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Lundi
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 6 December 2021

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 6 décembre 2021

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to acknowledge that we are meeting on lands traditionally inhabited by Indigenous people. We pay our respects to the many Indigenous nations who gathered here and continue to gather here, including the Mississaugas of the Credit. Meegwetich.

This being the first sitting Monday of the month, I ask everyone to remain standing for the singing of the Canadian national anthem, followed by the royal anthem.

1020

Playing of the national anthem / Écoute de l'hymne national.

Playing of the royal anthem / Écoute de l'hymne royal.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOLIDAY MESSAGES

Ms. Jill Andrew: This is my last member's statement for 2021. I'd like to take the opportunity to say thank you to Jewish community members, leaders and friends in St. Paul's who welcomed me into your home and synagogues in person and on Zoom, celebrating Hanukkah and holding close its many lessons of gratitude, resilience, belonging, community and family. I wish you all continued blessings as the Festival of Lights comes to a close this evening.

Additionally, I want to wish my community of Toronto—St. Paul's happy holidays, happy winter solstice, merry Christmas, and also a happy Kwanzaa. Kwanzaa will begin the day after Christmas and will continue till January 1, New Year's Day. May we all take a moment to reflect on the seven principles of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, co-operative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. We must, now more than ever.

Our challenges this year have been significant. Many of us have experienced devastating loss. Our families and friends have been tested. Essential workers in our community continue their heavy lifting.

This holiday, as we get our homes and hearts ready for the season, still in the grip of a pandemic, may we remember those who last night in the cold Toronto rain slept outdoors. To the government: They will have no home for the holidays. I wish you the clarity and conviction to know that no amount of upholding institutions that arrest, dehumanize and evict people who experience homelessness or their

advocates and allies will get them housed. Everyone deserves a home.

Happy holidays.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Over the past 10 years, demand for MRI services in Ontario has increased on average by approximately 4% annually. It's why a key part of our government's commitment to ending hallway health care includes a \$30-million investment to expand MRI services for patients and add new MRIs in hospitals across the province.

It's also why I had the privilege of announcing a 50% increase in funding for the Niagara region's MRI services, with new operational funding for an MRI machine for Niagara Health this past November, a move that will help reduce wait times for diagnostic imaging in our region and put patients and their families first.

As part of a wider comprehensive surgical recovery plan that will provide patients with the care they need, this year the Ontario government is expanding up to \$324 million in new testing services to provide more surgeries, MRI and CT scans and procedures, including on evenings and weekends. The investments that were announced will bring additional MRI services to Niagara, reducing wait times and making it easier for patients to receive the care they need closer to home.

The release of our fall economic statement will confirm our commitment to protecting people's health. In Niagara, this also means a commitment to two new hospitals in Grimsby and Niagara Falls. It means important services for current hospital infrastructure and health services. As a strong advocate for Niagara, I am very pleased to see that November's announcement means an additional MRI machine in Niagara to end hallway health care and reduce wait times for diagnostic imaging.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Last week, the Auditor General blasted the Ford government for not having a coordinated strategy on homelessness and for its out-of-touch funding based on old StatsCan data about housing need. I'll say. Everywhere, homelessness is skyrocketing. Rural and small communities that have never seen unhoused people before are begging for help. Shelters and shelter hotels are full. There is simply nowhere for people to go. Cities across the province are seeing park encampments grow, and often their response is to clear them violently,

which of course does nothing to house people and serves only to further traumatize residents and their supporters, and to criminalize those who work to keep unhoused people warm, fed and safe.

Recently, Black Muslim youth in Hamilton doing that work were brutally arrested. One woman had a police officer kneel on her neck in exactly the move that killed George Floyd. Her hijab was ripped from her head. Community leaders and academics alike are calling for an investigation and that the charges against the volunteers be dropped.

The violent clearings in Hamilton echo similar events in Toronto this past summer, and they do nothing whatsoever to diminish the homelessness crisis. Governments shouldn't be relying on volunteers to literally keep unhoused people alive and then punishing them for doing that work. We need to build housing and we need to provide community and care to unhoused people in ways that work for them while we build that housing. We need a homelessness strategy. We need it desperately.

HINDU HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Deepak Anand: During November, communities across Ontario celebrated Hindu Heritage Month. For centuries, the Hindu community has made significant contributions in every field, including philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, science, law, architecture and arts. Sanatan Dharm is based on the principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," which in Sanskrit means "the whole world is one family." This beautiful principle, if followed, will result in love and affection for each other and create a seamless society.

I was pleased to join the flag-raising at Brampton city hall, organized by the founding members: Amit Bhatt, Anand Iyer, Anil Sharma, Ashwani Aggarwal, Dave Kapil, Don Patel, Jake Dheer, Madhusudan Lama, Madhu Sharda, Manan Gupta, Nik Mengi, Pathik Shukla, Peeyush Gupta, Rakesh Joshi, Subhash Chand and Virender Rathee of the Hindu Heritage Celebration Foundation.

I also had the opportunity to celebrate Hindu Heritage Month at ISKCON temple, Hindu Sabha Mandir, the Hindu Heritage Centre and the Hindu Federation at Mississauga Ram Mandir in my own riding of Mississauga-Malton, where Pandit Roopnath Sharma reinforced the value of non-violence, "ahimsa."

Thanks to Hindus across Ontario for their amazing Ontario spirit during COVID-19 to help the communities, for raising funds for neighbours, donating meals, providing PPE and supporting our seniors. Let's continue to celebrate every culture and heritage and build a prosperous and inclusive Ontario. Hari om.

WEARING OF TEAM MEMORABILIA

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: I seek unanimous consent to be able to wear Ti-Cats jerseys and memorabilia in light of

winning the Eastern Finals yesterday and to congratulate the Ti-Cats and wish them luck in the Grey Cup next week. Oskee Wee Wee!

1030

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to wear Tiger-Cats sweaters and attire to celebrate their win. Agreed? Agreed.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Winter is upon us and as northerners and Ontarians, we are used to winter conditions. But what we can't get used to are the conditions of the highways. Over the years—first under the Harris government, then under the Kathleen Wynne-Dalton McGuinty government—we've seen increasing privatization when it comes to how we clean our highways, and the circuit times have been affected. As a result of all of those changes, the circuit time that it takes a plow to start at one spot and then come back again, those times have increased. And as a result, it's been—thank you.

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

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. John Fraser: Ontarians have really stepped up over the last year since the beginning of this pandemic. They're getting vaccinated in record numbers. They have followed public health advice.

They depend on the government to do the things that they need to support them, to be decisive and to act quickly, and that's been a real challenge at some times in this pandemic. Right now we're vaccinating our kids. We need to do more to fight the anti-vax information that's out there, the anti-vax protests. There's going to be one rally in Whitby tonight. There was one planned last night in Oshawa. We're not doing enough to help and to protect parents and kids from anti-vax misinformation and anti-vax harassment when they're just trying to go to a clinic to get a vaccination.

Speaker, this government has to take action on safe zones around vaccination clinics here in Ontario to protect families, health care workers and kids from harassment. We have to do more to combat the kind of anti-vax misinformation that we're going to see in Whitby tonight.

WHY NOT YOUTH CENTRE

Mr. Will Bouma: I rise today to mention the amazing work happening at the Why Not Youth Centre located in Brantford-Brant. The Why Not Youth Centre is vibrant, inclusive and, in their own words, sometimes a little loud, as I found out a few months ago when I was there listening to some of the music that the youth had created in their facility there.

With dozens of teens on site at any time, there is a variety of simultaneous activities to take part in, including

karaoke, pool, Just Dance, video games, board games, lounging, arts and crafts, or anything else that the group can come up with. Free of abuse, judgment and harm, the Why Not Youth Centre offers a plethora of entirely free resources that are available to youth.

Why Not just opened a transitional supportive house for four young men from the community. It will teach them how to be housed, how to pay bills, and life skills. Why Not has been on the forefront of combatting youth homelessness for years. I wanted to just come here and say thank you to Charlie, Susan and all of the volunteers, community organizations and supporters involved with purchasing a former drug house and getting it in shipshape for the four youth who moved in yesterday. Again, thank you for all that you do.

HARRY VANDEKEMP

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I rise today to sadly mark the passing of a long-time York South–Weston resident, business owner and community champion: Harry Vandekemp. Harry passed away suddenly of a heart attack at 8:45 p.m. on Thursday, November 25.

Harry was the beloved owner of Golden Crisp Fish & Chips, a business that has operated in our community for 60 years. He leaves behind his wife of 30 years, along with five children and four grandchildren. According to his family, 20 minutes before the heart attack, after heading home from work, Harry was cheerfully riding his bike, ringing the bell and singing.

According to his wife, Judy, Harry would always say fish and chips was just one aspect of the business. For him, it was about connecting with the people who made it so much more for him.

I'm grateful to have known Harry, and I enjoyed our many interactions over the years. Harry always had a smile on his face and an encouraging, positive outlook on life. The York South–Weston community loved Harry, and Harry loved them back. His passing is a great loss to our community, but we are all thankful to have known Harry. He truly left his mark.

The York South–Weston community is mourning along with his family, and I pass my sincere condolences to them.

We thank you, Harry, for all of the joy you have given to our community.

FOOD AND TOY DRIVE

Mr. Stephen Crawford: This is a joyful time of the year. The Christmas and holiday season is here, with towns decorated with lights and holiday events taking place. Family and friends will be gathering to celebrate.

While this is an exciting and festive time, we also need to think of those in need. In every community, the generosity of Ontarians is demonstrated. There are many opportunities to give to those in need.

I want to mention the fantastic work of the first responders within Halton, who are always there when we need them.

This week in my riding, the Oakville Professional Firefighters Association, in partnership with the town of Oakville, is hosting their annual drive-through toy donation at Coronation Park. This free event will occur on Friday, December 10, from 5 to 9 p.m., and will display hundreds of Christmas lights, and Santa Claus will be making an appearance to wave at visitors. Oakville residents are encouraged to bring a gift card, a non-perishable food item or an unwrapped toy. The goal of this toy drive is to give every local child the opportunity to enjoy this holiday season. I will personally be there to collect donations with the firefighters and local volunteers.

If you cannot make the event in person, there are other ways to make a difference. The Oakville Professional Firefighters Association will be collecting non-perishable food items, gift cards and unwrapped gifts at a number of local establishments, such as the Oakville town libraries, community centres and town hall, until December 19.

In Oakville, helping others is what our community is known for.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services has a point of order.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to wear white ribbons and to make statements regarding the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, with five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group, and five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's government, after which the House shall observe a moment of silence in tribute to the victims and survivors of gender-based violence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Fullerton is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to wear white ribbons and to make statements regarding the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, with five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group, and five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's government, after which the House shall observe a moment of silence in tribute to the victims and survivors of gender-based violence. Agreed? Agreed.

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Jill Andrew: It is my honour to stand on behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus, as the critic for women's issues, to commemorate this important, however tragic, day in our Canadian history. Today marks the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

We remember the 14 women who were taken from us 32 years ago in Montreal as part of the Montreal massacre. They were murdered by a misogynist, anti-feminist coward because they were women.

I also cannot stand in this Legislature today without thinking of the many days and nights since December 6, 1989, that Indigenous women and girls, Black trans women, sex workers and countless other women of colour and those who are experiencing homelessness have been killed by men and others and again by systems that, to this day, still value certain lives and deaths more than others.

In Ontario, 58 lives were lost to femicide this year alone—a number that represents an increase of over 52% from the previous year. Calls to assault help lines nearly doubled through the pandemic.

Violence against women is a public health issue. It is not a women's issue. Each life lost and each call made is a reminder that the fight for gender equity and the fight to end violence against women is sadly far from over. Each call is a reminder, regardless of partisanship, of the work anyone elected into these seats must commit to. The Ontario NDP recognizes this and the many dimensions of what this work entails.

1040

Last session, and again recently, I retabled a motion calling for the Conservative government to adopt a provincial intersectional gender-equity strategy that includes thorough interministerial gender-based analysis on the impacts of each government policy change prior to the introduction of any government bills, motions, budgets or regulations, with the results of such analysis fully disclosed to the public.

My legislation would acknowledge that women, 2SLGBTQIA+ and others at the intersections of race and disability, for example, are disproportionately impacted in negative ways by policies that ignore them. I hope this government will act on this motion.

Additionally, we, the NDP official opposition, have been fighting for municipalities' rights to be able to ban the sale, possession and use of handguns and ammunition within densely populated urban areas and municipalities. This government has ruled against that ban.

Preventing gender-based violence means ensuring every woman and person who experiences violence has access to safe and affordable housing, economic access and labour rights. It means a real commitment to creating the supportive housing we need—not on paper through promises and platitudes, but actual bills.

Women must have affordable child care, a functional Family Responsibility Office within the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services where people actually receive child support which lifts parents, predominantly mothers and children, out of poverty and doesn't simply become a dream deferred. Why? Because poverty is violence. Poverty is violating, and it steals dignity. Survivors need a social safety net to help them leave abuse and all of these needs are further and further away from those who need it the most.

We must have permanent paid sick days so people, particularly women, can take personal emergency leave—paid time-off to leave the situations of abuse without the added stress of income loss.

We need rent stabilization so women aren't staying in situations of abuse because they simply can't afford the astronomical rent hikes we're seeing across the province courtesy of vacancy decontrol, unethical above-guideline rent increases—another motion of mine that died in this House—and this government's ripping up of rent control in their first year of government.

Again, I cannot say enough how critical affordable child care is, not only for the she-recovery but for women escaping violence.

I'd also like to take the time to thank the countless organizations across the province doing the heavy lifting: places like OAITH; Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres; Assaulted Women's Helpline; Canadian Women's Foundation; YWCA Toronto; South Asian Women's Centre; Imani's Place; the Redwood; the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children, otherwise known as METRAC; shelters bursting at the seams; case workers, councillors and others working desperately within broken systems, chronically underfunded and understaffed by this and previous governments, quite frankly, to keep women safe. They may be heroes, but even heroes need consistent and annualized funding.

I'd also like to recognize the work of the White Ribbon campaign. All too often the discourse surrounding gender-based violence re-victimizes survivors. The White Ribbon campaign creates a space to centre men and boys' responsibility against ending violence against women: dismantling the toxic masculinity that has been entrenched in men and boys' psyche that can and has led to these senseless and callous murders of disproportionately women and girls.

Since 1991, White Ribbon campaign has pledged to never commit, condone or, what too often happens, stay silent as negative bystanders against gender-based violence. Thank you, White Ribbon, for your orange laces, #LaceUpSpeakOut campaign, promoting gender equality and healthy masculinity as men and boys walk the talk of positive allyship.

The legacy of the 14 women killed and the many more women following must be made more than words or a day of significance or a moment of silence. Their lives should not have been taken. They didn't have to be taken. They should not have been murdered. They should have been here today, dominating in science, technology, engineering, arts, math, thriving in their communities, holding political office—maybe, if they chose to—and being loved by their families. These 14 women and the countless others should have been here, but sadly, they are not, and that's just not acceptable.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, we have the member for Scarborough–Guildwood.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Today, December 6, is a sad reminder. We mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Today, our

nation also continues to process the brutal reality that another incomprehensible act of hate-fuelled violence has taken place right here. Thirty-two years ago, 14 young women were murdered at École Polytechnique in Montreal. As a teenager about to enter university, I remember this. While the brutal act of violence does not reflect the core values and beliefs we aspire to in the communities and in the country that we love and call home, it forces a devastating reminder upon all of us that hate and intolerance and those acts live here too.

Today is a sad reminder of the pervasive presence of gender-based violence in our society. We mourn the loss of these 14 women, these bright women whose lives were senselessly stolen. It is incumbent upon all of us to honour their memory by reaffirming our collective commitment to fighting hate and misogyny across society.

Around the world, women, girls, the LGBTQ, Indigenous, Black, the people of colour community and gender-diverse individuals experience disproportionate levels of violence and discrimination. Violence against women is a serious issue that does not discriminate. Its victims can be poor or rich, educated or not—of any background.

Gender-based violence has been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent report by the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses has indicated that gender-based violence has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other statistics show that more women and girls have been killed in Canada in the first half of 2021 than in the same period in the past two years. This may be lost in the headlines of the health crisis.

In the past 12 months, Ontario has lost 58 women and girls to femicide. These 58 women cannot be ignored or forgotten. These women, many of whom are mothers, daughters and sisters, deserve justice and continued investment to address gender-based violence so that no women must experience the tragic reality they faced.

Approximately every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner. Dubbed the “shadow pandemic,” the rise of gender-based violence is a result of increased stress, isolation and aggression. This is a serious public health risk that cannot stay in the shadows and can be prevented.

Stopping the violence begins with changing beliefs, dismantling attitudes and shifting norms. It means believing survivors and adopting comprehensive approaches to tackling the root causes. It means affordable housing, child care and income security supports. It means believing survivors and empowering women and girls. Speaker, together we can do this. Believe women and know that it's never okay to take her life.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Thirty-two years ago, 14 women were murdered at l'École Polytechnique. They were murdered because they were women, and the sad reality is that we continue to face a rise in violence against women.

The pandemic has made it worse. Police have recorded additional calls for domestic violence, and social service

agencies have reported an increase in the severity of that violence. It's a public health issue, it's a human rights violation, and it's a significant barrier to gender equality in our province and in our country. So I urge all Ontarians to take action today and every day to end violence against women, to stand in solidarity with survivors.

1050

I especially want to speak to people who, like myself, identify as male. We have a special responsibility to stand in solidarity with women and survivors and to take action each and every day to tell other men that violence against women is never acceptable.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Today in this Legislature, we rise together to condemn violence against women and to remember 14 young women who were tragically murdered 32 years ago simply because of their gender. December 6, 1989 is a day that lives on in our hearts and minds, and on every December 6, we pause and remember those young women whose lives were shortened by a senseless act of violence.

If I may, Speaker, I would like to read out their names: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte, Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz; Anastasia Kuzyk, Nathalie Warmerdam and Carol Culleton.

While we remember these young women today, it is also a day that we remember the countless other women, girls, racialized and marginalized victims of gender-based violence. Sadly, despite all the work that has been done and the tireless ongoing efforts of legislators, police, and shelter and community workers, the incidents of violence against women and girls is far too common. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, reports have shown that all types of violence against women, particularly domestic violence, have increased. This tragic reality is being felt worldwide and has become so widespread that the United Nations now refers to it as the “shadow pandemic.”

Speaker, as Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, as a physician and as a mother, this trend concerns me greatly. I am proud to be part of a government that is steadfast in our commitment to ending violence against women and is taking action to address this violence in all forms.

Words are not enough. This year, our government is spending \$202 million on services and supports: \$191 million for victims of violence and \$11 million for violence prevention initiatives. This funding supports emergency shelters, counselling, 24-hour crisis lines, and safety planning, and an investment to enhance the transitional and housing supports program that helps survivors of violence and reduces pressures on the emergency shelter system. We have also boosted support for rural front-line agencies to increase collaboration and reduce geographic and transportation barriers through the \$3.6-million Rural and Remote Enhancement Fund.

To address the calls for justice in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, our government released Pathways to Safety, a strategy developed in close partnership with Indigenous communities, organizations and the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council. As part of this strategy, our 2021 budget includes an \$18.2-million investment over three years to support initiatives to end violence and address this crisis facing Indigenous people. This important investment will provide access to community supports; enhance resources for First Nations police services for sexual assault, human trafficking and domestic violence investigations; build on existing investments to support community safety; and provide additional supports to end violence against Indigenous women and girls.

Last year, our government launched our five-year strategy to combat human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children and youth. Our comprehensive action plan includes a cross-government approach that is focused on raising awareness, early intervention, protecting victims and holding offenders accountable.

Speaker, violence against women is more than just a woman's issue. It is an issue for all of us. We need strong women supporting vulnerable women. We also need all people supporting vulnerable women.

I know all of us in this House share our government's enduring commitment to prevent violence against women and girls. We will continue to work hard across government and with our partners to prevent this violence, because every Ontarian has the right to live in safety and in a society dedicated to equality and opportunity.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm now going to ask members to rise to observe a moment of silence in tribute to the victims and survivors of gender-based violence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Members may take their seats.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm very pleased to inform the House that page Serena Noronha, who is from the riding of Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, is one of today's page captains. We have with us today at Queen's Park her grandmother Dora Noronha and her father, Trevor Noronha.

We are also joined today by the father of another of today's page captains, Elinor Carter, who is from the riding of Parkdale–High Park. Richard Weiser is here.

Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We're delighted that you've joined us.

QUESTION PERIOD

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I just want to start off by saying Oskee Wee Wee. It was a great game yesterday. The Cats

and Argos both played very, very well. Of course, now we're all on the same team, because we're going to Hamilton next week to fight for the Grey Cup against Winnipeg, so I hope everybody who can be there will be there.

My first question this morning is to the Premier.

We just heard that New Brunswick is imminently going to be signing their deal for affordable child care in their province. That means Ontario is dead last. We're the only province without an affordable child care plan.

Costs are sky-high. Families are really, really feeling the squeeze. They could use some financial relief, and they could use some hope that we're actually going to get affordable child care in this province.

It's obvious that child care is just not a priority for Premier Ford, but it is for Ontario families.

My question is, why is this Premier so unable or unwilling to get Ontario families affordable, \$10-a-day child care, and why did they take so long to even bother to try?

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The Premier is very committed to getting a fair deal for Ontario families. We recognize child care is inaccessible and unaffordable for so many working parents. That is the reality that families have faced for the last many years as a consequence of inaction by the former Liberal government.

But our Premier is standing up for Ontario. We're working with the federal government. In fact, we met with them multiple times, walked them through our numbers, our methodology and our asks, which is for a larger investment over a sustained period of time so that we can finally make child care affordable for parents in Ontario.

That is with the federal government. They have our full, complete financials. We look forward to hearing from them so that, yes, we can wrap up a deal that reduces costs for moms and dads right across this province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here's a list of successful child care deals that are bringing real relief to families across Canada, and more spaces as well: For example, Alberta families are going to have their fees cut in half, cut by 50%, in just less than a month. Saskatchewan families are going to see up to \$2,000, and in some cases more, in rebates retroactively until the middle of this past summer. BC families are seeing thousands of \$10-a-day child care spaces, literally right now, being developed in their province. In Manitoba, the ECEs are having their wages increased to \$25 an hour as a starting wage. Quebec families, as we know, have long had affordable child care in their province and it's done wonderful things for their economy.

Ontario families, unfortunately, continue to pay mortgage-level child care payments. With the cost of living now so high, why won't the Premier deliver the kind

of relief that Ontario parents deserve and get a deal for \$10-a-day child care for our families?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Indeed, we do want a deal, a fair deal, a deal that actually reduces the price for families, a deal that really helps to solve some of the great challenges of affordability that families are facing and that they faced for 15 long years under the former government, where child care rose by literally 400%.

Now, I accept and agree with the member opposite that we need to continue to work hard to reduce costs. Ultimately, the government, in our first budget, introduced a measure to reduce costs and increase affordability for parents through the introduction of the Ontario Child Care Tax Credit, which was opposed by the NDP and the Liberals. We also brought in a plan to build 30,000 child care spaces within our schools, 22,000 of which are approved. That was opposed by the NDP and the Liberals. I appreciate that it's incremental, but it moves it in the right direction to create more access for parents and ultimately reduces the prices, given the explosive increase under the former Liberal government.

There's more work to do. We've sat with the federal government. We've given them the data. We await their response so that we can get a deal that reduces costs, increases access and ultimately changes the trajectory so that we can bring down prices for families across this province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's just absolutely obvious that what this government has done is dragged its feet. They've dragged their feet, and now we're the last province. And we still don't have a deal.

Affordable child care means money in the pockets of parents. It's money that will boost the local economy, money that—struggling families, who have actually had a lot to deal with in the last couple of years, might see some great opportunity for things to get a little better over the holidays, if this government had done the right thing. But instead of a deal, we have Premier Ford playing petty politics, negotiating in the media, fighting with the federal Liberal government, and of course, as I've already said, they waited months and months and months before even trying to get a deal.

Why has this Premier failed, just like the Wynne-Del Duca government before his, to get affordable \$10-a-day child care for Ontario families?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The Premier has been working constructively with the federal government through this pandemic with one aim, which is to protect the families we serve and ensure we can get through the worst of this pandemic. That has been a hallmark of his leadership, working across party lines and across levels of government with one interest, which is to defeat this pandemic and put it behind us. I think that is a strength in this province. He and I and other members of our government are working with the feds and making the case to them on an expedited basis, to get us the feedback, get us the response I think Ontario families deserve—now that they have the full data they requested.

It is true that the Liberals created a great affordability crisis in this province, from energy to housing and, no doubt, child care. That is their legacy. I agree with the member opposite.

What we're doing, under our government and our Premier's leadership, is introducing measures to reduce costs and increase access. Working with the feds, we aim to land a fair deal that finally brings down prices for families and ensures it's sustainable for decades to come.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. The Premier has consistently opposed COVID vaccine certificates. In July, he said, "We aren't doing it." In September, he announced it's only temporary. He told Ontarians that the certificate program is going to end on January 17. But COVID cases, as we all see, are creeping up. For a couple of days now, they've been over 1,000 cases a day. Who knows what the new variant is going to bring, Speaker?

So my question is will the Premier continue the mandatory vaccine certificate program after January 17? Yes or no?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you to the leader of the official opposition for the question. The reality is that there is so much about the Omicron variant we don't know yet. We do know it appears to be much more transmissible than the Delta variant that we're currently dealing with, but we don't know about its virulence and we don't know about the effects of our vaccine to withstand the effects of this Omicron variant, so it's too soon to say.

What we are telling people is to please continue to follow the public health measures that we've been following for many months now: the physical distancing, the wearing of masks, the frequent handwashing and so on.

We're also urging any Ontarians who have not yet received both of their vaccinations to please do so. And if you have children between ages five and 11, please get your children vaccinated as well. That's the best work that we can do to protect ourselves against the Delta or any other variant of this virus.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I didn't hear an answer to my question. The fact is that the certificate helps us avoid lockdowns. The science table advice was clear: Certificates help keep businesses open and they encourage hesitant people to get vaccinated.

Yet the Premier's take on the certificates are, "We're not going to have a split society." That's how the Premier frames it. Dr. Peter Jüni, the head of the science table, said in November that that's a false frame. He said, "The point that it's dividing society is an absolutely invalid argument."

Certificates are about uniting Ontarians in the fight against COVID-19. So my question is, why won't the Premier commit today to keeping vaccine certificates in place beyond January 17?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Our government continues to support the need for the vaccine certificates. It is very important for people to be able to enter certain locations, restaurants and other places—for their protection and the protection of other people as well.

However, as to when it's actually going to be lifted, we have the plan we put in place several months ago, but we do have this new variant. We do have Omicron among us right now.

The same answer that I had for your previous question is: We're planning to start lifting things, but if this Omicron variant circulates widely, and if it is as virulent as it has been in other jurisdictions, we are going to need to take a look at that. Dr. Moore has said that from day one, that if there is a major change in circumstances, we will have to reconsider, as we're reconsidering every step along the way. But right now we don't have the pertinent information we need in order to make a decision.

I anticipate that will become evident in the next several months as we see what happens in South Africa and other jurisdictions.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I find it shocking that the Minister of Health is standing in this House projecting the lifting of these measures, and all that does is embolden the anti-vaxxers and let them know that they don't have to worry about getting their vaccine because the government is about to lift the measures.

Look, the Premier needs to step up here and provide some strong leadership. Ontarians have been doing their part. The vast majority of Ontarians have been doing their part, but they need leadership and public health measures to fight the fourth wave. Instead, the Premier is pandering—as is the health minister—to the anti-vaxxers who support them.

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The head of the science table, Dr. Peter Jüni said this—*Interjections.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Government side, come to order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: "I believe vaccine certificates actually worked surprisingly well." That's Dr. Peter Jüni, the head of the science table.

Will the Premier do the right thing, the evidence-based thing, and announce today that he will continue the use of vaccine certificates in Ontario? Stop sending mixed—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I think it's really important that we be clear, because apparently the leader of the official opposition perhaps didn't understand what I was saying. I indicated that we are following the science, we are following the evidence.

We are listening to the science advisory table. We are listening to Dr. Moore. We are listening to everyone who has advised them. That is why we have taken the position

we have. That is why we set out our road map to reopen Ontario. But it was always subject to the caveat that if there is a situation such as a variant that we don't know about and we don't know what's going to happen with it, we'll have to re-evaluate.

That's what we are doing. We are waiting to find out what the data is, what it is that we're dealing with, with this variant. But we're continuing to ask people to follow those public health measures, to continue to get vaccinated, to continue to get the vaccine certificate—because we anticipate we will need it for at least another several months if everything is all right, and maybe for longer than that once we know more about the Omicron variant.

We are following evidence and we are following the science at every step we take.

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Doly Begum: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Last week, the Auditor General's report showed that approximately \$210 million in COVID-19 support was given to 14,500 ineligible businesses.

Dozens of businesses in my riding of Scarborough Southwest couldn't get the Ontario small business grant due to numerous inconsistencies in the process, a lack of clear communication and an unnecessarily confusing process. While our community members and businesses continue to suffer, this government decided to close escalation and any inquiries about the grant and stopped providing the support altogether.

Will this government take responsibility for their mismanagement of the pandemic business relief program and address the ongoing concerns from small business owners regarding their applications?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member opposite: Thank you for that question. Clearly, small businesses in our communities right across Ontario have been struggling, not just for one month but for 21 months through the pandemic. That's why, since day one in March 2020, we provided supports—an over \$19-billion action plan, of which \$10 billion was for jobs and people and \$6 billion of that for businesses.

We acted swiftly to defer rent and help with rent payments, property tax, electricity rebates. We provided, beyond that, supports for WSIB premiums.

We were there, day one, for small businesses. We'll continue to be there for small businesses. We've heard from many of the small businesses, and they said that the support grants we provided them were often the difference between keeping the lights on and having them close for good.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: It's nice to hear those big numbers, but they're not going to the people of this province. They're not going to the businesses that need them. I don't

know where it's going; maybe this government can tell us where it's going.

Some \$210 million, people's hard-earned money, was mismanaged. I heard from Simon, a small business owner from my community whose grant application was initially approved. He was even assured three times on the phone that his money will come soon. He was relieved that some support would be given to him during this difficult time.

Months later, he received a rejection email with a list for qualification that he had never seen before. Simon expressed anxiety and fear for the future of his business—anxiety for six months, and then he was denied the support.

The Auditor General's report actually highlights a lack of central tracking for business relief funds, poorly defined eligibility criteria and exclusion of businesses that needed the support. We can see these issues clearly in our ridings—across all the members' ridings, really, because we heard from so many different ridings, including others in Scarborough.

Why did the government allow a program that was so critical to small businesses, that was a lifeline for small businesses and for our economy, frankly, to be grossly mismanaged, causing uncertainty and fear for small businesses?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: What was important through the second wave was to get money out the door to many of those businesses, and I remind the member opposite that over 100,000 businesses received support. Many of those businesses were struggling and continue to struggle. Many are struggling to this day. That's why this Deputy Premier and Minister of Health is encouraging everyone to get vaccinated in this province. In fact, we developed the Verify app so that businesses could go to 100% capacity safely—the double vaccinations as proof of vaccination.

We continue to be there for small businesses. We'll continue to provide the supports for small businesses and we'll continue to support the families and hard-working people of this province.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Will Bouma: Ontario students and parents deserved so much more than what they received for 15 years under the previous Liberal government. And we know what their track record was: closing 600 schools across the province of Ontario, the most expensive child care program in Canada, and the cost of living rising at a dramatic rate, undermining the interests of middle-class and working families in the province of Ontario.

Ontarians deserve a government committed to improving flexibility and affordability and building new schools. Following school closures and repair backlogs province-wide, we need to see substantial investments to ensure Ontario remains a leader in world-class learning.

New, modern and connected schools remain critical to the growth and learning of young people across this province.

So, Speaker, through you, can the Minister of Education tell this House what steps he is taking to ensure a continuity of innovation and excellence for Ontario learners?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member for Brantford—Brant for the question. I very much agree that Ontario families and students deserve modern schools that are accessible, Internet-connected, with the highest standards of air ventilation.

I am proud that under our Premier's leadership, we are investing over \$1.5 billion in capital projects, supporting 76 net new schools being added to our province, as well as 43 major additions. This represents 26,000 spaces under way within our schools, expanding them for the benefit of children. Today, there are 105 construction projects under way, and 350 approved in the province of Ontario—and it's going to make a big difference. Nearly 100,000 more student spaces are being added to our province as a consequence of our investment, in partnership with the Minister of Infrastructure, the Minister of Finance and so many others, to build this province, build spaces, build schools, build modern child care after a decade of neglect and closures under the former Liberal government.

There's more work to do. We're going to continue to invest to build new—

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

Mr. Will Bouma: I want to thank the minister for his response. To build these schools and child care spaces, our province will continue to rely on the skill and expertise of skilled trades professionals. A report by the apprenticeship youth advisers called for the government to recognize the invaluable contributions that skilled trades make to our infrastructure, all while providing good-paying, lifetime jobs to youth.

Mr. Speaker, we know that for too long, skilled trades were neglected by the previous government and were framed as less than a university degree. More also needs to be done to erase the stigma associated with skilled trades careers so that young people and their parents recognize that the trades are a pathway to success. Skilled trades training for youth will be key to meeting the labour demands of our generation, including building schools, all while providing quality pensions, benefits and pay to those in the industry.

Can the Minister of Education tell this House that what the government is doing is working with schools across the province to encourage engagement in the skilled trades?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I again want to thank the member for his question and for his leadership in getting child care spaces approved in his riding just weeks ago, in the Catholic school board system. But we know, by 2025, one in five jobs will be in the skilled trades. We're also aware there's a 100,000-person shortfall today, and so we have to take action.

This is why the government, in partnership with the Minister of Labour, has been working since day one to fill

those gaps with qualified young people to fill those rewarding opportunities. We announced a \$90-million investment in the skilled trades. We've expanded the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program with the aim of bringing roughly 63 recruiters literally into our high schools to recruit, to incent and to create meaningful pathways for all students of the province, particularly women, racialized children, Indigenous and others who are under-represented within these exciting careers. Speaker, we've also expanded investments within our school system and in our curriculum, starting in kindergarten, literally to inspire young people to pursue these careers.

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We're going to continue to invest and continue to encourage more young people to enter these jobs right across Ontario.

NURSES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé. Patients in intensive care units are critically ill and they can deteriorate unexpectedly. That is why the standard of care in our ICUs is a one-to-one nurse-to-patient ratio.

Registered nurses, registered respiratory therapists and community members are raising serious patient safety concerns about Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket–Aurora. Southlake, like all hospitals in Ontario, has seen eight years of budget freezes and below-inflation increases the rest of the time. They have adopted a team-based nursing model in their ICU. That means that now the one fully trained ICU RN monitors her patient, but she must also monitor RNs who are not trained in critical care nursing. That is not one-on-one, Speaker. That is not best practice.

Will the Minister of Health listen to the concerns of her constituents and act now to make sure that every patient admitted to the ICU gets nothing less than one-on-one?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much to the member for the question. Our first concern has been the health and well-being of all Ontarians throughout this pandemic, and that includes when they are admitted to hospital. We recognize, and I am sure the member opposite will know, that there are concerns with respect to health human resources right now, and so we have made other accommodations but always with patient safety first and foremost in our minds.

We are making massive investments in educating more nurses, more locations in our colleges and universities. We are training more people to become intensive care nurses, emergency nurses, surgical nurses, but that doesn't happen overnight. But whatever the health human resources we're putting into intensive care, the people of Ontario can rest assured that they will receive excellent quality care in nursing and any other resources that they need. That will happen through the pandemic and thereafter.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It takes three to five years of intensive care experience to become an ICU nurse, or the successful completion of a critical care course in the last two years and critical care experience. But at Southlake hospital, nurses have left and continue to leave the ICU. They are now hiring brand new nurses, some with less than one year of med. surg. experience, and providing care to critically ill patients. How is this safe, Speaker? This is a cut to the ICU. This puts patients at risk.

Nurses, respiratory therapists and concerned community feel like they are not being heard by their MPP—the minister. They want to know the concrete steps that the minister will take to promote retention, recruitment and training of critical care nurses at Southlake and in every other hospital in Ontario that provides ICU.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I am certainly very pleased to respond to the question that the member has raised. We have been taking every step possible to recruit and to retain our qualified health human resources.

The member is absolutely right that it takes several years in order to train someone to become a nurse in intensive care, for example. We are spending those resources to do that, to make sure that we can have a program where people can be trained to be able to achieve that status. But at the other end, we're also training more nurses.

But with respect to the specific question that you asked, there are always qualified intensive care nurses in intensive care. They will always provide supervision of anyone who has maybe not achieved that status. So there are qualified professionals in every aspect of our health care system, including intensive care, with the appropriately trained nurses, and that will always continue.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to the answers that the Minister of Education gave to the question just a moment ago. I give credit to the government for its focus on skilled trades. I think that it's an interesting expansion into experiential learning. I think it's important. But given that this government has consistently proclaimed that it's a government that is intent on building Ontario's economy, it's really inexplicable that it has consistently undermined the publicly funded education system, which is the single most important investment in a future strong Ontario economy.

As soon as this government was elected, it demonstrated its disdain for publicly funded education by cutting staff, setting untenable class size increases in both elementary and secondary schools in order to cut millions of dollars from the system, and cutting student aid for university and college students. And when COVID-19 hit, this government dragged its heels, and then the investment was well short of what was needed.

Now there's a child care deal on the table from the federal government that has not been available to any governments before.

Why has this government not signed the child care deal with the federal government?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I do know that the Premier has increased investment every single year in publicly funded education—the highest levels ever invested in the history of this province, in sharp contrast to the former Liberal government that perhaps increased investment but didn't get a good return on that investment. Young people couldn't pass the grade 6 math average, 600 schools closed, and we created a massive deferred maintenance backlog while the standard of our schools simply regressed by \$16 billion—unacceptable. We appreciate that, which is exactly why we are investing over \$590 million more this year within our budget to improve the standard within our schools. It's why we're investing half a billion dollars to build new schools. And yes, it is precisely why we're working to make child care more affordable.

I joined the Minister of Infrastructure two weeks ago to announce 3,000 additional affordable, accessible child care spaces for families within publicly funded schools.

The former Premier is right; there is more work to do. I accept the federal government has a lot to contribute—2.5% today is insufficient. We're asking them to step up their investment. Let's get this deal done.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate that the government has continued the building of the 100,000 child care spaces that had already begun under our government. I think it's a good thing that they have continued on that plan.

When we took over government in 2003, 68% of kids were graduating from high school. When we lost government in 2018, 86% of kids were graduating from high school.

Speaker, this is the last question that I'm going to have the privilege of asking in 2021, and I sincerely hope that when we're back in the Legislature in 2022, Ontario will have signed a child care agreement.

We just heard statements in honour of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. We know that there are many women who are more at risk today than they were two years ago because of COVID-19 and that child care is something that could help.

Speaker, toddlers at home and their anxious moms and dads today are completely oblivious to the provincial election cycle. They don't know and their parents don't care how signing a deal with a federal Liberal government will affect the provincial Conservatives in an election. They all just want a safe, affordable child care option. That is what is on the table right now.

Will the government come to a child care agreement with the federal government before the dawn of the new year and put the anxieties of those families to rest?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I think many families' anxieties rose when they saw their child care bills increase by 400%

under the former Liberal government's tenure. That just is unacceptable, and that is their legacy.

Speaker, we do recognize that the federal government currently contributes roughly 2.5% of Ontario's child care funding. That is in need of a significant increase, which is why we're at the table. We met them many times. The Premier and our government demonstrated our willingness and ability to successfully negotiate with the federal government—be it the Safe Restart Agreement, a \$4-billion outcome benefiting Ontario families; or the federal funding that the Minister of Transportation helped lead negotiations on the GTA subway expansion and the Hamilton LRT in the opposition member's riding.

We know we can get a good deal, and we of course aspire to get one as soon as possible. We are not the obstacle here. We provided the information to the feds. We hope that they will respond in kind to land a deal that reduces costs, that increases access, and finally makes child care more affordable for the people we serve.

VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

As members of this chamber have already observed, today marks 32 years since the tragic events at Montreal's École Polytechnique. I'm sure I speak for all members of this House when I say that it is imperative for the government to do all it can to help prevent violence against women and to support victims of this horrendous crime.

Speaker, through you to the minister: What has the government done to provide support to women and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community who have been victimized by senseless acts of violence and abuse?

1130

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I'd like to thank the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for her important work on behalf of her constituents. I'd like to assure the member and all members in this House that our government has been steadfast in our commitment to preventing violence against women and is taking action to address violence in all forms against all genders.

This year, our government is investing \$202 million in important violence against women initiatives. These dollars will fund emergency shelters, counselling, 24-hour crisis lines, safety planning, child witness programs, transitional and housing supports and much more.

We're working across government and across jurisdictions to stop violence against women and to end human trafficking.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'd like to thank the minister for her response. I'm pleased to hear that the government is committed to addressing this issue and taking concrete steps to protect the people of Ontario who are at risk.

With my supplementary, I'd like to focus in on one particular horrendous form of violence against women that overwhelmingly impacts vulnerable women and girls, and that is human sex trafficking.

As I am sure the minister knows, a disproportionately large number of the women trafficked are Indigenous, racialized, and young, underage women and girls who are particularly vulnerable to offenders. Can the minister tell the House what the government is doing to prevent another instance of this terrible crime?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you again to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. As the member will know, last year, our government launched our five-year strategy to combat human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women, children and at-risk youth. This comprehensive \$307-million action plan is focused on raising awareness, protecting victims and intervening early, supporting survivors and, most importantly, holding offenders accountable.

Speaker, our government is committed to working across jurisdictions and with all members of the community to ensure a multi-faceted approach that provides more education, more prevention, more protection and more support for survivors, especially children.

The issue of violence against women and girls is one that demands every single one of us to work towards change. I can assure the member and this House that our government is committed to doing our part.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: *Remarks in Oji-Cree.*

My question is to the Premier. Last week, the Auditor General released their 2021 annual report. We have an agency, under the Ministry of the Environment, with a mandate to improve drinking water in First Nations. In Kiiwetinoong, there are 14 First Nations under long-term boil-water advisories, including Neskantaga, which is almost at their 27-year anniversary of living with no clean drinking water.

Speaker, it is shameful that governments, including this one, enable this structural racism—or you can call it racism, period. Why is it that the government refuses to step up to ensure all Ontarians have access to clean drinking water, no matter where they live?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply on behalf of the government, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. David Piccini: That member is right, and I appreciate that question. For too long, this has been simply unacceptable, the reality of challenges in getting clean drinking water in First Nations communities. That's why our government is working closely with OCWA and Walkerton, agencies of government, and collaboratively with First Nations and the federal government to support resolutions to long-term drinking water advisories.

We know that Indigenous Services Canada provides funding for First Nations for water and waste-water services on-reserve, 100% for design and production and

80% for operating and maintenance costs. First Nations are not mandated to meet Ontario's regulatory framework, as this is a federal government lead. However, we're not stopping with that. That's why OCWA is working closely with a number of Indigenous communities. That's why, working collaboratively with the Auditor General, OCWA is launching for the first time, under this government, both a mandate to Walkerton to work with Indigenous communities and an Indigenous advisory circle that will be Indigenous-led to improve water quality in First Nations communities.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: In her report, the Auditor General stated that the Ontario Clean Water Agency is "hesitant" to support First Nations struggling with boil-water advisories. Apparently, they are hesitant because they need to achieve full cost recovery. I didn't realize getting people clean drinking water was only important when there was money to be made off it.

Speaker, leaving people to live their whole lives under boil-water advisories is nothing to be proud of. When will Ontario begin to subsidize these technical services so they can help more First Nations in Ontario under boil-water advisories?

Hon. David Piccini: Again, I thank the member opposite for that question. OCWA is in First Nations communities around Ontario, regardless of whether they receive cost recovery or not. That cost recovery is given to the Indigenous communities from the federal government and, quite frankly, under my leadership as minister and under this Premier, we don't care—we will be there to support, regardless of the reality. That's why OCWA has been in Neskantaga on a 24/7 basis since November 2020. We will continue investing in OCWA and Walkerton to work with Indigenous communities. We will continue working with OCWA.

I just recently met with the chair of their board, who reported to me that they are well on their way with the Indigenous advisory circle that is Indigenous-led. It's a principle I learned when at the royal college: never about us without us. That's why we are working with the Indigenous community. That's why we've launched an Indigenous-led advisory circle. We will always respond to and work in close collaboration with Indigenous communities across the province. I appreciate that member's question.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Premier. Nurses are at a breaking point, overworked, underpaid and underappreciated. The ONA says that hospitals face 18% to 20% nursing vacancy rates. ICUs have reduced capacity because we don't have as many nurses to staff them. The surgery backlog is worsening because we don't have enough nurses to staff operating rooms. The nursing shortage is putting pressure on our health care system, affecting patient care.

Ontario desperately needs a plan to retain nurses, to shore up our health care system, and that starts with fair wages. Speaker, will the Premier do the right thing, show nurses the respect they deserve and revoke Bill 124, so they can negotiate a fair wage for the services they've provided Ontarians?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: As has been mentioned on a number of occasions in this House, we understand. That is why the Minister of Health has been putting so many resources into rebuilding the health care system across the province of Ontario. Bill 124 is an opportunity to ensure that we save jobs across the province of Ontario, but it hasn't stopped us from investing and working with the Minister of Colleges and Universities to ensure that we bring in more new nurses. I think we are adding some additional 2,000 new nurses.

But at the same time, as we build out more ICUs, as we build out more critical care beds, as we build out 30,000 additional long-term care units, and with the investments that are being made—historic investments, frankly—in Brampton and in Mississauga with the Peel hospital, we understand how important it is to bring on new nurses, and not only new nurses, but PSWs at the same time. There is a lot of work to be done. We're making the investments in order to get this work accomplished.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: What the government needs to understand, and I believe the people of Ontario understand, is that you can build more physical space and you can expand physical capacity, but if you don't have the people to work in those hospitals, in those operating rooms, in those ICUs, you're not going to be able to provide the health care that Ontarians need.

On November 14, the registered nurses' association called on the government to revoke Bill 124 within 30 days, so nurses could get the pay raise they deserve—because, frankly, freezing their wages, with today's inflation rate, is the same as a pay cut.

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Speaker, the clock is ticking. The 30 days are almost up. Will the government listen to nurses, show them the respect they deserve and revoke Bill 124?

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I said, Bill 124 is about preserving jobs across the public service. It doesn't restrict individuals who receive promotions within their category from receiving that augmented pay.

But what we heard a lot of the time, too, was the fact that the lack of investments being made by the previous government in terms of our hospitals was causing people to leave the province. We saw that so often with our doctors, with nurses. We did not have the facilities that were keeping and attracting the top and the best and the brightest back here.

That's why these investments in a Brampton hospital, the investments we're making in Peel, the investments we're making in Niagara and the investments we're making in long-term care are so important to bringing the

best and the brightest back to Ontario, and keeping the best and the brightest here. I agree with the honourable gentleman: It's not just about wages; it's not just about building these facilities. It's about investing in the top-notch quality health care that the people of the province of Ontario demand. We're finally getting that—

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

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Stephen Crawford: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We all know Ontario is in a housing crisis. Young families, seniors and hard-working Ontarians are desperate for housing that meets their unique needs.

The previous Liberal government sat on their hands for 15 years and said no to addressing the housing crisis. In 2020, the year after our housing supply action plan was implemented, Ontario had the highest level of housing starts in a decade and the highest level of rental starts since 1992. But we all know there is more to be done.

I understand that this morning the minister announced that our government is cutting red tape in the city of Guelph. Speaker, through you: Could the minister tell us how this will lay the groundwork for future development, much of it needed for housing, and how the government will protect the city's drinking water supply for years to come?

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the honourable member for that question. I was pleased to be in Guelph this morning. I joined Mayor Cam Guthrie to announce that I'll be issuing a minister's zoning order that will speed up approvals to allow for the development of new housing on the Dolime quarry and lands in the township. Also, we'll be protecting valuable drinking water for the municipality.

Just like all other minister's zoning orders issued on non-provincially owned land, the MZO comes at the request of city council. Together with our local municipal partners, our government is using the MZO tool to get critical projects in the ground faster, things like affordable housing, health care facilities, long-term care.

We need to move at a pace that Ontarians deserve. The announcement today demonstrates our commitment to ensure that critical local priority projects can be built as fast as possible.

I'll have more to say in the supplementary.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the minister for his response and sharing that information with the House.

I'm pleased that our government is using the MZO tool to speed up critical projects such as much-needed housing, long-term-care beds and even hospital expansions, all while ensuring the local municipality remains in the driver's seat the entire time.

While I understand the minister has already fast-tracked 3,700 long-term-care beds and created over 46,000 jobs through the use of ministerial zoning orders, the citizens of Guelph are depending on our government to not only

offer up new opportunities for housing, but also to protect Guelph's drinking water.

Through you, Speaker: Can the minister tell us what this announcement means for the current and future residents of Guelph?

Hon. Steve Clark: Another great question from the member for Oakville. As he stated, this is a partnership with the city. We're using the minister's zoning order tool to protect the drinking water for the people of Guelph.

Speaker, under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government is saying yes. As the member mentioned, we're saying yes to building more homes. We're saying yes to expanding our health care facilities and our long-term care capability. We're saying yes to protecting our environment.

When Guelph city council requested the MZO to cut red tape, to clear the way for new development that will also help protect the city's drinking water, our government was pleased to say yes. I'm proud that this initiative shows that there's a balanced and responsible approach to growth for our government. It protects the natural heritage features, a pond and the drinking water source beneath the quarry, alongside the future creation of housing. This is a fantastic announcement for the people of Guelph.

Unlike the Liberals and the NDP, who always say no—

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

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms. Jill Andrew: Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Earlier this month, I wrote a letter to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services and the Minister of Health about an important issue raised by one of my local constituents. We're all still waiting for a response. When she went to renew her OHIP card using the online service, she found it was only available to those who hold an Ontario driver's licence. This is exceptionally limiting for her as a person with a specific disability that prevents her from driving.

The CNIB Foundation in my riding also flagged this issue to the ministry over two years ago, noting how this system requirement excludes people who are blind, partially blind or blind-deaf across Ontario.

With expired health cards no longer accepted as of February 2022, what is the government doing to remove this barrier that disproportionately impacts people with disabilities?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Ross Romano: Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

I want to be very clear, first and foremost, that you can renew your health card the same way you always could renew your health card: at a service counter at a ServiceOntario. That hasn't changed in any way, shape or form.

Speaker, what our government has done with our modernization efforts—which we are very proud of, as we

continue to work towards modernizing Ontario, making sure that we have a process that is digital-first, not digital only. All of our health cards can be renewed, and at the present time there is a process that requires the driver's licence to be used for that purpose. Along with our great Minister of Health, we have been working towards trying to ensure that there are additional ways that we could get our health cards renewed, just like all of the other cards.

But I want to be crystal clear that the way in which you would have renewed your health card in the past still exists. You can still do the same type of renewal processes that you always could. We are just making it better.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: Speaker, modernizing systems shouldn't leave people with disabilities behind.

My supplementary question is again to the Premier.

The CNIB, as I said, flagged this issue to the government over two years ago, so the two-year delay in fixing this glitch is inexcusable.

Sadly, this government doesn't have a good track record, frankly, with accessibility issues. In 2019, the AODA report by David Onley described this government's progress to meeting the 2025 accessibility action plan as glacial, and in the over 1,000 days that have followed, there has been utter inaction.

This government's failure to consider how the driver's licence requirement would unfairly burden people with disabilities who are unable to drive wasn't just inconvenient. It is actually discrimination.

Can this government explain what they're doing to consult specifically with disability advocates to lift not just this barrier towards full accessibility but every other one that still exists in this province, to meet the 2025 commitment?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I mentioned last week in the House, I know that the minister is working very diligently on this. We understand how important it is to have all communities have access throughout the province of Ontario—something that we have to work with in conjunction with our municipal partners and our federal partners.

At the same time, we recognize the contributions of Mr. Onley in that report.

As I said last week, the minister will have more to say on this in the future.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Premier.

Ontario had paid sick days for all working Ontarians before this government reversed that right given to workers in 2018. During this pandemic, doctors, nurses, teachers and countless others have asked this government to bring them back. Workers were going to work sick, unable to afford taking time off to get vaccinated.

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Ontarians need paid sick days to slow the spread of COVID-19 and its variants of concern, and to make it easier to get vaccinated. This government dragged its feet for over a year and the current program is set to expire less than four weeks from now, on December 31.

Speaker, does the Premier once again plan to make workers choose between a paycheque and their health? Will parents be forced to take unpaid time off to get their children vaccinated, or will this government do the right thing and extend 10 paid sick days to Ontario workers?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Look, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals waited, as I said last week, 5,110 days to bring in sick days in the dying days of the previous administration. That's 5,000 days.

Now, we brought in sick days: Working with our federal partners, we brought in over 20 sick days for the people of the province of Ontario, sick days that can be used to bring your kids to get vaccinated, because we know how important it is. We also brought in job protections right at the beginning, faster than any other government across this country. We brought in job protections to ensure that anybody who was impacted by COVID had their jobs protected.

We are continuing to work with our essential workers, because we know how important it is to keeping the economy going. That is why the Premier made it a priority. We didn't wait 5,000 days. We didn't wait for four or five different administrations to get it done. Like so many other things, we're getting it done in our first term of office.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Well, Speaker, it's ironic that this PC government under Premier Ford took less than 200 days to cancel those same sick days. Shame on you.

In my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood, we have many parents who must work multiple jobs, long extensive hours, and yet we expect them to be able to take their kids to get them vaccinated. The guidance that this government has provided to elementary schools acknowledges that in the winter, the virus is likely to spread more rapidly. Has this government updated its guidance since the Omicron variant?

Speaker, we need to make sure that parents know that their children, regardless of background, regardless of circumstance, can get vaccinated. Only 21% of five- to 11-year-olds have been vaccinated to this point. Will the government act to make sure that they work with school boards to do in-school vaccinations for all students in light of the risk we are now facing with the Omicron variant? We know that in the winter months, the transmission—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much to the member for the question. We know that with the threat of the Omicron variant coming forward—we still don't know the details about it, but we know we're dealing with the Delta variant here in Ontario, so we're advising all

Ontarians to please get vaccinated: first and second vaccinations for adults, and booster doses as well. We've lowered the age now from 50-year-olds to 69-year-olds. They will be able, as of December 13, to get their third doses.

With respect to children: We have 246,445 children who have already been vaccinated, 21% of the population. That's in only 10 days. We already have over 180,000 appointments booked, so we thank the parents of Ontario for taking their children to be vaccinated. That's the best way for us to emerge from this pandemic. People are responding accordingly, and we're very, very grateful for that.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. I want to talk about a constituent in my riding, a constituent who deserves the respect of this entire House. His name is Burd Sisler. He's 106 years young, a Second World War veteran and a lifelong resident of the great town of Fort Erie.

Burd has been trying to get into a long-term care home in Fort Erie for six months. Imagine: In this province, veterans can't immediately get placed in a long-term care home in their own community. If anyone should get a bed in a long-term care home the day they need one, it's Burd Sisler and, frankly, any veteran in this great province.

My question is this: How can it be that in this province there are veterans like Burd who wait months for a long-term-care bed?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The honourable gentleman is correct. It shouldn't be the case in the province of Ontario. It never should have been the case in the province of Ontario. That is why we get so angry when we talk about the failures of the previous government, which built 611 beds in the last two administrations. In over 10 years, they only managed to build 611 beds. To put that into context, my own riding is building 1,000 new beds in our first term.

That is why we put a priority on building 30,000 new beds. That is why the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is being so aggressive in ensuring that we get MZO's to support over 3,700 brand new beds, all initiatives that the members opposite voted against, not only in our time in office, but when they supported the Liberals between 2011 and 2014, when they had the balance of power. They could have ended the fiasco that were the last two Liberal administrations. They chose not to. But on behalf of your constituent, we will get the job done.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Back to the Premier: I wasn't going to get political about Burd because I don't think he deserves to be political right now. What he needs is a place to be taken care of.

I visited his home just a couple of weeks ago. His sons and his daughters are taking care of him. Burd, when he was 104, was still bowling. He had to stop because he couldn't go down the steps to the bowling alley. He's got

countless trophies from bowling. He used to go to the fundraisers at the fire hall, and he'd eat a full breakfast. This was just before COVID. I sat with him, and I was amazed. He had three pancakes, he had scrambled eggs, he had juice, he had toast. I ate my little part that I ate. He ate the whole thing, at 104 years old.

Burd was there for us in World War II, like a lot of veterans were. He answered the call. He went over there. He fought for his country; he fought for our freedom. He was there for us, and today I'm asking everybody here, let's be here for Burd. Let's be here for his family, who have given everything to him. They love their dad to death. They just can't do it anymore. They can't take care of him at night the way he should be taken care of. So I'm saying to you, please, he was there for us; let's be there for him.

What Burd needs is a safe, publicly funded, not-for-profit long-term-care bed which guarantees four hours of hands-on care every single day. Speaker, will the Premier immediately implement a plan to get Burd and veterans like him into publicly funded not-for-profit beds in their communities, for Burd and his family?

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I just said, from day one it was so important for us, because there are so many people just like his constituent who fought so hard for this country, who fought to build this country. You didn't just have to fight hard in a war. People like my parents, who came to this country and worked their tails off for generations, worked their tails off and contributed, should have access to the top-quality health care that we demand. They should have access to long-term care. They should have the best education system. They should have the best transit and transportation systems.

This is one of the richest communities, one of the richest jurisdictions in North America. But in so many different ways, we have failed the people. That is why we set out right from the beginning to make those investments in the priority areas that were so important: rebuilding health care, rebuilding long-term care, rebuilding our education system, building roads and bridges, because we know that this province can be so much more than it was when we took office in 2018, and so that we can honour people like him who fought so hard to give us our freedoms—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The member for Chatham-Kent–Leamington.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Health.

Earlier this year, doctors said it was okay for pregnant mothers to get the vaccine, and now we're seeing a substantial rise in stillbirths. Speaker, to the minister—

Interjections.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Look, I'm only reporting what I've discovered. Hear what Trish has publicly stated: "It is well known in the midwifery community that people opting for the jab have seen stillbirth rates rise exponentially."

Speaker, we have heard from a hospital joint chief of staff saying that the rise in stillbirths is erroneous. Well, I've been informed by front-line health care workers who have witnessed this tragedy first-hand. They've chosen to report these stillbirths to protect the public.

We also know that CPSO and hospitals are muzzling staff. If these incidents are not being reported properly, then in my opinion, it's medical fraud. My question to the minister is, who do you believe, hospital administration or front-line nurses and doctors who are willing to risk it all—

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

The member for Nickel Belt has a point of order.

M^{me} France Gélinas: A quick point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to congratulate my colleague John Vanthof from Timiskaming–Cochrane for becoming a granddad yesterday.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Congratulations. There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1201 to 1300.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 43, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / *Projet de loi 43, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.*

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

2238990 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2021

Mrs. Wai moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr56, An Act to revive 2238990 Ontario Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 89, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

SPEAKING OUT ABOUT WORKPLACE
VIOLENCE AND WORKPLACE
HARASSMENT ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 SUR LA DÉNONCIATION
DE LA VIOLENCE AU TRAVAIL
ET DU HARCÈLEMENT AU TRAVAIL

Madame Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 68, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to protect workers who speak out about workplace violence and workplace harassment / Projet de loi 68, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail pour protéger les travailleurs qui dénoncent la violence au travail et le harcèlement au travail.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I invite the member for Nickel Belt to briefly explain her bill.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I thought that on this Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, I would reintroduce my bill, the Speaking Out About Workplace Violence and Workplace Harassment Act. The bill amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The provisions of the act protecting workers against reprisals are amended to include protections against reprisals against workers who speak out about workplace violence and workplace harassment. The amendments provide that a reprisal is any measure taken against a worker that adversely affects the worker's employment. Examples of reprisals are provided. Those working in health care are the people most at risk of workplace violence, so I thought I would read this bill for them today.

EDUCATION STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT (FETAL ALCOHOL
SPECTRUM DISORDER), 2021

LOI DE 2021 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'ÉDUCATION
(ENSEMBLE DES TROUBLES CAUSÉS
PAR L'ALCOOLISATION FOETALE)

Ms. Wynne moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 69, An Act in relation to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) / Projet de loi 69, Loi concernant l'ensemble des troubles causés par l'alcoolisation foetale.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd like to invite the member for Don Valley West to briefly explain her bill.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am reintroducing this bill. It is a bill that would require boards of education to

develop policies and guidelines with respect to FASD, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. It would also require that teachers' colleges and early childhood education programs be required to provide training with respect to FASD.

Mr. Speaker, this is work that will ease the burden for young people with FASD in the school system, but it will also help classroom teachers, education assistants and early childhood educators to understand the accommodations that children with FASD need. It's something that I think fits very nicely into the special education evolution that is ongoing in this province. It's not new, these are not new concerns, but we have more information, and teachers, education assistants and early childhood educators need to know about these symptoms.

FOUR-DAY WORK WEEK ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 SUR LA SEMAINE
DE TRAVAIL DE QUATRE JOURS

Ms. Karpoche moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 70, An Act respecting a four-day work week pilot / Projet de loi 70, Loi concernant un projet pilote visant à tester la semaine de travail de quatre jours.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member care to briefly explain her bill?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for greater work-life balance, including more time for mental and physical health, for family and for rest. This bill establishes the Four-Day Work Week Commission, which will develop recommendations for a four-day work week pilot project. The bill thereafter brings the pilot project into effect for one year.

Several jurisdictions around the world have adopted a four-day work week with successful results, including greater job productivity, increased workplace morale and improved mental and physical health for workers.

KEEPING STUDENTS SAFE ON
SCHOOL BUSES ACT (HIGHWAY
TRAFFIC AMENDMENT), 2021

LOI DE 2021 RENFORÇANT
LA SÉCURITÉ DES ÉLÈVES
DANS LES AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES
(MODIFICATION DU CODE DE LA ROUTE)

Ms. Wynne moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of seat belts on school buses / Projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les ceintures de sécurité dans les autobus scolaires.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the member to explain her bill.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: This bill would make it mandatory to have three-point seat belts on forward-facing seats on school buses. There is information that has come through Transport Canada not that long ago which is new information that I think points to the need for seat belts on school buses, which are currently not there.

MOTIONS

CONSIDERATION OF BILL Pr56

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice relating to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice relating to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. Agreed? Agreed.

Government House leader?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I move that notwithstanding standing order 92, the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills be authorized to consider Bill Pr56, An Act to revive 2238990 Ontario Inc., during its meeting on December 8, 2021.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved that notwithstanding standing order 92, the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills be authorized to consider Bill Pr56, An Act to revive 2238990 Ontario Inc., during its meeting on December 8, 2021. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, colleagues, for that.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I move that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for up to 18 days during the winter adjournment.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for up to 18 days during the winter adjournment.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

FRONT-LINE WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Melissa Wood from my riding—and I think she lives in Chelmsford—for these petitions. They read as follows:

“Make PSW a Career...:

“Whereas there has been a shortage of personal support workers (PSWs) in long-term care and home care ... for many years;

“Whereas Ontario’s personal support workers are overworked, underpaid and underappreciated, leading to many of them leaving the profession;

“Whereas the lack of PSWs has created a crisis in LTC, a broken home care system, and poor-quality care for LTC home residents and home care clients;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Tell Premier Ford to act now to make PSW jobs a career, with” permanent “full-time employment, good wages, paid sick days, benefits, a pension plan and a manageable workload in order to respect the important work of PSWs and improve patient care.”

I fully support this petition, Speaker, will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Isabella.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on behalf of the elementary teachers of Ontario and various schools within the TDSB, including Bendale Junior Public School in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood.

“Fund Our Most Vulnerable Students, Fund Dedicated Remote Teachers for Students in ISP Programs in the TDSB.

“Whereas hybrid learning forces teachers to divide their attention between students in-person and online, which will result in students not getting the attention they need and deserve;

“Whereas intensive support programs at the TDSB are meant to provide additional supports for students with special behavioural, communication, physical and intellectual needs;

“Whereas educators and experts have repeatedly pointed out there is no evidence to support hybrid learning as an effective pedagogical tool, especially when offered to students with special needs;

“Whereas students, parents and caregivers can and should expect a safe and supportive educational environment that safeguards their privacy from video cameras that could capture their likeness or behaviour;

“Whereas students enrolled in intensive support programs at the TDSB are being forced to rely on hybrid learning to receive teaching instruction from their classroom teacher, thus leaving vulnerable young students without the supports that they need;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit to funding and providing a dedicated remote teacher to all students enrolled in the intensive support program to supplement their in-person” learning.

Speaker, I will sign this very weighty petition and give it to our page Felicia.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I have a petition from my community in Oakville North–Burlington of over 2,000 signatures.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the Millcroft golf course represents more than 60% of the community’s overall green space, is home to many species of wildlife (some endangered), and acts as a” good “flood management system; and

“Whereas there is currently a proposal to re-zone the golf course for residential development;

“We call on the city of Burlington, the region of Halton and the province of Ontario to work together to preserve the Millcroft golf course lands as green space for the people of the community and beyond.”

I would like to sign this petition, affix my signature and give it to Athisha.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I have a number of petitions here entitled Do Not Play the National Anthem Twice—oh, no, that’s the wrong one.

A petition to save eye care in Ontario from people across northwestern Ontario, including Dryden, Sioux Lookout, Oxdrift, Eagle River, North Caribou Lake and many more.

“Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I fully support this petition. I will sign it and pass it to page Hayden to take to the Clerks’ table.

GUN VIOLENCE

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I have a petition from young people and youth workers in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood.

“Gun Violence is a Public Health Crisis

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Doug Ford and the Conservative government are not proposing the right solutions to address the gun violence happening in our communities;

“Whereas gun violence is a public health issue;

“Whereas the government must give communities the resources they need to heal, including covering counseling for those affected, through OHIP;

“Whereas the government must give funding to local public health boards for hospital and community-based violence intervention programs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Health to adopt” Bill 60, “the Safe and Healthy Communities Act (Addressing Gun Violence), 2021, into government legislation.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition, I will sign it and give it to Athisha.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I have a petition here on behalf of the Ontario Autism Coalition and the Elementary Teachers of Toronto. The petition is titled “Fund Our Most Vulnerable Students, Fund Dedicated Remote Teachers for Students in ISP Programs in the TDSB.

“Whereas hybrid learning forces teachers to divide their attention between students in-person and online, which will result in students not getting the attention they need and deserve;

“Whereas intensive support programs at the TDSB are meant to provide additional supports for students with special behavioural, communication, physical and intellectual needs;

“Whereas educators and experts have repeatedly pointed out that there is no evidence to support hybrid learning as an effective pedagogical tool, especially when offered to students with special needs;

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“Whereas students, parents and caregivers can and should expect a safe and supportive educational environment that safeguards their privacy from video cameras that could capture their likeness or behaviour;

“Whereas students enrolled in intensive support programs at the TDSB are being forced to rely on hybrid learning to receive teaching instruction from their classroom teacher, thus leaving vulnerable young students without the supports that they need;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Toronto District School Board and the Ministry of Education to commit to funding and providing a dedicated remote teacher to all students enrolled in the intensive support program to supplement their in-person programming.”

Speaker, this petition is signed by hundreds of my constituents in Parkdale–High Park, and I support it.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Jill Andrew: I’m proud to stand today and present this petition on behalf of the elementary teachers of On-

tario, the Ontario Autism Coalition, members from Davisville Junior Public School in my community, and many, many hundreds of others. The petition is entitled “Petition to the Toronto District School Board and Ministry of Education from parents, guardians, community members and teachers.

“Fund Our Most Vulnerable Students, Fund Dedicated Remote Teachers for Students in ISP Programs in the TDSB.

“Hybrid learning forces teachers to divide their attention between students in-person and online, which will result in students not getting the attention they need and deserve;

“Intensive support programs at the TDSB are meant to provide additional supports for students with special behavioural, communication, physical and intellectual needs;

“Educators and experts have repeatedly pointed out that there is no evidence to support hybrid learning as an effective pedagogical tool, especially when offered to students with special needs;

“Students, parents and caregivers can and should expect a safe and supportive educational environment that safeguards their privacy from video cameras that could capture their likeness or behaviour;

“Students enrolled in intensive support programs at the TDSB are being forced to rely on hybrid learning to receive teaching instruction from their classroom teacher, thus leaving vulnerable young students without the supports that they need;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Toronto District School Board and the Ministry of Education to commit to funding and providing a dedicated remote teacher to all students enrolled in the intensive support program to supplement their in-person programing.”

I affix my signature to this petition, and I will hand it to Ella for the Clerk.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Jamie West: I want to thank Paul Harvey from the riding of Sudbury for collecting signatures for this petition. It’s titled “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

It’s my understanding, Speaker, that they are negotiating right now, so hopefully this will be resolved. I will affix my signature and provide it to page Rishi.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I have a similar petition from the good people of Timmins. It’s titled “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas optometrists now subsidize the delivery of OHIP-covered eye care by \$173 million a year; and

“Whereas COVID-19 forced optometrists to close their doors, resulting in a 75%-plus drop in revenue; and

“Whereas optometrists will see patient volumes reduced between 40% and 60%, resulting in more than two million comprehensive eye exams being wiped out over the next 12 months; and

“Whereas communities across Ontario are in danger of losing access to optometric care;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately establish a timetable and a process for renewed negotiations concerning optometry fees.”

We’re glad that they’re back at the table, but let’s keep these petitions coming to keep the pressure on. Thank you, and I affix my signature.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to save eye care in Ontario, and I’d like to thank Dr. Bering on Fennell Avenue in my riding for providing me with these names.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this. I'm going to affix my name to it and give it to page Nathaniel to bring to the Clerks.

DOCUMENTS GOUVERNEMENTAUX

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier M. Claude Gagnon de Val Caron dans mon comté, ainsi que M. Lebel de Hamilton pour ces pétitions.

« Accents en français sur les cartes santé de l'Ontario.

« Alors qu'il est important d'avoir le nom exact des personnes sur les cartes émises par le gouvernement telle la carte santé;

« Alors que plusieurs personnes francophones ont des accents dans l'épellation de leur nom », comme moi;

« Alors que le ministère de la Santé a confirmé que le système informatique de l'Ontario ne permet pas l'enregistrement des lettres avec des accents; »

Ils et elles demandent à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario « qu'elle s'assure que les accents de la langue française soient inclus sur les cartes santé émises par le gouvernement de l'Ontario », et ce, « avant le 31 décembre » 2021.

Merci, monsieur le Président, et ça s'en va à la table des greffiers avec Isabella.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROVIDING MORE CARE, PROTECTING SENIORS, AND BUILDING MORE BEDS ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 VISANT À OFFRIR D'AVANTAGE DE SOINS, À PROTÉGER LES PERSONNES ÂGÉES ET À OUVRIR PLUS DE LITS

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 2, 2021, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act to enact the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 and amend or repeal various Acts / Projet de loi 37, Loi visant à édicter la Loi de 2021 sur le redressement des soins de longue durée et à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise to participate in the debate on Bill 37. Given the tragedy we all witnessed in long-term-care homes during the COVID pandemic, our elders deserve legislation that will transform the way we care for elders. Bill 37 doesn't provide the transformative change that we need, Speaker.

We know that the challenges in long-term care predated the pandemic. Every time I meet with the Registered Nurses' Association they remind me they've produced 35 reports in the last 20 years. One of the key components of those reports is the need to provide elders with the minimum standard of care of four hours in every home. So, while the government has said they're going to bring

in four hours of care four years from now, we have to dig into the details of what's actually in this bill.

First of all, Speaker, elders can't wait four years for four hours of care. They need four hours of care now, and they need it to be mandatory, not a target. They need it to be legally binding, with consequences if homes don't meet the standard of care. They need it to be mandatory in every home, not averaged out across the system, where you might have some homes that actually don't meet the standard. After we've seen almost 4,000 elders, unfortunately and sadly, die during this pandemic—many times not cared for appropriately—I think they deserve four hours of care, and they deserve it to be mandatory and legally binding, with consequences for homes that don't meet the standard.

In order to deliver that, we need to have a workforce that is paid well and has good working conditions. We need to make pandemic pay for PSWs permanent. We need to increase pay for nurses. We need to ensure we have more registered nurses in our long-term-care homes.

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Finally, we need to reimagine care, and that begins by prioritizing care over profits. Our elders in long-term care: The dollars that we spend to care for them should go to care—not dividends, care—care that provides decent food; care that treats long-term-care homes as a home; care that's culturally appropriate, providing the care and services that people need, provisions of dignity and respect embedded and legislatively defined. Those are the kinds of transformations we need in our long-term care. Our elders deserve better than what is in Bill 37.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would be curious to see if the speaker believes that having 75% of PSW positions—actually, all positions in long-term care—being permanent, full-time, with benefits, with sick leave, with a pension plan, with a workload that a person can handle, would help alleviate the crisis we see in long-term care, with long-term-care homes not being able to recruit and retain a stable workforce; and if he saw any of those in the bill. I can tell you that we tried to put this as amendments to the bill, and they all got voted down. Does the member believe that that would have made fixing long-term care a whole lot easier?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the question from the member from Nickel Belt and also appreciate the amendments that were put forward at committee.

The bottom line is, the standards of people's working conditions directly affect the standards of care people are able to provide. We've heard from PSWs in particular that they need fair wages. They need full-time work with benefits. They need good, decent working conditions, because working conditions and pay directly affect care.

So yes, if we're going to provide the kind of care our elders need, we need to ensure that the people who care for our loved ones are cared for as well, with decent wages, full-time work, full-time benefits and good working conditions.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Our government puts the safety and security of our seniors in long-term care first. You're right: Our seniors deserve all the care. That is why we are legislating an average of four hours of daily direct care for seniors in long-term care.

I would also like to quote Candace Rennick of CUPE Ontario, what she has to say about this as well. She said, "We are encouraged to learn that this government is finally taking the necessary step of enshrining the four hours of hand-on care commitment into legislation. This is an important and long-awaited step."

We believe in the commitment so strongly, we wrote it right into the legislation. In fact, this has been something that has not been taken care of for a while. The question we have is, why won't the NDP vote to pass the Fixing Long-Term Care Act—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's a Green speech.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. To reply, the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the question from the member from Richmond Hill. She probably should give the Green Party a rough time on this one as well, because I'm not planning on voting for this bill either—the reason being, with all due respect to the member, saying you're having a target and an average of four hours of care is not mandating four hours of care in every home. It's saying an average across the system, not a mandate within one particular home.

I believe each and every elder in each and every home deserves a minimum of four hours of care. I think the member was probably quoting Smokey Thomas from OPSEU. I'll also say that Smokey Thomas from OPSEU is also quoted as saying that a minimum standard of four hours of care is meaningless if it's not enforced, if it's not mandated. Right now, in this bill, it will not be mandated nor will it be properly enforced.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): One quick question.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: To the member from Guelph, one thing that the COVID pandemic revealed was the disaster that was lurking in long-term care. It showed that care at homes—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Question?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Okay. Sorry. That's a quick question.

I'm just wondering: Do you think that we should give family caregivers of residents the right to care for their loved ones while they're in long-term care?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And a quick response.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I think I have one second, Speaker. I'll say yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I think the House expected it.

Further debate?

M^{me} France G  linas: It gives me great pleasure to put a few words on the docket for the third reading of this bill. As I said, I agree with the title, the Fixing Long-Term Care Act. We've known for a very long time that our long-term-care system needs to be fixed. We've known for a very

long time that there are many people who live in our long-term care who are not given respectable care, who are not being looked after in a way that we would want our loved ones to be looked after. Finally, a bill came forward. But except for the title, Speaker, I have to tell that you that there's very little in that bill that will actually fix long-term care.

We all know that the quality of care that the 78,000 residents of long-term care receive is directly linked to the working conditions of the people who provide that care. Well, the people who provide that care, the great majority of them are women; the great majority of them work part-time casual, waiting by the phone to see when their next shift is going to come. It is almost impossible to make a living if you work for a for-profit long-term-care home.

I want to make parentheses that there are a few good homes. They are homes, mainly the not-for-profit, the charitable, the homes for the aged run by the municipality, who will make sure that every penny that is directed to care goes to care. They also do fundraisers in the charitable system, in the not-for-profit, and in the municipal system, and they often invest into long-term care.

But make no bones about it: The majority of the long-term-care homes in Ontario are private, for-profit corporations who are so, so good at taking money out of long-term care and giving it to their investors and giving it to their shareholders. If you look at the 30,000 new beds that are being offered up on the market right now, the system is rigged against the not-for-profit. The great majority of those 30,000 new beds have already been allocated, and are allocated to for-profit corporations, some of the same for-profit corporations who, frankly, Speaker, through the pandemic, showed their true colours.

They were not ready for infection control at all when the pandemic started, although it is already in the act. It's already a regulation in this province that every single long-term-care home must have an infection prevention and control plan in place. They did not. They had never trained their staff. Why? Because they cannot recruit and retain a stable workforce, because they don't offer good jobs. Why? Because they would have had to invest a few dollars, and they would rather put those few dollars to the for-profit owners of those homes.

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We saw the result. We saw the result when 70 people died in a single home. We saw the result when 4,000 long-term-care-home residents died of COVID, the great majority of them from private, for-profit long-term-care homes. So what did we learn from this? Well, we took out from the preamble of the bill the need to put a focus on not-for-profit. That used to be in the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007. It's not in there anymore.

The great announcement that there were going to be four hours of hands-on care—remember that was back in the 2013 report that we started to say four hours of hands-on care. When I tabled this bill for the first time in 2015, four hours of hands-on care was needed then. We are now in 2021. In 2021, 90% of the people in long-term care have

cognitive impairments. Two thirds of them have diagnostic dementia. They are very frail, elderly people who depend on staff for most of their activities of daily living, from getting up in the morning and being transferred into their chair, from being toileted, being washed, being fed, being clothed, being entertained. There's more to life than the activities of daily living, and they deserve a life.

None of this can happen when a PSW has six minutes—yes, count them, Speaker, six minutes—in the morning to get you out of bed, into the chair, toileted, clothed, washed and ready to go for breakfast. I don't know about any of you, but if you look back on your day today, how long did it take for you to have a shower, to go to the bathroom, to get dressed, to get fed? I guarantee you, none of us did that in six minutes. But this is what we expect out of frail, elderly people who not only have all of the bodily functions of everybody else—they need to eat, they need to go to the bathroom, they need to get dressed—most of them also have hearing aids, dentures, glasses. All of this needs to be done in six minutes. That makes no sense. Nobody can do this. This has to change.

The bill tells us that there is this hope that in 2025, on average in the province we will have about four hours of hands-on care. That doesn't work. The system we have now, there are homes that are already at over four hours of hands-on care. The homes that did right will get zero new money. The homes that hire every single one of their PSWs through a temp agency that they own themselves and pay themselves 35, 40, 50 bucks an hour to hire a PSW who will receive \$14.50 an hour to do the work, those same agencies will continue to get more money from this government because they don't meet the four hours of hands-on care. To have a provincial average does not work. We know this. It is to be completely blind to what the long-term-care system in Ontario looks like. It has to change. It has to be mandated for every home. It has to be reported about every three months on every home.

I was here in 2007 when the old act was just being phased out and the new Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, was there. Every three months I would file a freedom of access of information and I would get the stats on every one of the 626 homes that existed at the time as to their hours of hands-on care. What did that do? That allowed the people in those homes to know where their homes were at, to know if things were getting better or worse, to put pressure on the home owners—most of the time—to improve the care. Transparency has a role to play. It has to be done.

The NDP—I was there on Monday from 9 o'clock in the morning till 6 o'clock at night putting amendments forward. When we put those amendments forward, the government did not even blink. They did not even look at it. They did not even bother to put forward an answer that would make sense. They just voted no after no after no. That's what we got. They have it in their head that the for-profit sector is doing just fine and all we've got to do is give the for-profits more money and that money will trickle down to care through the act of I don't know who. None of that will work, Speaker. None of that will work.

We need this in legislation. We have a chance right now. Legislation is not an incremental process. Once we pass this long-term-care act, it will be many years, probably decades, before we look at it again, and in all that time, the 78,000—that will be close to 100,000 people by then—will have a hit-or-miss chance of getting good care or continue to get the poor care that we see right now.

This is wrong. It has to change. The title says it clearly: Fixing Long-Term Care. We need to do that, Speaker. We need to fix long-term care. We do this by making permanent—75% of every job description in long-term care should be permanent, full-time, well paid with benefits, sick days, a pension plan and a workload that a human being can handle. This is what this bill needed to do. It does none of that.

I will be happy to share my time with the member from Toronto St. Paul's.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for Toronto–St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I first want to thank our outstanding health critic, the member from Nickel Belt, who truly paints a picture of the unrealistic task forced upon our PSWs, our front-line health care workers—six minutes. Six minutes: That is astonishing, and it really puts into frank perspective what I've been told by front-line health care workers, residents and even families in our community, but sometimes the water isn't even warm yet, but that six minutes ticks on.

We can't provide sound care to our residents. We cannot support our workers who are doing this heavy lifting, figuratively and literally in some cases, without taking for-profit out of care. We have to put the residents first.

I'm honoured to take an opportunity to add some words to the debate on Bill 37, the government's bill, the Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors—it says it in the bill—and Building More Beds Act.

The government promised to place an iron ring around our seniors here in Ontario, and that iron ring never came. We saw the impact of roughly 4,000 seniors who died, who perished in predominantly for-profit long-term-care homes.

The government, last month, could have supported our motion calling for safety zones which, among other things, would have also protected families going into hospitals, workers going into hospitals, patients, our community members, from anti-public-health harassment attitudes of anti-vaxxers. The Ford government said no. Sorry; my apologies, Speaker: The Conservative government said no to this once again.

This pandemic has exposed the cracks in long-term care, but these cracks were broken. These cracks were gaps long before the pandemic. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that the previous Liberal government cut inspections. I understand, because I wasn't here at the time, that it was courtesy of the NDP shaming them that these inspections were reinstated. I understand that the previous Liberal government, as well, blocked a full inquiry into long-term care, so they could essentially keep the problems under wraps.

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I understand that there was PPE stock—80%, I think—that was made to go bad and be spoiled under the previous Liberal government, PPE that was then tossed, discarded, however it was done, by this Conservative government without a plan to actually ensure that all of our long-term-care homes had the PPE that they needed. I know this because I remember the conversations with staff; with front-line health care workers and administrators; with workers, frankly, who were too afraid to ever have me say their name in this House for fear of retribution, who had to work—who had to work countless hours, unbelievable hours—using the same PPE, going from a room with a person who had a COVID-positive reality to a room with someone who didn't.

This is a tough situation, Speaker, and it just seems like it could be made so much easier if we could just get right the foundational reality that we must take for-profit out of long-term care. It's not a request; it is literally a demand. It has to happen.

In September, if I remember correctly, I had a meeting with a few of my colleagues in our caucus and one of this province's leading long-term-care advocates, Dr. Vivian Stamatopoulos. Dr. Vivian Stamatopoulos emphasized how critical it is to hold bad actors accountable. She emphasized that inspections were one part of a larger puzzle, but that actually enforcing consequences to bad actors was key.

This bill does not provide true consequences to bad actors. In fact, this bill provides gifts to bad actors in the form of extended licences that I understand could be extended to 30 years. I don't pretend to understand all of the inner workings and mechanics of the long-term-care sector, but what I do understand is giving a bad actor up to a 30-year licence. To me, it sounds like you're giving them an opportunity to hide those bad ways and to continue to work not for their residents, but for executives, directors and management who, frankly, have made profits during this time.

I have to say, the government also refused to support mandatory vaccines for health care workers. That was yet another failure of this government that, frankly, does impact the quality of care that workers are able to give to residents. It does impact a family member's ability to sleep at night.

I think of one of my constituents—I won't mention her name, because she left it on voicemail; I don't have her consent—who was terrified by a PSW coming to her home to take care of her. She's not clear on whether they're vaccinated or not. She shouldn't have to go through this.

The government must legislate actual consequences for bad actors, because it's very difficult for us to trust a government that has maintained and kept in place and propped up a for-profit long-term-care sector that is responsible, disproportionately so, for the passing of thousands of seniors—thousands of seniors. The residents, the workers, the families of those who have perished, those who are still struggling to get by because the pandemic, contrary to some people's belief, is still not over: This government, I

believe, should give those folks an apology, a full-throated apology, because Bill 37 is not getting the job done. It's not protecting seniors. You can't protect seniors without protecting workers.

I want to share two quotes actually, one from the Ontario Health Coalition's Natalie Mehra: "This government has for three years done nothing to hold any of the terrible operators to account despite already having powers ... to fine, have provincial offences charged, suspend licences, revoke licences...."

Dr. Vivian Stamatopoulos, again, a long-term-care advocate, said, "The problem has never been that there aren't enough" rules. "The problem has always been that they" do not prevail and "that we consistently allow bad actors to repeatedly break the law with impunity. That is the" basic question.

Let's face it: This government and previous governments have benefited from for-profit long-term care, so there is little reason to fix what hasn't been broken for them. It's been broken for people in our communities, in our families. Some of us on this side even have family members that are front-line health care workers, essential workers.

Through this bill, the government promises to double fines to increase accountability. It sounds great, but the fact is, zero times two is still zero. Not only did these facilities face zero fines, many are proposed to have their—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Questions?

Mr. Will Bouma: I appreciate the opportunity to rise and debate this bill again, especially with the member from Nickel Belt. I've always appreciated, since the first time I met her in my riding during the campaign in 2018, her intimate knowledge of this file and everything else associated with that.

Madam Speaker, when we were in committee, I asked the representative, the witness from the long-term-care-home association, what would happen with the NDP plan to fully nationalize all long-term care in the province of Ontario. And she said, interestingly enough, that the situations faced in jurisdictions where all long-term care has been nationalized and owned by the government—they face the exact same problems that we've faced here in Ontario. We've been hearing the opposition beating up on for-profit long-term care, but they have the same issues in those jurisdictions. I was wondering what she would say to the witness from the long-term-care association.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: We all know that there are two groups that represent long-term-care homes in Ontario. The Ontario long-term-care-home association that he's talking about represents all of the for-profit homes and a few not-for-profit homes. AdvantAge Ontario represents the great majority of the not-for-profit homes. So I just want to put the comments into perspective.

The second is that we're not nationalizing, although I'm not too sure what that word means. What we are really

pushing forward is that homes be governed by not-for-profit agencies—very similar to our hospitals. You will remember, those that are as old or older than I, that we used to have private hospitals in Ontario. We brought them into the not-for-profit. All of our hospitals, except for four that are from way before, are all not-for-profit hospitals. We would do the same with long-term care and bring it into the not-for-profit sector.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Question?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: It's really shocking to hear the Conservative government or Conservative members talk so in support of for-profit long-term care when we know the facts. The army investigated and was at these long-term-care facilities and they saw the horrid status, the horrid position that elders, that seniors were being put in, especially by for-profit long-term-care facilities.

My question to the member is, can you just really articulate—all these numbers are here; they're clearly focused on the Conservative government. Just articulate to them—maybe they need to hear from us once again—how poorly the terrible position was that seniors were put in in long-term-care facilities, and specifically for-profit long-term-care facilities.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Member for Toronto—St. Paul's.

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Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member for that question. The bottom line is, we know that for-profit long-term-care homes are usually more concerned not only with profit but in cutting corners, and that cutting corners often means not having enough staff to do the heavy lifting, not paying front-line health care workers—heroes, as the Conservative government likes to call them—what they are worth and ensuring they have fair working conditions.

We've had, in St. Paul's, residents fall out of beds. We've had, in St. Paul's, family members having to stay the night with their dead relative in the bed because there's no one to take them out of the room. Those are some of the realities of long-term-care systems that do not work.

As I've said, the Conservative government—\$340,477. That's what they got as donations from for-profit long-term-care—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Question?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the members from Nickel Belt and Toronto—St. Paul's for talking about the Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors, and Building More Beds Act.

I recently lost my mother. I could understand how much this bill will make a difference, when it comes to the four hours of care for the patients. My mother was bedridden for four years. She was dying of dementia.

Madam Speaker, let me tell you how our government will be the first to make four hours of care the law in Ontario. We have set annual targets and accountability measures to ensure that residents get the care they need, when they need it.

Will the members opposite be supporting four hours of direct care per day in long-term care—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Question?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for Toronto—St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: First of all, I'd like to start by offering my deepest condolences to the member, who just expressed that he recently lost his mother. That is my worst nightmare, so I sincerely send you love, and I hope that you and your family can manage.

We need those four hours of care now. That's the problem. Our residents, our loved ones, our communities cannot wait until 2025. The time to care is now—in fact, it's too late; it was yesterday. The NDP has put forth that legislation. If this building could actually step away from partisanship and say yes to the NDP's legislation calling for four hours of care, we wouldn't be here right now. We don't want it in—well, we want it, but we don't need it in years to come; we need it right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Question?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoché: Last week, I met with a constituent who is a palliative care physician, and she shared with me what she has been witnessing and experiencing on the ground. She said that there is a severe lack of staffing, and the personal support workers who work with her and work with the seniors in palliative care have—the seniors have very complex needs, and the personal support workers are underpaid for the work they do.

And Speaker, she said this: "If someone isn't fed, there is no prescription that's going to help." She's right. The long-term-care and home care sector is in a state where sometimes seniors are not fed, washed, changed and more.

If we're going to address the crisis in the sector, one of the important things we need to address is support for support workers. PSWs need higher wages, paid sick days, workplace protections etc. So my question to the member from Nickel Belt is: Does she agree with me?

M^{me} France Gélinas: We have been calling, on the NDP side, for a reform of long-term care, of home care. The two of them are connected. You can ask anybody if they're looking forward to going into long-term care—they don't. They want to be respected in their own homes. How do you do this? You make sure that PSW jobs are permanent, full-time, well paid, with benefits, with sick days, with pension plans, and with a workload that a human being can handle. We have been saying this since—actually, Howard Hampton was my leader in 2007, and we were campaigning on 3.5 hours of hands-on care. And yet, here we are, in 2021, and the problems have just gotten bigger, not smaller. But the solution that the member brought forward will work, if only the government was willing to act.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Question?

Mr. Will Bouma: I appreciate being able to continue the conversation a little bit further. I remember when I was talking about the NDP's plan to fully nationalize long-term care in the province of Ontario with the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. When I asked him, since it was fully costed, how much it would cost, he couldn't answer.

But the question that I wanted to ask the member from Nickel Belt was, what would she say to the older retirees from my riding who have invested in long-term care and are counting on those savings in order to fund their retirement when their plan to fully nationalize long-term care would go through and they would see their retirement savings disappear?

Mme France Gélinas: I would say that there is a Conservative government in Saskatchewan right now that is showing Extendicare, a private, for-profit long-term-care home, the door. They are saying, “The way that you treated our seniors during the pandemic is so horrific that you don’t belong in Saskatchewan anymore. You are out of here.” The people of Saskatchewan are not afraid. They know that not-for-profit agencies will be able to deliver care, will make sure that every dollar that is invested in long-term care goes to care, not to profit. Other provinces with Conservative governments are able to show the for-profit long-term-care homes the door. So is Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It’s an honour to rise in the House today to speak on Bill 37, the Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors, and Building More Beds Act, 2021. In my riding of Niagara West, I have the privilege of representing a part of the province that has a high percentage of seniors, a high percentage of people who decide to come down to the sunny climes of Niagara. I can see my colleague from St. Catharines smiling over there; I know she has a similar type of demographic. Many of these seniors, as they retire and they age in the Niagara region, want to ensure that they’re also able to spend time in the Niagara region later on in life, when perhaps they have to access long-term-care services. This is something that I hear about from my constituents regularly.

Within my constituency, I have a number of very, very good homes. We have homes such as Shalom Manor, Albright Manor, the United Mennonite Home—many amazing long-term-care homes and amazing workers who have the opportunity to serve in those communities, which are really more than facilities. They are homes. They’re places where people need to be treated with dignity and with respect, ensuring that they’re receiving the quality of care that they deserve.

It’s because of the importance of maintaining a high standard of care in our long-term-care homes that I have the privilege of speaking to today’s legislation. For too long, we saw long-term care neglected under the former government. For too long, we saw governments of various stripes fail to invest adequately in our long-term-care sector. So I’m pleased to see that not only is our government stepping forward with substantially more money for long-term care, being driven by a desire to see results in four hours of care, but also taking steps when it comes to the legislative requirements that need to be changed in order to build up our long-term-care system.

With Bill 37, I want to speak a little bit about some of the specifics of this legislation that I think are important. First of all, I want to acknowledge that our government has

recognized the need to fix the cracks in the system that were exposed in COVID-19. We know that residents in long-term-care homes were hit extremely hard as a result of the pandemic, and our government is resolved to take swift action to fix this. I’m sure you’ve heard, Speaker, members already speaking about the three pillars of this plan, but I want to reiterate the commitment to (1) improving staffing and care; (2) protecting residents through better accountability, enforcement and transparency; and (3) building modern, safe and comfortable homes for our seniors. I’m proud that this bill helps delivers on all three pillars.

Our government recognizes the urgency needed to fix long-term care in Ontario and address the wait-list. We know that it will require working with all our partners across the sector, regardless of corporate structure, to get shovels in the ground on new developments.

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Our government recognizes that securing capital for new developments is not always the easiest thing to do for not-for-profit operators. So, to make this easier for them, the Minister of Long-Term Care announced just last week that the government would be making it easier for some not-for-profit homes to secure development loans from Infrastructure Ontario. The not-for-profit loan guarantee will unlock \$388 million in lending from IO, Infrastructure Ontario, and reduce borrowing costs for approved not-for-profit operators. This will save them approximately \$62 million, money that can go right back into providing good, front-line care. Our government is committed to building 30,000 net new beds by 2028. We don’t care if you’re a municipality, a not-for-profit or a for-profit operator: We need all hands on deck to help reach that commitment.

I also want to speak about a section of the bill that’s particularly important to me. As you may know, Speaker, I had the opportunity to bring forward the Compassionate Care Act, an act asking for a strategy on palliative care, something that was heard by the Minister of Health. The section in this legislation refers to section 12 on palliative care, which reads, “Every licensee of a long-term-care home shall ensure that ... residents are provided with care or services that integrate a palliative care philosophy.”

This is very, very important. I’m glad that the government which I have the opportunity to serve with has seen the importance of palliative care, and that this legislation builds on that framework to ensure that every Ontarian has access. By including this section in the Fixing Long-Term Care Act our government is taking an important step in the right direction.

But, Speaker, we know that the road does not end here. Our government will continue to listen and learn to ensure that every person in Ontario receives the best care and end-of-life care possible. I look forward to supporting this bill when it comes forward for a vote and I hope that the members opposite will also be doing the same.

I’m proud to be in the chamber today and to be part of a government that is helping to fix long-term care here in Ontario.

Now, Speaker, I move that the question be put.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Mr. Oosterhoff has moved that the question now be put. I am satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion that the question now be put, please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion that the question now be put, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred to the next instance of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

NON-PROFIT SECTOR APPRECIATION WEEK ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021

SUR LA SEMAINE DE RECONNAISSANCE DU SECTEUR SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Mrs. Wai moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to proclaim Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week / Projet de loi 9, Loi proclamant la Semaine de reconnaissance du secteur sans but lucratif.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for Richmond Hill.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you, Speaker, and members of the House. It is a distinct honour for me today to present the third reading of my private member's bill, Bill 9, An Act to proclaim Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week. I thank you all for your unanimous support at second reading and the interest you've shown in this bill through the questions you asked at the committee meeting.

Yes, we all need to appreciate the hard-working professionals in the non-profit sector, especially during the pandemic period when their services were so much needed, volunteers had dropped tremendously and donations from the community had diminished significantly.

Anna, from one of the mental health and family services organizations, shared with me the challenges she faces. We can all identify with and share her concerns.

Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week will help ignite the passion and the performance of workers who are understandably exhausted and feeling burnt out. It will help boost the morale of the organizations and charities that have been forced to downsize and lay off employees. Our simple gesture of solidarity can be a source of strength and persistence for these unseen warriors. We need to celebrate these invisible champions in our communities.

Our government has been supporting the non-profit sector through various government grants and special Ontario Trillium Foundation funds.

Just in my riding of Richmond Hill alone, I have shared the exciting news with Yellow Brick House, Carefirst, the Legion, Richmond Hill food bank, Richmond Hill Soccer Club, Richmond Hill Canoe Club, Richmond Hill Curling Club, Mosaic Interfaith Out of the Cold, the Iranian Canadian Teens Club, the learning disabilities association, and many more.

But government support is not enough. The community's contributions, support and appreciation will go much further. By recognizing and appreciating them through an appreciation week, we will be strengthening their credibility, enabling them to be more and more self-reliant.

Ontario's non-profit sector employs more than one million workers, of which 600,000 are full-time workers. They have a significant impact in Ontario, socially and economically.

Bill 9, if passed, will proclaim the third week of February each year as Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week. In fact, every day will be a day of appreciation. We should and we will collect videos from different non-profit organizations and recognize their contributions. We'll start this off with the United Way, the Bhayana Family Foundation and the Ontario Nonprofit Network, as they have been working very hard together with me on this bill. We would like to highlight a non-profit organization every day and display them on a specific website for ongoing visits. We will be generating various activities to draw the general public awareness to join us in the appreciation.

I trust that I will have the support of both sides of the House in passing the third reading of my private member's bill, Bill 9, An Act to proclaim Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week.

I pass the remaining time to my fellow members.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Will Bouma: I am pleased to rise in this House to take a few minutes to talk about a very important private member's bill brought in by my dear friend and colleague the member of provincial Parliament from Richmond Hill. The Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week Act, if passed—and some of this we've heard already—would recognize and encourage Ontario's non-profit professionals. It would raise awareness about the important work done by non-profit organizations. It would fortify the credibility of non-profits, enabling them to fundraise and remain largely self-reliant. It would highlight the meaningful causes championed by non-profit workers and encourage growth in the sector.

Speaker, the heroic work done by non-profit organizations often goes unnoticed, and it should be acknowledged. If passed, this bill would highlight the non-profit sector, which is crucial to Ontario's social and economic development and should be viewed as such.

As you've already heard—but if you didn't hear it, Speaker, just so you know—the non-profit sector employs more than one million workers, including 600,000 full-time workers. This bill would give a great boost and encouragement to enter and to stay in the sector. It would also help prevent burnout, which is, unfortunately, endemic in mission-driven organizations, and show them that Ontario appreciates and recognizes their vital work.

What would this bill do to promote community engagement? As has been mentioned, there would be a ceremony right here at Queen's Park, community ceremonies or webinars in the MPPs' ridings all across the province, a social media campaign showcasing non-profit champions, and sharing of the personal stories of the invisible

champions and the real difference that their work makes across our great province.

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These programs range from mental health support, senior services, homeless shelters, crisis lines, skills development, immigrant support, specialized help for children and family support services to programs that promote arts and culture, environmental sustainability and recreation. Non-profit organizations are there day and night for every single person in the province of Ontario. It would be hard to imagine what our communities would look like without them.

As just one example, Madam Speaker, in my home riding of Brantford—Brant—and I already spoke about them this morning—we have the Why Not Youth Centre. Why Not Youth Centre is vibrant, inclusive and, in their own words, a little loud. With dozens of teens on-site at any time, there is a variety of simultaneous activities going on at any time, including karaoke, pool, Just Dance, video games, board games, lounging, arts and crafts or anything else the youth can come up with. It's a place free of abuse, judgment and harm.

Why Not Youth Centre offers a plethora of entirely free resources that are available to the youth, including a clothing bank, computer access, crisis support, day trips, de-escalation support, document printing, employment skills coaching, financial awareness coaching, a food bank, free shoes, hot meals every night, Internet access, leadership training, life skills coaching, recreational activities, resource networking, résumé writing, school supplies, social navigation support and tutoring, just to name a few. Speaker, at Brantford's Why Not Youth Centre, they don't ask why, but rather, why not.

This is just one example of the positive, passionate drive of Ontario's not-for-profit sector. Imagine, Speaker, an Ontario without the work of the United Way, the Alzheimer Society or the Canadian Mental Health Association. I certainly cannot. These are just some of the reasons why I will be supporting this private member's bill, the Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week Act, 2021, and the powerful message that this House will send with a unanimous passage.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate? The member for Toronto—St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this bill and, more so, to the incredible work of non-profits across this province and my own riding of St. Paul's.

Throughout the pandemic, the cracks of Ontario's social safety net were brought to the surface. People lost their jobs, their primary source of income, risking the roof over their heads and food on their table. Never has this sector been more relied upon than now.

I saw this in my own community during the pandemic, and, frankly, long before, listening to stories from my constituents. Nonetheless, these organizations rose to the occasion to support those who needed it when the government left many behind, places like the Stop Community Food Centre; the Out of the Cold programs run out of many places of worship within our riding; Beeton

Cupboard; Na-Me-Res; Massey Centre, Humewood Campus; Canadian Women's Foundation; SPRINT Senior Care; Dying with Dignity; the CNIB Foundation; For Youth Initiative; Skills for Change; BIST, Brain Injury Society of Toronto; Human Rights Watch; Girl Guides of Canada; and others that I've met even outside of my riding as well, like Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario, OAITH, OCRCC and METRAC, all working to prevent gender-based violence in its many forms.

Bleed the North is a great organization, started and run by youth, some 14 and 15. These are the next generation of leaders in this province.

Toronto Environmental Alliance and ONEIA are working to tackle climate change. These are the people that we need to be listening to and ensuring that they're protected, that they're paid well, that they have good working conditions.

The reality I've heard from many non-profits is, quite frankly, volunteers are doing heavy lifting, and while the volunteers are a crucial part of non-profits, they cannot do it all. It's not sustainable, and those organizations are facing a crisis of volunteer burnout.

Whether it's front-line support to provide food, shelter, mental health supports, crisis services or so much more, these organizations, our non-profits, are absolutely essential. Having met with them, I have heard of the work they do, I have learned of their work and I have certainly learned of their needs. What we hear is that these organizations need more funding; they need more sustainability; they need funding that goes beyond program to program; they need longevity; they need sustainability; they need annualized funding, in many cases.

There needs to be paid opportunities to keep these organizations afloat and serving their communities, and that comes strictly as well from funding them properly. It needs to be core funding. Right now, most is project-based and fragmented, as has been reported by OCRCC, the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres. It also must be annualized, as recommended by OAITH, to allow for advanced planning and staffing that comes from secured yearly budgets.

Speaker, our non-profit sectors need help. An awareness of the incredible non-profits and the people behind them, both volunteers and staff, is important. But what's dually needed is supporting them, funding them accurately, bridging the gap between what they want to do, what they exist to do and what they can actually do. So while I do support a Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week, because we do appreciate our non-profits, again we cannot forget the people behind the non-profits and our organizations, many of whom don't have paid sick days, many of whom take their work home and do countless unpaid hours doing the work of non-profits. Because let's face it, non-profits are usually helping those who are the most marginalized, the vulnerable, the ones who have the most difficulties accessing "resources." One person is doing the work of 10, in some cases.

In many non-profits, there's also a gendered reality where we see many women, we see racialized folks, we see disability advocates—again, we see environmental

activists putting up and doing the work to keep our non-profits floating. They require supports. They require funding.

This Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week—again, yes, I appreciate our non-profits; this is a good idea. But there's a lot more that this government could also be doing to show appreciation to our workers and to their families to ensure that they are sustainable and to ensure that when they go to work they can do so with their heads held high, knowing that the work that they're doing is actually able to amplify their communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's a privilege to be able to stand in this House and to speak to the issues that are so important in our communities. One of the reasons I have so much gratitude in being able to speak in support of today's legislation is because of the advocacy of this member. The member for Richmond Hill has been nothing short of outstanding in her commitment to her local community. She speaks so passionately about the important work that's happening there in her community, and she's remarkably capable in following through with what needs to be done for her constituents. I want to also thank her for bringing forward something that is so, so key: the Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week.

The not-for-profit sector, as you know, Speaker, provides so many incredible services in our community, and we recognize that the work that they do is so often driven by a real sense of vision, a real sense of commitment to our local communities and a clarity of purpose that I think is truly remarkable.

When I speak about the reasons I got involved in politics, I regularly reference my philosophical basis around the intermediary organizations, the importance of recognizing that in a strong and healthy society, we don't just have the state and the individual, we don't just have the obligations of the individual towards the state and we don't just have the obligations of the state towards the individual. But all those organizations, the make-up of society that is really what makes society so important are the many, many intermediary groups that are mostly not-for-profits—not all not-for-profits. But I'm thinking of, whether it's local organizations like the Legions, whether it's organizations like the Rose Cottage Visiting Volunteers; the Niagara Christian Gleaners; the Grimsby and West Lincoln chambers of commerce; Pelham Cares; West Lincoln Community Care; Community Care of West Niagara; too many churches in Niagara to number; Gillian's Place; the FORT resources for teens; Eco-Defenders; Toastmasters; Big Brothers Big Sisters; YMCA of Niagara; Bibles for Missions; McNally House; Hannah House—and so many other not-for-profit organizations.

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Individuals are often members of multiple of these organizations at the same time, because they care passionately about giving back. They care about being involved with purpose. That's what makes a strong and healthy

society. It's not just the individual in an atomistic, individualistic way, but his or her engagement and participation in these organizations that help make a society such a healthy place in that ability to share ideas, to share the talents that you've been given, to be able to share even your resources in so many ways, and to be able to proactively help either those in need or help those with particular areas of expertise. To be able to do that in a multiplicity of ways is what our not-for-profit sector does.

When the member from Richmond Hill brings forward this legislation, I'm reminded of those organizations in my community. I'm reminded of the many service clubs, the many organizations that are engaged not just at Christmas in providing toy drives and things like that, but also throughout the year in providing a multitude of both activities and engagement opportunities for our community. When I look around at the communities that make up Niagara West and I think of how many different organizations there are that are not-for-profit, it brings a welling of appreciation in my heart. I know it's an appreciation that so many in this chamber have. So, to be able to see that we're now going to have a week where we can take some time throughout that week to extend our appreciation, as I know so many of us do in this chamber, through certificates, through letters of appreciation, notes of appreciation, maybe volunteer appreciation days—those are all ways that we can acknowledge and thank those not-for-profit-sector organizations. But to have a specific week of the year that recognizes that, that draws our attention in our busy schedules to those unique gifts that they bring and those unique contributions, is a very, very valuable thing.

In conclusion, I want to not only thank the member from Richmond Hill for her advocacy on this, but thank those not-for-profits and thank them with a deep appreciation on behalf of myself, but also, I know, on behalf of all my colleagues and the constituents in Niagara West. Many of them have the opportunity to participate in those services, to also provide some of those services. As we approach this Christmas season, I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart for all that they do.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Ian Arthur: It's an honour to rise and contribute to this debate. I do want to begin by recognizing the tremendous work that not-for-profits do in my riding of Kingston and the Islands and across Ontario and across Canada. It's been a remarkable part of being an elected representative to get to meet so many of the not-for-profits that exist in your community in a way that you just weren't able to do as a private citizen. It's the breadth of the services that they deliver that is remarkable.

The short list from Kingston, to name a few—and I won't do too many. There are so many more that I'm not going to have time to list here. But everything—Home Base housing, the Kingston Humane Society, the Kingston Sexual Assault Centre and the United Way are just some of the ones that leap to the forefront of your mind for the tremendous work that they're able to do, both as not-for-profits and charities in the community.

But what I really want to spend the brief time I have here on during this debate is a conversation that I've had a number of times with the head of the United Way in Kingston, Bhavana Varma. She talks to me again and again about how she wants to work toward a place where she works herself out of a job, where the resources that the United Way provides to the community, the tremendous resources—and they just had a record-breaking year, Speaker, which is amazing. But even within that organization, there is this kind of deep recognition that the fact that they have to exist and continuously deliver the services that they do points to such glaring gaps in the delivery of services in this province, in a way that boggles the mind; that we're at this place where so many people have fallen through the cracks at this point that they have to step up, they have to have record-breaking years, they have to partner with all those organizations, just to make sure that—we're not even making what, frankly, should be the minimum standard in Ontario; this is trying to prevent deaths on the street. That's the bar we're setting ourselves at now. It's not that all members of society get to flourish and excel; it's that we're trying to keep them alive. That's a really heartbreaking reality in one of the richest countries in the world.

Social services made up 38% of the not-for-profit sector in 2021, and this is up from 29% in 2020. While this reflects the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, it also indicates a disturbing trend in the not-for-profit sector and the delivery of services in Canada.

What I want to draw some attention to is that the second-largest area of the not-for-profit sector is actually tourism, culture, heritage—all those industries. They went from 18% all the way down to 12%. Again, a lot of this is tied to the pandemic, but what it highlights is the lack of resources that so many of the not-for-profits that we don't even think about as being not-for-profits—the museums, the galleries, these kinds of institutions that make communities what they are—have been unable to make it through. There has been a lack of supports for the very sector that we're trying to recognize right now, in trying to get through the pandemic. The doors are shuttered, and so many of them are never going to open again.

While I welcome any opportunity to thank the not-for-profit sector for everything they contribute—and an appreciation week is a good idea, Speaker—I think that more than words and appreciation are, again, exactly what we need to do. We've had the debate countless times in this House since the beginning of the pandemic about the role that not-for-profits should play in the long-term-care sector. Not-for-profits are excellent at delivering, yet time and time again, this government refuses to back the not-for-profit sector in long-term care, and instead says, "For those not-for-profits that exist, we'll give them an appreciation week, but what we won't do is follow that up with substantive funding that allows them to do what they do best, which is to deliver those services."

I have a brief moment left before I finish, and I want to draw attention to one more issue, and that's the growing

need for the not-for-profit sector to step in with the housing crisis we're facing. Home Base Housing does remarkable work in Kingston, and we're all so appreciative of what they do, but they're a drop in the bucket. Unless we see meaningful government action to eliminate the backlog of affordable housing demand in Ontario, those not-for-profits, no matter how much we recognize them, are not going to be able to fill that gap. That's a tragedy, and it's unfolding in all of our communities around us.

So while I appreciate the sentiment of recognizing the not-for-profit sector—I certainly applaud that—let's follow up with meaningful action. Let's give them ongoing, substantive funding that allows them to deliver the services. And let's recognize that the government needs to play a bigger role in the delivery of social services in particular, so that those gaps are a little bit smaller and the not-for-profit sector stands a chance at helping fill those.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I appreciate having the opportunity to rise today, and I'd like to start by thanking my colleague the MPP for Richmond Hill for bringing forward this important piece of legislation on the not-for-profit sector recognition week. Speaker, this, of course, is the second time we've had the chance to debate this bill, and I'm excited that we're back and have the chance to speak on it again.

When I rose last time, I talked a little bit about a mentor of mine—a name that may not be familiar to many of those in this chamber but is certainly familiar to those of us in Ottawa, and that's the late Max Keeping. He was the CTV Ottawa anchor for a number of years—a face that graced the television sets of folks across Ottawa at 6 p.m., over the course of a very, very long and successful journalism career. But Max was more than a journalist; Max was really a titan in the community. Any time that there was an issue that the Ottawa community was grappling with, Max would rally everyone together. He was involved in just about every single not-for-profit-sector organization in Ottawa and was always there to give them a platform, to support them and to help connect them with other resources. When Ottawa was facing a crisis, Max would be there. He would pull together government representatives, folks from the business community and folks from the not-for-profit sector to tackle those issues.

1440

Unfortunately, Ottawa lost Max to cancer back in 2015. It was a tough loss for everyone in the community and certainly a tough loss for me, because he had taught me so much over the course of my time knowing him.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, I know there were a lot of people who worried: Would we, as the Ottawa community, be able to rally together in the same way that Max had done so many times? I'm proud to report that we did. I think Max is smiling down on Ottawa because when COVID hit, right away, groups started coming together to figure out how they could tackle these issues.

The United Way of eastern Ontario, under the leadership of Michael Allen, who was just recognized with an Order of Ottawa award—congratulations, Michael—brought together a community response table of over 80 different not-for-profit sector agencies, business leaders and politicians. I was proud to sit at that table throughout the pandemic. We tackled issues, whether it was mental health supports, supports for new Canadians through the pandemic or supports for those fleeing violence against women. All of these different issues we tackled one at a time and brought together the tremendous resources that our city had to offer.

I was proud that our government, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, invested over \$1 billion through the Social Services Relief Fund to help support some of these agencies in their critical, important work.

I was there on the ground, working with these agencies through the community response table and seeing the amazing work that they were doing. Everyone here in this chamber knows that a not-for-profit agency knows how to take a dollar 100 miles and make sure that support is getting to those who need it most.

It was so wonderful to see all of these agencies, all of these partners coming together and making sure that they were responding to the needs of folks across Ottawa throughout the pandemic. Max's legacy is certainly living on.

As we continue to fight through this pandemic, there's still going to be a lot of work left to do. Of course, we're going to recognize and continue to acknowledge the important roles that our not-for-profits play. This past weekend, as we started to celebrate the holiday season, I was out in my riding. There were a number of church bazaars happening to support different charities. There was a wonderful food bank drive at College Square in my riding that I had the chance to attend and make a donation to on behalf of our team. These organizations play such a critical role.

I'll conclude with this, Speaker: Max was famous—whenever he sent you an email, he always closed the email by saying, "Thanks for all you do." It was because Max touched so many people and saw all the amazing work that was being done by volunteers and folks right across the city. If I can borrow from Max, I'd just like to say sincerely to all the not-for-profits in Ottawa, thank you for all you do. I'm glad we can support this legislation to recognize you formally in the Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Doly Begum: I rise on behalf of many organizations, along with the members of my riding, who have been doing amazing work throughout this pandemic. I truly believe the intention of this bill is genuine and I'm proud to speak to it.

I want to thank the member opposite for bringing this bill forward to show recognition and support for the grassroots and community organizations that have played an immense role in supporting Ontarians throughout this pandemic—in fact, not just this pandemic: Their contributions have gone beyond the pandemic. They have stepped

up to address the challenges that our communities faced throughout, at any time, to provide support for Ontarians and to provide the resources that people need.

I have the incredible opportunity to work with so many wonderful organizations whose work is invaluable to the people of Scarborough–Southwest, and Scarborough-wide. I know the difficult reality that they face, where one person is often doing the work of four people—because most of these people are doing this voluntarily. This understaffing and lack of resources is a huge problem in many of the organizations as well.

So when we talk about not-for-profits, when we talk about grassroots organizations, it's important that we talk about the need for investment and the underfunding and the amount of work they need to do, as well as the recognition. Thanking them is amazing, but we have to make sure that the money comes with that as well.

Not-for-profit organizations have played a critical role in helping marginalized and low-income communities in my riding of Scarborough Southwest, especially when we talk about bridging the gap in inequity for vaccines by providing support with vaccine outreach, culturally appropriate and language-accessible resources, and a lot more. This is an issue that's really close to my heart because I've been working closely with a lot of them to provide—the need for vaccines across Scarborough Southwest.

I would also like to take a moment and pay tribute and say thanks to many of the organizations in my riding and many of the people who have been part of the work that we do in Scarborough Southwest—if I could just take a moment to recognize some of the organizations that I've worked closely with and say how much we appreciate you, how much we thank you for the work you're doing. If I don't have enough time, then I won't go into all of them, but I will start by listing:

YouthLink, an amazing organization that's doing great work; Warden Woods Community Centre, one that I used to be a part of as well; Variety Village; Warden Hilltop Community Centre; Access Alliance; AccessPoint on Danforth; UrbanPromise Toronto and Julius Naredo; Birchcliff Bluffs Community Centre; Scarborough Bluffs Community Association; Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities; Thunder Woman Healing Lodge Society, another wonderful organization; Bluffs Food Bank—I was just there the other day; Feed Scarborough food bank—I was there, actually, this weekend; the local Legion halls, branches 13 and 73, in my riding; Toby's Place; West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre; Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre; Bangladeshi Canadian Community Services, also known as BCS; Bangladesh Centre and Community Services, BCCS; Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Goshti; Bangladeshi Canadian cultural association; Bangiya Parishad Toronto; BLRC, Bengali Literary Resource Centre; Jalalabad Association of Canada, an organization that we've worked really closely with; Organization for Toronto IMLD Monument—recently, they built the Bangladeshi International Mother Language Day Monument in Beaches–East York;

Ontario Bengali Cultural Society; Bianibazaar society and cultural association; and Moulvibazar Zila association of Toronto.

We also have Hobiganj Association; Shunam Ganj Association; Golap Ganj association; Sylhet Mohanogor Association; Bengali Information and Employment Services, another important organization; Association of Bangladeshi Agriculturalists in Canada; Association of Bangladeshi Engineers Ontario; Barisal Zila Samiti; Chittagong Association of Canada; Greater Khulna Association Canada; Indus Community Services, another organization that we heard from recently; Mymensingh Zila Samiti; Toronto Film Forum, another group of volunteers that has been doing amazing work throughout this pandemic; Shakti—empowering Canadian women; Women's Committee of the National Council of Nepalese in Canada; Khelaghor Association Toronto; Dancing Damsels, another women's organization doing great work empowering women; as well as PACE.

I believe I'm running out of time so I'm going to stop listing the names. But I just cannot say enough about the work that they have been doing and how much we appreciate and admire them. We have to come up with the funding to invest in them and make sure that they are able to do the work that they continue to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, before I start my remarks, I would like to acknowledge and thank the member from Richmond Hill, MPP Wai, for your hard work, your dedication and your passion for bringing this important legislation. Thank you so much.

Applause.

1450

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thanks for that wonderful applause. She absolutely deserves way more than this.

Madam Speaker, with more than 58,000 registered charities and over one million workers, of which 600,000 are full-time workers, Ontario's not-for-profit sector is the largest in Canada, with job contribution to 2.6% of Ontario's overall GDP. It has more than \$50 billion in economic impact. That's how important it is.

Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week will help with the much-awaited recognition deserved by the people whose roles are often less acknowledged. This humble initiative will acknowledge the contributions of these unsung heroes. It will be a ray of hope for the organizations and the charities that are supporting our residents.

With this appreciation week, we want to demonstrate that the not-for-profit sector is truly appreciated. It will set a great example and also encourage youth who are trying to fulfill their passion and perhaps help others in joining the sector and contributing to the growth of our province.

The minimum we can do is to recognize and appreciate the dedicated service of our professionals working in Ontario's not-for-profit organizations. The sole purpose of this bill is to make the third week of February each year Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week.

We often talk about these charities and not-for-profit organizations. We call them the Ontario spirit. Here today, I would like to mention a couple of them. The first one is the Caribbean Children Foundation. It starts with Nirvana Garib, a child from Trinidad who was diagnosed with a brain tumour at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. Her family, saddened and desperate for hope, prayed for a miracle. They would need \$90,000 to pay for Nirvana's brain surgery. The miracle happened. Today, Nirvana is over 16 years old. The Caribbean community came together and raised the funds. Nirvana's brother Avinash said, "It was indeed a miraculous recovery and we thank God and the TCCF every day." Since then, countless deserving children from the Caribbean have received life-saving surgeries they could not have otherwise afforded.

Founded by Jay Brijpaul in 2000, TCCF's—the Caribbean Children Foundation's—job is to assist children in need from the Caribbean suffering from life-threatening ailments for which no treatment is available in their country, to receive treatment at a hospital in and out of Canada, such as SickKids in Toronto. It is a 100% registered charity. Everyone is a volunteer. No one is getting paid. Every dollar raised goes directly to medical care. They have been able to save over 300 children, with an average cost of \$25,000 to treat, with \$1.5 million of funding paid for these surgeries.

I would like to thank both the volunteers and the donors for saving lives. You are true heroes.

Another organization, which the member from Richmond Hill also talked about, is the Bhayana Family Foundation. Incorporated in 2006, the Bhayana Family Foundation partners with the United Way, provincial not-for-profit associations and governments across Canada to close the recognition gap for the non-profit sector and focus to strengthen the roots of community, the invisible champions of Canadian communities. The foundation has recognized close to 1,300 professionals with 325 social services organizations across Canada.

Just for this bill, there are 354 provincial organizations, not-for-profit and for-profit, and individuals in Ontario that have endorsed Ontario's week of appreciation. To name a few of them: the Canadian Mental Health Association Peel Dufferin; Community Living Mississauga; the Mississauga Food Bank; Peel Leadership Centre; Peel Senior Link; Punjabi Community Health Services; and Safe City Mississauga.

Through this statement, I would like to thank Raksha Bhayana from the Bhayana Family Foundation for the great contribution to society. Thank you for your hard work. Thank you for your tireless work. Thank you for your commitment and passion. We can see a day of recognition, a week of appreciation coming to life.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, the not-for-profit sector is supporting our province and, therefore, I encourage everyone in our House to support this bill. I would again like to congratulate the member from Richmond Hill for her dedication and for bringing this bill to life.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's my pleasure to rise today on behalf of the residents of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake and speak to this motion, the Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week Act. As campaign chair for two years of the United Way, I always remember to say thank you, thank you, thank you. It's the most important thing to do, so it's nice that we're doing that.

Of course, we on this side of the House in the NDP caucus support recognizing not-for-profit organizations. We also support supporting non-profit organizations through funding so they can continue to do the important work in their communities. In my communities, these not-for-profits save lives.

Honestly, there are too many to mention in my riding, but places like Project Share, Women's Place of South Niagara, Meals on Wheels, the March of Dimes, Heartland Forest, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Red Roof Retreat, Niagara Chapter-Native Women, the Lions Clubs, the Rotaries—every day these workers, who are underpaid by the way, who work in these organizations—every day they save lives, and I see it in my office.

Right now, we have a housing crisis in Niagara—I say Niagara, but I believe it's right across the province of Ontario. Every day people are telling me they can't afford rent. They can't afford to buy a house. Seniors—renovictions—are being thrown out of their apartments. Young families can't buy homes. My daughter is in that case.

It's places like Project Share, Start Me Up Niagara, the YWCA, Gateway Residential and Community Support Services that we turn to. They get a roof over the heads of people in need.

Speaker, let me say this again, as I did at the beginning of my speaking time. If you want to truly appreciate these great groups, do more than just have a name of a month after them. Give them financial support so they can pay our heroes who work in these organizations, and give them core funding. Core funding is what they need, and this isn't just from me. The Ontario Nonprofit Network's 2021 budget submissions were focused on the need for emergency financial stability to get through the pandemic, as well as increasing funding to meet the longer-term challenges created by COVID-19. That's not in the bill.

The Ford government cut \$15 million from the Ontario Trillium Foundation that went to community groups. I'm sure you're aware of that. Reinstate that funding. It's not in the bill. Reinstate it; put it back in the bill. There's no money in this bill for affordable housing or for more support, more staff to help with housing programs. These workers and organizations can only do so much on their own. They're already burnt out, they're working overtime, and they're trying their best.

Because of this government's cuts to much-needed social programs and inaction to address the affordable housing issues, like housing—I think we can all talk about housing in our particular ridings.

Rising food costs, utilities, transportation costs, the need for more—and the work of these not-for-profit organizations is increasing. If you want to appreciate them—

I'm going to repeat this twice because I know sometimes they don't hear me as well as I'd like. If you want to appreciate them, listen to them. Help them help others. You can do that today. Add that into this bill. If you give them more tools, they will save more lives across Ontario.

We'll support this bill. We're also asking you to do better. Make this bill one that actually supports these not-for-profits. These helpers need your help, and so do the people they serve. If we all do that together, we can save lives. Thank you very much to all the organizations in not-for-profit.

1500

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: What a wonderful way to honour and acknowledge the many not-for-profits that contribute so much to our province. I don't want to take a lot of time, Speaker, but what I really want to do today is just acknowledge some of the not-for-profits in my community of Brampton and the amazing work that they do serving the community, serving those in need.

I want to start off by acknowledging a group called Khalsa Aid. Khalsa Aid is a group that is known across the world. They go to any area in which there is a disaster or a crisis and they help wherever possible and however they can. Most recently, they've been very active in BC, helping the community deal with the terrible, terrible floods that have wracked BC.

Locally, in Brampton, they were really amazing pillars to our community in the heart of the pandemic. In the heart of the terrible, terrible dark times of the pandemic, Khalsa Aid actually had set up a temporary food bank in my riding, in Brampton East. They did a fantastic job of helping to serve those in need. I really want to take time to acknowledge them, and specifically I want to acknowledge Mandeep Singh and Abinash Kaur, who are part of Khalsa Aid, and the amazing work that they did in assisting Brampton and assisting Ontario, working across Canada to help ensure that people who are in need have the supports that they need to get through tough times. They're pillars of our community, and I really think they need to be acknowledged.

I also want to take the time—

Interjections.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Yes, I want to do something for it, so save your applause because I have a few people I'm going to be shouting out today.

I want to acknowledge the Brampton Tamil Association. They do so much for our community, and specifically the Brampton Tamil Seniors Association. The Brampton Tamil Seniors Association and their amazing community leader, David, just do so much to ensure that Tamil seniors have the ability to come together, to connect in culturally appropriate and relevant ways, and also to give back to Brampton as a whole across the board. What a fantastic organization, and I want to thank David for his amazing work.

I need to take a moment to acknowledge another really amazing group. It's called the Sikh Sewa Society. They

are a group that, prior to COVID, had this amazing food truck that was really yellow. They still have this truck, but because of COVID-19 they're just maintaining specific distances because of that. But the folks at the Sikh Sewa Society would take this food truck and go around to communities in need, provide food to them and ensure that they were well-fed. It's a core tenet of the Sikh spirituality of langar, of giving food away to those in need and ensuring that food is a human right that everyone should be able to access. They really epitomize this value, and I want to thank them for their amazing work. I want to acknowledge specifically Manjit Singh Basran for his work with the Sikh Sewa Society and how hard he worked to ensure that our community was well-fed and that those who were in need had the ability to access that food.

I need to also talk about a pillar throughout the Peel region. The group is called the Seva Food Bank. The Seva Food Bank does so much to ensure that communities in need, people in need, have access to food. The Seva Food Bank is an amazing organization that does that, and they have two folks who are near and dear to my heart who are part of the Seva Food Bank, and that is Mandeep Grewal—she is a community activist, a leader. She's someone who goes wherever there is need to ensure that people are being served and helped. She is someone who, any time there's someone in need, she is the first person there to help them out. She does amazing work with the Seva Food Bank, along with many, many other organizations, so I just want to acknowledge her work, and also talk about Harbaljit Singh Kahlon. He is someone who is involved in the Seva Food Bank, but he's involved in organizations across Brampton, across Ontario. He is someone who is so dedicated to human rights and social justice, and I'm so proud of the work that he does. I just want to acknowledge him and his contribution to our province and to Brampton, across the board. Thank you to Harbaljit Singh Kahlon for that amazing work.

I want to end off by talking about two last final organizations—actually, a few final organizations. I want to talk about the Hindu Sabha mandir in Brampton and the amazing work that they do. I've been able to attend some of their events recently, and just to see the dedicated volunteers they have there and how committed they are to the community—it's such an honour to see them contribute and serve the community along with Brampton as a whole.

There's a specific organization that truly needs acknowledgement. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at in Brampton is an organization that works so dedicatedly, so amazingly, so hard to ensure that the Ahmadiyya Muslim community is being well represented, but also works so well and so much in interfaith work and ensuring that their message of love for all, hatred for none is truly being heard across the board. Two really strong pillars of this amazing organization and community—and there are so many, but the two who are near and dear to my heart are Ashfaq Ahmed and Naseem Shad. These two individuals work day and night in Brampton. They ensure that the Ahmadiyya Muslim community is being represented

across the board, but they are dedicated to serving the community as a whole. It truly is a pillar of their value of love for all, hatred for none, be it fundraisers for the hospital, organizing and helping to organize Muslims for Remembrance in solidarity and alongside Indigenous remembrance day. Ashfaq Ahmed and Naseem Shad are just really, really amazing pillars in Brampton who need to be acknowledged.

I want to end off by just talking about—I call them “super volunteers.” It's Gurnishan Singh and Amrit Kooner. These are two individuals who, wherever there is need in Brampton, in the community as a whole, they are there. Be it at our local gurdwaras, be it at local human rights organizations, be it at any place where there's injustice, these two pillars are there fighting for more justice. It's an honour to know them and an honour to see their contributions to Brampton and to Ontario as a whole.

Thank you so much, Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to acknowledge some of these amazing pillars in our community. They can all serve as really amazing representatives, as examples, as people for us to look up to, to hopefully epitomize and really internalize the spirit of not-for-profit work, which is to serve others.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Before I call for further debate, I just want to ask the members of the House, please, when you are getting up to speak, make sure that you move your phones onto another desk or to the seat beside you. It's happened a few times today, and it's a work hazard for the folks up in the booth. It's quite loud for them. If I can hear it loudly, I'm sure it's amplified 100 times for them up there. Thank you.

Further debate? Further debate?

Mrs. Wai has moved third reading of Bill 9, An Act to proclaim Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? That is carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I believe the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill has a point of order.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I want to inform the House that there will be no night sitting tonight.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I believe the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill just made a lot of people really, really sad. And he has another point of order.

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

Mr. Michael Parsa: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Mr. Parsa is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice. Agreed? Agreed.

The member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I move that, notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House, when the order for third reading of Bill 34, An Act to proclaim May as Anti-Asian Racism Education Month is called, and when the order for third reading of Bill 58, An Act to proclaim March as Endometriosis Awareness Month is called, 29 minutes shall be allotted to debate on the motion for third reading of each bill, with 12 minutes allotted to the government, 12 minutes allotted to the official opposition and five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group; and

At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Mr. Parsa has moved that, notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House, when the order—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Dispense? Agreed? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

1510

POLISH HERITAGE MONTH, 2021

LOI DE 2021 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE POLONAIS

Ms. Hogarth moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 18, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Polish Heritage Month / Projet de loi 18, Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois du patrimoine polonais.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I'm honoured to rise in this Legislature to speak on the third reading of Bill 18, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Polish Heritage Month.

First of all, I'd like to thank all the members from across this House for debating on this bill through second reading, through committee, and here tonight. I am truly honoured by the support that I have been given from all sides of the House.

I also want to thank my colleague the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, whose father was the first Polish MPP, for co-sponsoring this bill with me today.

I bring forward this bill for many reasons. Through my work with the Polish community in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore I have learned so much about the history, culture and endless contribution of Canadian Poles to our province. I know I am not alone by admiring their tireless work ethic, and their commitment to their communities, to their families and to the institutions they have built and maintained for decades since their arrival to our province and to our country. Generations of Polish immigrants have made countless contributions in multiple areas impacting all aspects of life in Ontario, from culture to politics to business and in the arts. For this, we shall all be grateful.

We have heard over numerous speeches from members of all sides of the House of the achievements of the Polish community in Ontario, and they have been significant, so much so that many Ontarians' successes can be traced through multiple generations of Polish immigration to this province. Speaker, throughout the process, it has been my sincere honour to have shepherded this bill through until today at its final reading.

I want to once again thank all members of this House for their generous support of this bill and for speaking on it so eloquently. I look forward to our further debates today. I know that members of the Polish community in your ridings all across Ontario will be grateful for your support of this bill, which will finally give appropriate recognition to Canadian Poles in Ontario by establishing May as Polish Heritage Month.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Norman Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: It's indeed an honour to rise in support of Polish Heritage Month on its third reading, and if you'll indulge me, a few short words.

Before I begin, I want to welcome the new consul general from Poland, Magdalena Pszczółkowska.

I also want to wish all the best to the outgoing consul general, Krzysztof Grzelczyk. He became a good friend as I attended many different events here in the GTA, and I was really proud to have known him.

I also want to say that those of Polish ancestry must be feeling glowing with big hearts, because I know that as this bill has travelled through the Legislature, whether it was in committee or whether it was at second reading, we heard amazing things about Polish people. Whether it was on the world stage—some of the great scientists in the world, like Marie Curie Skłodowska or Nicolaus Copernicus, have made an indelible mark on human history. Certainly here in this country, where over a million Polish people claim ancestry—whether they came among the first settlers in Ontario in the 1850s or those who've come even as recently as yesterday, they've had a huge impact in building this province of Ontario and making contributions in every single way you could imagine.

But I asked to speak to this bill not just to tell you some of those amazing facts you know, but because the Polish people, and Poland, have become part of my own personal history. My wife is Polish. In fact, I was married in Poland, and in Poland I got to see some beautiful places like the port city of Gdańsk, the capital of Warszawa, and Toruń, the walled city. It has so much history as you go there. This is a people who have over a millennia of identity, and you could feel it in every place you went.

Certainly, because I married a wonderful Polish woman named Aleksandra, I also now have two children, two sons that are half Polish, and here in our home—

Interjections.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you. Aleksandar and Ilija are my sons. Ilija was just born five months ago. My wife speaks to them in Polish and is teaching them their

ancestry, and I'm so proud to know that they are learning that and they will continue throughout their life.

Personally, I want to thank the member for introducing this bill, and I know as my sons get older, they will certainly be very proud to celebrate that month of May as Polish Heritage Month every year. So thank you for that.

The final thing I want to say, as well, is I live in one of the most diverse constituencies in all of Ontario, and I look forward to the day that every heritage is recognized, whether it be a month, a week or even a single day in this beautiful province of Ontario. Thank you for bringing this bill here. I'm so honoured to speak to it, and I'm happy to see this pass.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Norman Miller): Further debate? The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

And if the Speaker is allowed some editorial comment, I should mention that I stopped in the first Polish community in Wilno on Saturday and got some perogies and cabbage rolls from the Wilno Tavern while passing through the member's riding.

Go ahead, member.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, thank you very much, Speaker, and I'm glad you enjoyed those perogies. And if my information is still correct, my cousin Joanne Yakabuskie is the one who actually makes those perogies for the Wilno Tavern, so I'm glad you enjoyed them.

It is a pleasure and honour to speak to the third reading of Bill 18, and I want to thank my colleague from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for introducing the bill. Some people would say, "Well, Yak, why didn't you introduce it 18 years ago? You've been here for 18 years." When I got here, it wasn't the fashion that we were doing these types of bills, but I am so thankful to my colleague for doing it.

The history of the Polish people here in Canada is not one that is headlining all the time because, quite frankly, they're generally a humble group of people. But there are almost a million people of Polish descent in Canada, and over half a million here in Ontario. The first significant immigration—I know we had some Poles that came here in the 1700s, actually, but the first significant immigration came in 1858. They settled in Wilno, Canada's first Polish settlement, which the Speaker in the chair at the moment, the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, was visiting on the weekend.

I articulated before, that was the place they came together because they wanted to be with their own kind, and they found Wilno and said it reminded them of home. The first settlers came from the Kashub region of Poland, and those are the ancestors that I come from, people from the Kashub region of Poland.

One of the things we do every year in Wilno—years ago, I'm going to say about maybe 20 years ago or so, the Wilno Heritage Society was formed. One of the things that they've done—and the member would see the work that they've done, just below the tavern there, all the work in the Wilno Heritage Park. They now have the Polish Kashub festival every May, the first Saturday in May. I'm

hopeful that at some time, the Premier may be able to make his way up to that to enjoy some of those perogies and the Polish sausage that they enjoy as part of that festival every year, the first weekend in May.

But this is not just about the Kashub Poles; this is about every person of Polish descent. I want to thank the member from Humber River–Black Creek for articulating his own history with his wife and his connection through his children. I'm a fifth generation here and my grandchildren are now seventh-generation Canadian, so we don't have maybe that same direct connection, but nonetheless, as we are as proud as anyone of the contributions of Poles to this great country of ours, Canada.

I want to say again to everyone, on all sides of the House: We heard it in second reading, we heard it in committee and we've heard it today, the great support for this bill, and finally recognizing a nationality, a group, an ethnic group—finally recognizing them with a heritage month of their own.

1520

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Norman Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: As always, I am proud to rise in this House on behalf of the people of Parkdale–High Park and today, in particular, for the wonderful Polish community in my riding, in support of this bill.

Speaker, when I spoke to this bill early in the session at second reading, I noted that proclaiming the month of May of each year as Polish Heritage Month ensures that the Ontario government and the Ontario people recognize the contribution of Polish Canadians to our province's cultural fabric, history, economy and society. I also shared with members of this House how my riding, Parkdale–High Park, has a large Polish population and is home to important cultural events, such as the Roncesvalles Polish Festival Toronto, as well as the solemn Katyn Memorial, which includes a laying of wreaths at the Katyn monument in our Beaty Boulevard Parkette.

Since I have already shared my community's vast connection with the Polish culture, heritage and history, today I wanted to take an opportunity to share a more in-depth look at the Polish community's past and future in Parkdale–High Park and Ontario.

Let's begin with an important person from the past: Just last year, our community lost a beloved neighbour, Mr. Joseph Solarski, to the COVID-19 virus, at the age of 95. Born in Poland, Joe immigrated to Canada at four years of age, growing up right here in Toronto. At age 19, Joe enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force and served in England during the last year of World War II. When he returned home, he completed high school and then obtained a degree from the University of Toronto. Thereafter, he opened Solarski Pharmacy in my riding of Parkdale–High Park, right across from St. Casimir's church on Roncesvalles Avenue, and remained its owner and operator for 50 wonderful years.

Joe belonged to many organizations that gave back to his community, including the Knights of Columbus. One of Joe's biggest legacies, however, was established in the

mid-1970s when he co-founded Copernicus Lodge, a seniors' long-term-care home on Roncesvalles Avenue for Toronto's Polish community. Copernicus Lodge is a beloved place in Parkdale–High Park where our Polish elders can live and celebrate their Polish culture, heritage and language. Because of this, Joe will never be forgotten and will live in the hearts of our community forever. Thanks to Joe and his family for all they have done.

Now, I want to focus on a small part of Parkdale–High Park's Polish community's future. Founded in 1966, Biały Orzeł/White Eagle Polish Song and Dance Academy is the only Polish dance ensemble in all of Toronto. Each year, their performance serves as the main event in our wonderful Roncesvalles Polish Festival Toronto, but they certainly do not limit their performances to our community only. In fact, the group also performs at many festivals annually across four continents, from North and South America to Europe and Asia. Founders Paweł and Maria Dubicki were deeply committed to the preservation of Polish folklore, dance, song and costume.

I would like to read a quick excerpt from their website: “Their deep affection, respect and honour for the heritage of our homeland has been reflected throughout the many generations of the ensemble's performers.”

The Biały Orzeł/White Eagle Polish Song and Dance Academy has now enjoyed 55 successful years of connecting young Polish Canadians with a love and pride for their Polish history, culture and community. I have deeply enjoyed their incredible performances each year, and I'm so grateful for the work they're doing in enriching Ontario's cultural fabric. This wonderful group ensures that Polish song, dance and culture will continue to thrive as new generations join their ensemble and carry these beautiful traditions forward.

Once again, I'd like to thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore and the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for bringing this important bill forward. I am glad to support this bill so that all Ontarians have an opportunity to reflect and to learn about the many contributions Polish people and organizations have made, and the struggles, too, that they have faced in our province. I'm happy to see it passed, and I would like to wish all of my Polish constituents in Parkdale–High Park and across Ontario congratulations.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Billy Pang: As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, I'm proud to rise today in support of my colleagues the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for Bill 18, the Polish Heritage Month Act, 2021. I want to thank the members for bringing forward this meaningful bill.

Madam Speaker, Ontario is one of the most diversified provinces in Canada. Our multiculturalism has played a significant role in the success of our province. Ontario is also home to hundreds of thousands of people of Polish descent. Since the 19th century, Ontario's Polish community has made an immense impact on our province's

economic, social and political foundations, and still today, people of Polish heritage continue to enrich the cultural fabric of Ontario's towns and cities.

I know many Polish immigrants arrived in Renfrew county in 1855 as part of a mass exodus, fleeing from oppression and persecution. By 1890, there were approximately 270 families living and working in Renfrew county's Madawaska Valley, helping to shape eastern Ontario's robust forestry industry.

Now, in 2021, there are many notable people of Polish descent who call Ontario home, across all regions and representing all walks of life—people like John Tavares, captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs; Penny Oleksiak, Canada's most decorated Olympian; broadcasting greats like Moses Znaimer and Peter Gzowski; and, of course, my colleague the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who is a descendant of that first group of Polish settlers in the Ottawa valley.

The Polish community in Ontario has long been a part of our province's history. With a strong commitment to democracy, freedom, hard work and family, the people of Ontario and Poland share many common values. This would be why so many Polish Canadians chose to make Ontario their home. Bill 18, the Polish Heritage Month Act, 2021, is an opportunity for all of us to recognize the important role that the Polish community has had in building and sustaining the strong Ontario we know today.

The designation of a heritage month is significant for many reasons. They help us learn more about the history and traditions of the many diverse communities who make up our province. With a better understanding of the complexities of each cultural identity, we are creating a stronger, more inclusive Ontario. My ministry is happy to support this bill, which would see us all in May recognizing and celebrating the contributions of Polish Ontarians in our province.

I invite all members of the House to vote in favour of Bill 18 and join me in looking forward to celebrating Ontario's first official Polish Heritage Month in May 2022.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mme France Gélinas: I just want to say a few words about Polish Heritage Month. I come from Sudbury. We know that Sudbury is known for mining. There's also a lot of coal mining being done in Poland, so it's not surprising to see that there is a very large and vibrant Polish community in Sudbury. The Polish Combatants Hall is often packed, and everybody's always welcome. They allowed me to discover the food, the music, the culture, and all of it is good. I would argue with Mr. Yakubuski that the best perogies are made in Sudbury, but we'll have to see about that.

1530

I want to thank Mrs. Novak, who is my sister-in-law's mom, for also introducing me to the culture of the Polish people. They are part of our community in Sudbury, and we are richer for it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: It's an honour to be able to rise today and join the debate on Bill 18 that was introduced by my colleague from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. It's great to hear as well the personal connections that some of the members in the Legislature have, such as the member who sits beside me, from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, and the member from Humber River–Black Creek, and I'll just quickly share mine as well.

I don't have any Polish blood in my family or my wife's, but my wife's father actually left Karachi, Pakistan, in 1971 and completed a PhD at the University of Krakow in Poland. He spoke so fondly of his time in Poland, and it's something that we'll always remember and his fondness for the country.

I'm very pleased to be able to speak in support of this legislation, which will be the first of its kind here in the Ontario Legislature. Ontario is home to more than 523,000 Polish Canadians, and while our community in Oakville is a little smaller, it's still a very vibrant community. Oakville is home to the Polish Alliance branch. The Polish Alliance of Canada was created in 1907 to carry out cultural, charitable and social activities which cultivate Polish traditions and promote the rich heritage of Polish culture. Interestingly, it's the oldest ethnic organization in Canada, and there are 13 towns and cities across the province with a branch. Polish Canadians have brought their rich culture and delicious foods throughout our province.

In Toronto, a new Polish festival was started a few years ago and is one of North America's largest celebrations of Polish culture. This year, unfortunately, the event was postponed, but will be returning for the fall of 2022. Event attendees there of course can taste all those great Polish perogies we've talked about—I know there's a little bit of debate about who makes the best ones—listen to folklore, live music and see traditional dancing.

From judges to athletes, Canadians of Polish descent have added to Canadian sports, the legal system, health, business and other professions. During the Summer Olympics that many of us watched, we saw Penny Oleksiak, who's an Olympic swimmer for Team Canada, win medal after medal. With a total of seven medals, including the gold, the hard work and dedication of her hard work paid off.

Stanislaus Gzowski, a Polish nobleman, helped develop Canada's railway system and also co-founded the Engineering Institute of Canada, became the Administrator of the province of Ontario and founder of Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto. His grandson, many of you know, Peter, became a famous radio personality and writer in Canada. He became host of CBC Radio's hit, *This Country in the Morning*, which was later renamed *Morningside*.

The migration of Poles to Canada has occurred, as mentioned earlier, over centuries, and history can point to six significant waves of Polish immigration to Canada. Polish immigrants first started arriving in our province in the mid-19th century. Having immigrated from northern Poland. They settled in eastern regions of Ontario, with Renfrew county being one of the first areas of settlement,

and as already mentioned, the town of Wilno being the oldest Polish settlement in Canada.

After arriving, new Polish Canadians contributed to the building of our province and country. They helped construct railways, started businesses and became farmers. Plenty of opportunities were seized by them. They became landowners since the government at the time was providing tenders of free land. Additionally, because of the unavailability of workable land at the time, Poles from the Russian and Austrian areas of a partitioned Poland left seeking a better future here.

Of course, Poland has endured a trying history. From wars to partitions, the country has remained strong. During the 20th century, the people of Poland have fought for freedom from the Nazis and from the Communist Soviet Union. Poland has also survived three partitions. Our province—the great province of Ontario—was a place of refuge for those escaping those wars and tyranny.

Poland's commitment to democracy and freedom has a long history. In 1791, a constitution was signed that transformed the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth into a democratic constitutional monarchy. For that time period it was a very rare and progressive document and was viewed as a threat by neighbouring states. Canadians and Poles share similar values of freedom and the rule of law.

This bill is significant because the month of May is important to the Polish people. May 3 is Constitution Day in Poland, and it recognizes the declaration of the Constitution of 1791. So May 3 is celebrated as a national holiday in Poland.

As I conclude, I believe this bill shows how welcoming we are to different cultures and backgrounds here in the province of Ontario. We recognize the diverse accomplishments and contributions of Polish Canadians, and this should not be downplayed. The history of Poland is incredible, and I am proud to say I will support my colleague's legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to briefly speak on the third reading of Bill 18, the Polish Heritage Month Act, and to finish my remarks, as there wasn't enough time on second reading. Just to reiterate, I want to thank my friends the members from Etobicoke–Lakeshore and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for their leadership in co-sponsoring this important bill.

Last week in Mississauga a new monument was unveiled in front of the John Paul II Polish Cultural Centre, the Spiral of Victory, honouring Polish veterans who fought with Canadians and our allies during World War II. Polish and Canadian pilots fought together in the Battle of Britain, and soldiers from both countries helped to liberate the Netherlands and Belgium. A Polish destroyer recovered 95 Canadian soldiers who were trapped at Dieppe. Canadian pilots flew support missions to Poland during the Warsaw Uprising. Even today, Poles fondly remember the 26 Canadian pilots who lost their lives over Poland.

But of course, our alliance is much older than this. Last month I began to share a story, which I'll just finish now. As the Duke of Wellington was leading the British to

victory against Napoleon, the hussars, or the “winged horsemen” of his Polish allies, were among the most effective army unit in Europe. The duke was so impressed, he made the colours of the hussar banner the colours of the British army. In turn, red and white became the colours of the Royal Military College of Canada and of its flag, which George Stanley later used to design our Canadian flag.

As is the way with so many others, the history, ideas, symbols and the people of our two countries are linked together. Today, our two countries continue working together as NATO allies to defend the people of Poland, but also of Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Ukraine from Russian aggression.

Here at home, Polish Canadians have made incredible contributions to building our province and helping shape our culture, our economy, our politics and our identity.

In closing, I want to encourage all Ontarians to learn more about Polish Canadian history and their heritage. Polish Heritage Month will be a great way to encourage this. Again, I want to thank my friends for this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate? Further debate?

Ms. Hogarth has moved third reading of Bill 18, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Polish Heritage Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Before I call for orders of the day, I just want to say that I always appreciate a great debate around the perogy. I think everybody who mentioned it should have to bring some in and let me be the judge.

Orders of the day? The member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: On that note, no further business.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1540.

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Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Jim McDonell, Suze Morrison
Randy Pettapiece, Gurratan Singh
Donna Skelly, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Présidente: Laurie Scott
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Rima Berns-McGown, France Gélinas
Goldie Ghamari, Faisal Hassan
Jim McDonell, Sam Oosterhoff
Laurie Scott, Vijay Thanigasalam
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Taras Natyshak
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Hogarth
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Jessica Bell, Stephen Blais
Stephen Crawford, Rudy Cuzzetto
Christine Hogarth, Michael Mantha
Taras Natyshak, Michael Parsa
Amarjot Sandhu
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Aris Babikian
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser
Aris Babikian, Lorne Coe
John Fraser, Vincent Ke
Laura Mae Lindo, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Jeremy Roberts
Dave Smith, Daisy Wai
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Bhutla Karpoche
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Bhutla Karpoche, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight /
Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations
d'urgence**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin
Sam Oosterhoff, Tom Rakocevic
Donna Skelly, Sara Singh
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell