

Legislative  
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of Ontario



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Thursday  
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Jeudi  
29 mai 2025

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Speaker: Honourable Donna Skelly  
Clerk: Trevor Day

Présidente : L'honorable Donna Skelly  
Greffier : Trevor Day

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 29 May 2025

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 29 mai 2025

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Good morning, everyone.

*Prayers / Prières.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### 2025 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 28, 2025, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Further debate? I recognize the leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Thank you very much, Speaker, and good morning. And good morning to my colleagues who were hanging out with us last night. Good sports.

I'm pleased to be speaking to bill number 2. And I want to say that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Because we're all a bit sleep-deprived this morning—I'm a bit sleep-deprived, although my colleagues look pretty fresh—you only have to endure me for minutes and not hours.

All I simply want to say, because I think it's important to restate this: If you take a look at the budget and what it does for the two most important things that we do in Ontario, which are health care and education—the promise that was Ontario's, that has been Ontario's for so many years, which is, "If you're sick, don't worry; you won't have to reach for your wallet. We'll take care of you. And your kids will all get equal opportunities." Well, that is just not the case now.

The government is underfunding education per student since 2018. We can argue about it, but it's somewhere between \$700 and \$1,500, annually, less than we were spending in 2018. It's not like we're aspiring to make our schools the best schools in the world or give our kids the most opportunity in the world. It's like the government is just saying, "Well, maybe we'll let you keep your head above water," to the schools and school boards.

When it comes to health care—I'll go back again—too many times in this province we know that whether it comes to cataract surgeries or having to go to a nurse practitioner for primary care that's not funded by OHIP, people are being asked for their credit card instead of their OHIP card, which is contrary to what the Premier continues to repeat.

If I wanted to bring it down to what I think about this budget, never has a government spent so much, borrowed so much, incurred so much debt—almost half a trillion

dollars—to do so little with the things that are most important to Ontarians, and that's our health care and our kids' education.

I will yield the floor to my colleague.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** It's a pleasure to be here in the House to debate the budget this morning with my colleague the member for Ottawa South.

Just to reiterate what he has just said, never has a government spent so much to achieve so little. The budget lays out a plan to spend a record \$232.6 billion, with a planned deficit of \$14.6 billion next year. It forecasts flat-lined spending in health care and education, and a decline in post-secondary education. It has little for research and innovation, to keep Ontario at the leading edge. It includes a new \$5-billion fund, without details, to "protect Ontario," largely tied to the implementation of Bill 5. And it invests in transit, including planning for the fantasy tunnel under the 401 and lots of highways, but it is silent again on the basics, such as making the Mimico GO station accessible.

I will say, Speaker, I made a choice to adjust my plan for this debate this morning, given what I witnessed yesterday here in this Legislature, which then forced a line-by-line debate to midnight last night at committee, to review Bill 5. I'm glad that my Liberal caucus colleagues—particularly the member for Kingston and the Islands—were well-prepared to be able to do that, given what Bill 5 needs.

Let's just consider the picture leading up to that debate. The government called an election in February. Why? Already a majority, they felt it was justified because of threats from the US. Really? Is that what was needed to govern through that period? They spent a record \$103.7 million on advertising in the year prior—three times more than the previous year.

Post-election, it takes until mid-April to return to the Legislature. I'm a brand new MPP. I was set up. I was ready to go. We could have come back earlier—on this budget.

We come here, we introduce bills, and then we prepare. We prepare. We come with recommendations. We bring the perspectives of our constituents to the table. We genuinely work with an urgency. We engage fully. And then what happens? Bulldozing again.

A motion was introduced yesterday to just move on—including Bill 24, Bill 9, Bill 11 and Bill 13. They won't go to committee, won't be open to revisions. Today we anticipate two more bills—Bills 6 and 17, both highly controversial, could use some input from stakeholders. Yet,

according to this government, they deserve no opportunity for debate or opportunity to consider revision.

The finance minister spoke in his speech about unity—needing to come together at a time to collaborate, to be strong as a province, to work with the federation and federal government to make Canada strong. And I agree that that's what we need to do.

But here's the thing: I've worked in a lot of successful collaborations in my years as an executive in health care, and never did collaboration involve one party of a collaboration deciding the details and all the other collaborators having no comment, no suggestion or compromise to what would actually happen. I actually wanted to hear from people who knew the business best—which is what this Legislature and committee process is meant to do, but the government doesn't seem to have much interest to do that.

I came here to get things done too. I'm impatient to be sure we can improve things in Ontario. Having a clear plan, outcomes, and responsibly using taxpayer money to get to good outcomes doesn't have to mean it's slow; it just has to be thoughtful, and it can happen quickly too.

This government talks about protecting us, protecting you, like some kind of superhero. Frankly, it's quite insulting to the people we serve in the province to not honour the systems in place to give them a voice. We can do this and govern effectively and efficiently. It seems now the courts will stop Trump on his tariff plans, because by law he doesn't have the ability to do it. This power-and-control approach that we're seeing now seems all too familiar.

Let's turn to Bill 5 and the budget. It includes this \$5-billion fund tied to the bill and the concept of special economic zones—or, shall I say again, the “special lawless zones”—they will provide to government with complete control, including overriding environmental protections that I've heard from so many constituents about, or designating whatever area they would like to do whatever they'd like. When I first listened to it, I understood, actually, where we were trying to go—the idea that maybe mining projects could move more quickly; that this could open up the Ring of Fire to the benefit of Canada. I'm someone who likes to see work move ahead, particularly if it has those benefits for those we're serving. But on Bill 5, the government lost me, because when it started talking about these special lawless zones, with the goal to support more development—it overrides all the protections that were created for a very good reason, and it feels like the greenbelt all over again.

**0910**

I think the thing that threw me off the most was the inclusion of Ontario Place and Dresden. With Ontario Place, it feels like the law—they just want to justify the clear-cutting that has happened and the \$2-billion investment in the Therme spa, giving them permission to do it quietly in whatever way they want, with no accountability or transparency. And with Dresden, it's very clear that they're just not listening to the communities that will be affected or even their local representative.

And finally—we've heard it loud and clear in this Legislature and outside of it: The First Nations leaders are looking for the duty to consult to be fulfilled, and it's not happening.

I think that the budget offers little reassurance, as well, to employers or employees on how those \$5-billion investments designed to address the tariff threat will actually help them. I get these questions from constituents all the time, from small businesses, asking me for the details. I say, “There's something, but we're not really sure how it's going to help you.” From what we can see, the plan is to provide corporate subsidies without conditions—provide billions to corporations, with no requirement to protect jobs, raise wages or guarantee local investment.

In the budget, we see waste: \$2.2 billion on Therme, \$1 billion on making sure that booze was more accessible in convenience stores one year earlier, and \$1.4 billion to relocate the Ontario Science Centre. It's \$4.6 billion that could have gone to a whole lot of other priorities. There are no tax cuts; it could have gone to that. It could have gone to addressing the rise in homelessness.

During my remarks on Bill 24 earlier this week, I actually included a few areas I was happy to see. Some of you might have been there. I was feeling pleased about the \$303 million for community mental health—a seven-year overdue increase in operating budget that was much needed. I like some of the tax adjustments for local business. I think it's important to give that credit.

But today, in watching everything unfold the last couple of days, the anger people are expressing in Queen's Park and outside, my mood around being hopeful is changing. Knowing what has happened in the greenbelt and how it's managed, I just have so little confidence that we're actually going to make the most of this spending.

Let's move to the largest areas of spending in the budget.

Each year, when the budget is released, I read it with interest—even before I was elected as an MPP for Etobicoke-Lakeshore. When I made the choice to run to be an MPP, people asked me, “Why would you decide to run? Why did you choose to run provincially versus federally?” I always state that the reason is, provincial government has incredibly important responsibilities in the areas that really impact people's lives every day: health care, education, post-secondary education, and the social programs that operate in ways that people experience every day—programs that are fundamentally what we value as Canadians, to ensure that people have an equal footing to contribute to society and our economy in the ways they want to. And in those moments in life of health or other crisis—that they won't be decimated, undoing all the good work that they've put into their lives. They won't need to mortgage their home to afford treatment for cancer or their cardiac surgery—know that if there is an economic downturn, which we could experience here, and people lose their jobs or there's little growth in jobs, their children, our next generation, will also be okay.

Beyond that, though, evidence shows that countries that prioritize these foundations such as health care and educa-



tion do better economically. They prosper, and the outlook for young people is strong.

In Canada, we have multiple levels of government that all fund things differently. Taxes are collected, and we make choices about where that money is spent.

The provincial government's role is to use our money to ensure the basics are there. This is not what we see here. Speaker, 68% of the provincial budget is accounted for in health care, education, and post-secondary education, because this level of government actually is charged with addressing them.

Let's talk about minute 29 of the budget speech. Who remembers what happened at minute 29? Does anybody remember?

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** You probably did, yes.

I remember it because it was the first real mention of health care—the single largest investment, and it only gets a real mention, any real attention, more than two thirds of the way through the budget speech. And what does that really say about the government's intentions to improve hallway health care, ensure people can access a family doctor when they need one?

In business, isn't it usual to talk about the areas where you are making the largest investments and what you're going to do to make sure that those investments are successful?

I believe in health care. Honestly, it's probably one of the reasons I'm even sitting here today as a member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore. We have 22,000 people in our community who don't have a family doctor. It's so unusual to see this in an urban area. And then, the government announced the day before the election that they would do something concrete to address it, with \$2.1 billion now—required to take a population approach, to ensuring access to team-based care. They've set a target of 100% attached to primary care in four years. I can't help but get behind this; it's what we ran on as well. It's what's needed. I just really hope that the implementation will manage to actually reach that target, and I'll be watching closely to see how that number in Etobicoke–Lakeshore reduces.

These are the planned investments in health care: in 2025-26, \$91.1 billion; in 2026-27, \$92.4 billion, a 1.4% increase; in 2027-28, \$93.6 billion, a 1.2% increase. This is for the health sector as a whole. It includes the \$2.1 billion for the primary care investment.

How exactly are hospitals, home care providers, long-term-care providers going to pay for the required settled rates in the aftermath of Bill 124? Frozen for so many years, the new contracts provide some much-deserved increases. Inflation in medical supplies is closer to 5%, and we still see the pressures in hospitals. Hospitals in Ontario are the most efficient by far in the country—the lowest per capita spending by a government by over \$1,000 per person, and the costs for in-patients stay the most efficient. Yet, the budget, once again, is setting them up for failure.

You're building hospitals over the next 10 years, and I like that as well. You're seeing the important completion

of hospitals that we announced, like Trillium Health Partners.

But it's not just about buildings. It's about services. It's about funding new therapies. It's about making sure that we're keeping pace with innovation. Research is done in Ontario, yet that care—like rTMS treatment for treatment-resistant depression—is available everywhere else in the world and it's not routinely available here. And then beyond that, the population is growing, so it feels like maybe a 1.1% increase—more than that is needed.

I also want to talk about housing and homelessness. We also need to protect against further exasperating increases in homelessness. It has increased by 25% over the last two years.

I read this quote the other day, but I'm going to read it again, from the Maytree Foundation analysis of the budget: "The government may not be interested in funding supportive housing, but it is certainly not opposed to paying for new beds in other places. To advance its agenda of putting more people in jail and keeping them there longer, the budget includes funding for 942 beds in correctional facilities across the province" really reveals the government's priorities.

This week, my colleague MPP for Kitchener Centre and I introduced a private member's bill on homelessness. It calls for us to actively manage addressing this 25% increase in homelessness, recognize the impact for those who are suddenly without a home. We want to measure because we want to be able to manage it. We want to direct investments to the places that will actually address homelessness. If people have a home and then need other support such as health care—it is an important starting point. How can we consider methods to incent the availability of deeply affordable or even supportive housing?

Bill 17, which is also funded through this budget, makes a minor mention of homelessness. I genuinely hope that this might be an area where we could collaborate with the government to fully develop a strategy that would align to their housing goals.

#### 0920

It was good to see the commitment this week that the \$200 provided by the federal government for ODSP won't be clawed back. But can we also think about adjusting the structure of the shelter component of ODSP, so that if somebody is admitted to hospital—I saw this all the time at CAMH. Somebody gets admitted, they lose their apartment, and then they have nowhere to go—back to the street—and then they lose that component of the ODSP benefit. How can we creatively think about adjusting this?

I think that, in the end, we can be much more strategic about our investment to address homelessness versus investing in incarceration. So that's what the private member's bill is about.

The reality is, we know with the increasing numbers accessing food banks, who are fully employed, the concerns about becoming homeless are only increasing.

Earlier this week, I also highlighted other areas of the budget, such as education, which has been flatlined, and

the spending per child, which is far reduced. I also spoke about—in Bill 24—the transit investments.

But I do just have to mention once again: Before we get carried away with investing millions and millions in fantasy tunnels, can we be sure that the basics are there, such as an accessible train station at Mimico GO, so that if you arrive there in a wheelchair, you can actually get down from the platform?

I could speak to so many more examples in this budget, but I will wrap things up.

Once again, this is all about the government showing us what their priorities are. It has been a focus on a power grab for control and, frankly, bulldozing, without even opportunity for much debate. There's very little commitment to concrete outcomes that will change the lives of Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Questions?

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I was listening to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. I was with her this weekend at the Dorothy Ley Hospice. I'm not sure if she's aware that we've expanded that hospice at Dorothy Ley, with two more beds there. As well, just beside it, we're building a new hospital.

Are you against what our government is doing in your riding for your people?

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** It was great to see you at the hike for the Dorothy Ley Hospice, an important resource in our community.

I said before—I think I mentioned right in my remarks, actually—that I'm very supportive of the investments in Trillium Health Partners, which is located next door.

We need to move even faster, honestly, to expand access to hospice care. We need to think about all these opportunities. This is where the innovation can happen in our health care system, if we actually focus on it and we actually make the money available to do these things. I guess I would ask you back, from the math that I've done—do we really think that the 1.1% increase that we're going to see is going to allow us to do that?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I would agree that this budget shows the government's priorities, and it shows that their priorities are not in the area where the people of Ontario need the help the most. And not only is it their priorities that this budget reflects; it's their attitude towards the things that we value, which would be due process, which would be principles of democracy. It really shows their arrogance, and the fact that it seems that they just think that what we do here is an inconvenience to ramming through the things they want to do.

We had time allocation, which means short debate on important bills—Bills 10, 11, 13, 24.

And this afternoon, we're going to be debating a time allocation of Bills 6 and 17.

And last night, we were here until midnight holding the government to account on Bill 5.

So my question to you is, do you think that this government thinks all of this is just an inconvenience for them—ramming through what they think they want to achieve for themselves, and not the people of Ontario?

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** Thank you for the question.

I'm a brand new MPP, and this is my first session with this government, and this is what I'm seeing—"We are going to time-allocate six bills." And it's not like we're not prepared to do the work. I come here prepared to do the work. "But we're not prepared to listen"—they don't seem to be prepared to listen to stakeholders, experts, the people who know the evidence inside and out. Why can't we just take that time? It doesn't have to be long—it can be quality, and we can get to better decisions.

That's where I have concerns about this budget—and certainly the trust that will be implemented in the way that it needs to be.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Thank you to my colleague for pointing out all the weaknesses in this budget—unfortunately.

In my riding of Ottawa–Vanier, the acute homelessness crisis is linked to mental health and addictions issues, yet there are no tangible measures or solutions offered in this budget to truly address this crisis, and it's really, really concerning for the future. I really don't know what to tell my constituents about what the government is doing or even trying to do to address the crisis.

You spoke about the importance of investing in these areas. I believe you have experience and expertise in this area. You have professional expertise.

Can you speak about what makes you an authority and a good source to talk about the importance of investing in mental health and addictions?

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** Thank you for the question.

I've worked for 27 years in health care. I've worked in hospital leadership. I've worked clinically, providing cancer care. I worked most recently at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health as the senior vice-president for clinical care.

What's needed is a commitment to the development of a full system of care, and understanding the kind of outcomes that we're trying to get to, and a recognition that we are seeing a rise in child and youth mental health issues that needs to be concretely addressed.

I would love to be able to bring that expertise to work. I've talked with the member across the aisle who is responsible for mental health and addictions and offered that—because we cannot let it fail.

Again, it's going to require investment, and when I look at what's reflected in here for health care, it's not going to be sufficient.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I want to thank the member again for being here today.

I know that you're a newly elected MPP.

I remember, in 2018, the night of the election, your former Minister of Health George Smitherman admitted that he had starved health care.

And Kathleen Wynne, in Maclean's, reported that if she had known a pandemic was coming, she would never have starved health care.

In 2018, before we were elected, health care was funded at \$59.4 billion; today, it's \$91 billion, and that's not including the \$60 billion to build hospitals, the \$10 billion to build long-term care.

Are you against all these investments that we're putting into health care for the province of Ontario?

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** Thanks for that question.

I don't know what in my remarks would ever have implied that I don't think we should be investing in health care. Again, what I'm trying to say is that we probably need to be doing some more.

When I look over the course of the next few years, we have not got enough to even keep pace with the labour contracts that we've negotiated subsequent to Bill 124 being in place. During that time, that allowed for a lot of waste—a lot of waste into third parties, private providers, agencies etc. That has happened under your watch. It's part of the reason why I decided to run. I could not stand by any longer and watch these things happen.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**MPP Catherine McKenney:** You and I actually arrived here together, and my question is not—I'm sure I know the answer, but you must be as surprised, or maybe shook, as I am, at just how undemocratic this government is. It is actually quite shocking.

I know that you were an executive in health care, addictions, mental health.

We have nothing in here, really, for new supportive housing, so we're not building supportive housing. There's \$20 million in here for shelters, which, again, is not housing.

**0930**

We've got some 430 new beds going into the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre in London, 66 in Quinte, 250 in Brockville, 25 in the St. Lawrence Valley Correctional and Treatment Centre, and 235 new beds in the Eastern Ontario Correctional Complex. Those are prison beds that we are building.

From your experience, do you see that this is going to have any impact, good or bad, on housing—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you.

Response?

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** Thank you very much for the question.

Again, it's interesting—the strategy that has been selected here, which is, incarcerate people more and then pay for their incarceration.

The business case on supportive housing is pretty clear. For every dollar that you invest, it's actually a \$1.60 return on all the other services, like health care services; on all the other social supports that could be there. When you

look at the cost of what it would take to have somebody in a correctional facility versus actually living in supportive housing—you could fund so many, many more with that amount of money.

Again, I think this just comes down to priorities. We have one of the lowest supportive housing availabilities in the country. It's another area that just needs to be invested in and seen as an investment.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**MPP Paul Vickers:** It's an honour to rise in the Legislature to introduce myself.

*Interjection.*

**MPP Paul Vickers:** Thanks, George.

I would like to thank the constituents of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for giving me the honour to represent you here at Queen's Park. It is my mission to do well for you over the next four years.

I wish to take a moment to congratulate our Speaker on her historic election.

As you know, I come to this house from beautiful Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. What you may not know is that our riding elected the very first female member of Parliament, the great Agnes Macphail, in 1921. Even to this day, 104 years later, she is still a local institution. Children back home quickly learn this fact about their local history. Madam Speaker, it is my wish that 100 years from now, your historic election will be met with a similar sense of pride and young women will draw inspiration from you.

If someone had told me back in school that I would one day become a member of provincial Parliament, I would not have believed them. I was just a skinny farm kid who only ever wanted to work with cattle and ride the tractor. "Most likely to be MPP" was not found in my yearbook.

I took over Vickhaven Farms, our family dairy farm, at a young age, and it has defined my life ever since. From dusk to dawn, if you were looking for me, chances are I was working on our farm on Grey Road 7.

Our farm spans three generations now. We milk 65 head of cattle, and we sell cattle for beef, and we also sell cash crops.

Farming is like no other. It teaches you the value of hard work. Nobody works longer hours than a farmer during the growing season. It also teaches you to trust your gut. Sometimes that gut feeling is to purchase a neighbouring farm that comes up for sale near you. They say you should buy land because they aren't making any more of it. Well, let's just say my wife, Karen, who wanted a new kitchen at the time, gave me a lot of quiet time to think about that one. After a few years, she did get her kitchen.

My agricultural career grew from the barn to the boardroom. I have served on many committees and boards.

The first provincial board I sat on was Gay Lea Foods. I was the youngest board member at the time. While young energy is an asset, there was growing I had to do as a board member. My fellow board members were very gracious with their time and everyone truly cared, not only for the co-operative, but also for each other. Ray Robertson, Stu

Steckle and Ralph Dietrich were board chairs who believed in me and gave me the opportunity to take a leading role in the co-operative. Alan Fisher and John Hill were two gentlemen I travelled with back and forth from Toronto many times. They always listened to my points of view, and I learned from theirs. You'd be surprised how many problems a few farmers can solve during a two-hour car ride.

I was fortunate. Gay Lea Foods belonged to the Dairy Farmers of Canada. Each year, we attended their conference in different parts of the country. This took our family to the east coast and the west. Highlights included the Bay of Fundy, as well as Banff and Jasper. Many times, the journey getting there was just as much fun, if not more, than the holiday itself.

Later on, when I became the chair of the board, we had a change in CEO. I was lucky. The CEO was great to work with, and I say that with a bit of a wink; hopefully he's watching. We had many great conversations about the co-operative and life itself. We were close friends then, and we still talk on a regular basis. Michael Barrett is his name. He is another person who has helped guide me on my journey.

Through this, I learned about the importance of governance and policy and how it impacts the ability to produce the food we eat. I learned just how important Canada's supply-managed dairy sector is for family-run dairy farms.

Fun fact: Supply management and I were both born around the same time, but I think our nation's decision to move to supply management will age better than myself.

After my time at Gay Lea, the 2018 municipal election took place. I ran for a council seat in the municipality of Meaford and was successful.

Municipal politics is a difficult job, as many in this House will know. Affecting people's day-to-day lives can be very gratifying, but people are very passionate, which I quickly learned. You can be lobbied passionately, but you must keep in mind that the decisions you make should be positive for the majority and not for the vocal minority.

Later, I had the opportunity to join the board of Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Through the OFA, I learned a great deal about Ontario's diverse agricultural sector. Many of the leaders I served with—including Peggy, Drew, Sara and Ethan—and I have all become close friends. I am confident they will carry the torch forward.

As many of my colleagues have already alluded to, it takes a village to make an MPP. Many people have influenced my path to where I stand today. Some of them are no longer with us, except in spirit.

The first was my mother. She was the farmer's wife who did everything she could to take care of her baby boy. I was the youngest of my siblings and the only boy. I'm the only boy in my family. I have three older sisters. I'm also the youngest of all my cousins. But she always tried to protect me.

I learned that she could have a very sharp tongue. I remember, one day when she was doing laundry, she was—and I was only four or five at the time—using a

washing machine we had to pull into the bathrooms. Something happened, and I can't recall exactly what I said, but I will never forget her words: "Be careful what you wish for, because sometimes wishes do come true." That line has stuck with me my whole life. Since then, I've always tried to think carefully before making decisions.

She was a kind woman, but I don't think life was always kind to her. Living in the northeast of Grey county on a small dairy farm in the 1960s and 1970s could not have been easy. Money was tight, and there wasn't much for life's extras.

Still, she was always there for me and supported me in taking over the farm after my father passed away. She did tell me, though, that if I wasn't ready to take it on, she would have no problem selling the farm. She had had enough of farming, but I was just getting started.

*Interjections.*

**0940**

**MPP Paul Vickers:** In later years—this is when I'll need the clapping—when Parkinson's disease had taken its hold on her voice and her voice was barely a whisper, we would—sorry about this. I planned this a long time ago, and it has taken a while. Kleenexes—I had a cold back then; I don't know how. Anyway, I appreciate this. Thank you, everyone, for your patience.

When Parkinson's disease had taken its hold on her voice and her voice was barely a whisper, we would get takeout from Dairy Queen in Meaford. We would sit at the local park, watching the waters of Georgian Bay go in and out. Her soft touch and the loving look in her eyes made those moments the most special and the kindest I've ever known.

My father, Harman, passed away when I was 21. To this day, he remains a major influence on my life and career. He taught me honesty, humility, determination and a strong work ethic—values which I've tried to carry on with me. He never just told you to do a job; he'd pick up a pitchfork, hand you one too, and get to work beside you. We rarely spoke while working, but I could always feel what he didn't say. While growing up, politics was often discussed at our home. My father served as a municipal councillor and deputy reeve in our local municipality. He started our family's foray into political life. He was a good man—just taken too soon.

I'm the youngest of four siblings, with three older sisters. That might have worked in my favour. I've been told they paved the way, making things easier for me, or maybe they just wore out our parents, so by the time I came along, I had more freedom.

My oldest sister, Ellen, made my teenage years smoother, and she keeps me humble. She moved back to Meaford and has become a well-loved part of the community. I have even had people tell me they only voted for me because she convinced them that I was a good guy.

Thank you, Ellen.

Barb, my next sister, has always lived in the area and has been a constant in our family's life. She often tells stories of all the peas she had to pick and pod, growing up, so the rest of us could eat well. She treats our four kids as

her own, and our traditional Sunday dinners feel special, with every detail made right.

Lorna, my closest sister in age, moved to the US in the 1990s to grow her nursing career. We don't see or talk often, but when we do, it feels like she never left.

There have also been many neighbours who have helped shape me. Growing up in a farming community, your neighbours are your first friends and those who help in times of need. Families like the Canns, Ormsbys, Almonds, McCauslands, Jacks, Wileys, Merrifields, Davisons, Pedlars, Kerrs, Fosters, and Sue, who's a very close friend, have all touched my life in some way. My community at St. James Anglican Church has always been there—a safe place for guidance, good advice, and the occasional nap. Faith is important to me. Families like the Alderices, Woodhouses and Merrifields make this place a special place.

When I served on council, the mayor was Barb Clumpus. She also shaped my understanding of public service. While we didn't always agree, I have great respect for the way she led our municipality.

Of course, my family deserves the biggest thanks. My wife, Karen, who I met at a Junior Farmers dance, has been our family's rock. We wed in 1991. She has supported me in all my roles. Soon after, in 1993, we welcomed our daughter Stephanie. Afterwards, our son Franklin, daughter Cassandra, and son Jack were all born. It isn't easy caring for four children while being a farmer's wife. There's a lot of pressure on the one staying at home. Still, she maintained a full-time job and worked in local health care, helping provide the lifestyle our family enjoyed.

My daughter Stephanie was wed a couple of summers ago. And I look forward to my youngest daughter, Cass—her wedding is in just over a week.

**MPP George Darouze:** Good timing.

**MPP Paul Vickers:** That's right.

We raised our family as a typical farming family. We were active in 4-H, Junior Farmers, and minor hockey. Winters took our family to cold arenas across rural Ontario. Often, Karen and I would have to divide and conquer to get everyone where they needed to go. Saturdays in the summer were spent showing dairy cattle at fairs across the area.

Three of my children are graduates of agriculture programs at the post-secondary level.

Sundays on the farm included a nice dinner and drinks.

These are fond memories, and much fun was had, but when you live on a farm, the cows still need to be milked twice a day, every day. They don't care how much fun you've had that day.

My two sons, Franklin and Jack, are now the third generation of Vickhaven Farms, continuing our farming agriculture legacy.

Boys, I know you'll do great.

None of us get here without a campaign team. My campaign was managed by Karen MacInnis. She also served members of this House as a constituency assistant for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for over 20 years. Carol Reaney from Owen Sound was instrumental. She donates

her time to so many great community causes. She gave up her February to support me. Don Standen from Wiarton was also a big help. Few know the Bruce Peninsula as well as he does. Lisa LaPierre from Owen Sound kept me on time. Graham from Chatsworth, who walked every single mile that I walked, managed the canvassing and events. Ted Miller and former member of the House Rick Byers joined our door-knocking crew when they could.

I also have to mention that Don Dietrich from Desboro, Bev Nicol from Chesley, and Tom Ruff from Tara were big in helping me secure the party nomination. Meeting the Chesley Coffee Club gave me the momentum that I needed.

Tom Carbert from Meaford and his team took on the wintertime task of managing signs—and there's snow up in Bruce Grey-Owen Sound. He has supported me in my endeavours over the years. We go way back. His work in farm equipment sales has led to many interactions over the years.

My wife, Karen, and eldest daughter, Stephanie, have been there through all my campaigns; not all were successful. I'm reminded of this as a sign sits on my desk stating, "Third time's the charm." Perseverance will serve me well in this house.

February in Bruce and Grey counties is great for skiing and snowmobiling, but not for door canvassing. Our campaign took us from the Wiarton Willie Festival, where he predicted an early spring—the lying little bugger—to doors and communities across our 6,500-kilometre riding. Looking back, I remember this month fondly, although there were struggles at times. Bev Harron, a long-time volunteer, said to me once, "We did a winter campaign once before, and since then I have always been trying to forget it."

Bruce Grey-Owen Sound is known for some of Ontario's best landmarks. Tobermory and Sauble Beach are the highlights, but there's more than that. The shores of Georgian Bay and Lake Huron grace us with beautiful sunrises and sunsets and brisk winter winds. The highlands of South Grey look down on the rest of our province, as the highest point in southern Ontario. I have been fortunate enough to have hiked Machu Picchu and through Nepal, but the Bruce Trail is a personal favourite. You can hike the same parts of the Bruce Trail but go in a different direction, and it gives you a completely different view.

Bruce Grey-Owen Sound is also diverse. We have members of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, with whom I seek to build trust throughout my term. We have new immigrant communities, old-order Amish families and Mennonites, who I've had many dealings with.

I welcome the members of the Legislature to come visit Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and see Vickhaven Farms in action.

As I begin this journey, I bring some lessons about agriculture with me. The first is patience. Good things take time to grow—and our work here is no different. The second is to plant a seed today, knowing you won't reap its benefits until later in the year.

As we begin this term, if we show patience with one another and know that we may not be the ones who will benefit from the hard work today, we will serve Ontarians well in these hard times.

I'm excited to collaborate with all my colleagues to move big projects forward and to protect Ontario from economic uncertainty.

**0950**

I value agriculture as an economic driver in this province.

There's an old saying—and please, the lawyers in the crowd, do not take offence—that a couple times in life, you may need a doctor and a lawyer; however, three times a day, you need to eat. Food comes from a farmer. After all, everyone always has hundreds of different problems, until you are hungry—and then you have one.

While few would have expected the skinny farm kid from Grey Road 7 to make it here, George, I'm here now. As I take my green chair with my golden member's pin on my lapel, the privilege is not lost on me. It is my mission to make Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and all those who helped me get here proud of my work.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Questions and responses for the member?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I listened intently to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who I have known for many years, respected for many years. As a fellow farmer, he really tugged at my heart.

My father got sick. I quit school when I was 17 and took over the farm, and I ended up here.

**MPP Paul Vickers:** It's hard.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes.

The one about how he occasionally fell asleep in church—we went to the Presbyterian church. I was the only farmer, and I fell sound asleep. The minister said, “Shh,” and everybody left the church. I woke up and thought I died, and I thought, “Well, at least it's not hot.”

I would like the member to expand on what it really feels like—things that only farmers can understand, like what it feels like when the soil is the right temperature and you can go to plant, or when you know your best cow is going to calve. Can you expand on what it really feels like—something that other people never get the chance to experience?

**MPP Paul Vickers:** Thanks to my fellow MPP from the north—sorry; I can't remember your riding, and I can't use your name. Thanks for just throwing that lob ball in there.

I don't think a lot of people do understand the smell of dirt in the spring, the smell of fresh-cut hay—and it's all coming together, the sun and the rain and everything else. It's hard to explain it to people.

More than a couple of weeks ago—a couple of months, maybe six weeks ago; I can't remember. We don't calve out many of our cows anymore, because they calve in another barn. They do it by themselves. If you leave them alone, they're better off. The less interactions cattle have with people, the better they are. That's why robots work so well. Anyway, I got up to the barn to feed the dry cows,

and one was calving. I thought, “Jeez, I haven't calved a cow in a while. What do I do? Do I leave it or do I help it? What happens if something goes wrong?” You come back in an hour, and the calf is dead—it's always not good. Anyway, I decided to grab some baler twine and went into the pen, put it on the legs, pulled that calf out and watched it take its first breath. You make sure it gets going. I can't explain what that is, but it's a feeling that only somebody who has been there can explain. You know it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Questions?

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** Congratulations to the member on your inaugural speech. It was so lovely to hear you speak about a part of the world that I also have such an appreciation for, having grown up up that way. Certainly, as you say, the tip of the Bruce and Tobermory is probably one of the best places in the world to visit, and the hike down to Stormhaven, you'll never regret—so I'll look forward to coming up and taking you up on your offer to do that.

I am interested; if you were to pick one thing that you have heard from your constituents that they really hope you will bring into focus while you're here, what would that one thing be?

**MPP Paul Vickers:** Thank you for that question.

I guess there were a couple of things. Obviously, health care is a big issue up in our area. We have an aging population, so they want to make sure the health care system is there for them at this point in their life. The other part is, they want to make sure that I speak for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound—that I don't speak for the people of Toronto, I don't speak for the people up east or up in Ottawa. They want to make sure that their voice is heard. I think you can do that. You don't always have to be the loudest out here on the floor to do that. There are lots of quiet conversations and opportunities like this to get to know me, and I think I can convey that out.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you to my colleague for his great remarks this morning.

I know he is still a farmer. Being a farm kid, as many of my colleagues will know in this place, I was just wondering if my colleague can elaborate a little bit on what he would think the best lesson—I don't know; whether it was mucking out stalls on a Saturday—would be, that he's taking from his time growing up on a farm, and still obviously being an active farmer, to this place.

What do you think is going to help you most in this new role that you have?

**MPP Paul Vickers:** Thank you for that question, my friend from Perth–Wellington.

I think sometimes less talk and more action is something. I'm trying not to hash in back into last night, because last night was last night—but don't think that didn't just gut me as hard as it did. Let's just get to the work and get it done. I think that's where I'll go with it. You've just got to get to work. You get up in the morning, you pull your pants on, you go downstairs, you get your

glass of water, and you go out to the barn and you start working. It's just such a natural thing for me to do. So let's be more active.

**MPP George Darouze:** And get it done.

**MPP Paul Vickers:** Get 'er done.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Question?

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** To the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound: What a wonderful inaugural speech you just did. It was very, very heartwarming, may I say. I want to welcome you here.

The reason I say that is because I listened—and you said to me about your mother, and how you were in Meaford and you went to the Dairy Queen. My grandparents had a cottage up in Meaford area, right by Ravenna, so if you blinked your eyes, you missed it. It is beautiful up there, and I will come back and visit.

Next week is probably a very special moment for you. You'll be walking your daughter down the aisle. So cherish that as much as you just cherished what you just said to this House.

I want to ask you, what wish will you ask that you hope comes true—of your whole journey being an MPP?

**MPP Paul Vickers:** Thank you for that question.

I hope I can bring awareness. I hope I can bring movement.

It just feels like sometimes we get bogged down. I wish we didn't have the whole thing last night. We get bogged down in the whole part of that, that I just wish would go quicker.

It's to bring things back to my community, back to my riding, that are important to them, and make sure that we aren't forgotten or just known as the beautiful little spot up the Bruce Peninsula.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I recognize the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Mike Harris:** It's wonderful to hear new members get up in this place and tell us a little bit more about themselves. Often, we get so caught up in the day-to-day that we forget to kind of slow things down and think about the real reasons as to why we're here.

So thank you for that. It's a good reminder today.

**1000**

My grandparents on my mother's side ran a dairy in North Bay. I'm no stranger to the industry. I used to run in and around the tanks and pull the hoses and all the stuff for them when I was younger. I can still remember the very distinct smell, which was not particularly pleasant, of all the hot water mixing in with the milk—and oh, boy. It gave me an opportunity early on to understand the importance of the agriculture industry to the province of Ontario.

I wonder if you could touch a little bit on some of your experiences and how you're going to be looking to drive that home to the people of Ontario and truly make sure that you're helping to raise that industry.

**MPP Paul Vickers:** Thank you for your question.

I guess the biggest thing—and I think it's starting to improve. It's all about recognition or getting the information out about agriculture to all the people who don't have

a real touch, whether it's in their riding—or never being on a farm before. I think education and trying to make sure that we aren't the forgotten, lost industry of Ontario, because we are big—\$52 billion in GDP. There aren't many other industries in Ontario that can match that sort of output that the agriculture and the food processing industry has here in Ontario. There are some opportunities. I think we can help move the agriculture industry along—and I hope they get solved. Fertilizer and fuel—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you.

Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Who wants to follow that speech? That was one of the best speeches I've heard in this place. Maybe we have a Conservative version of John Vanthof here. A lot of memories came back, listening to him. I've spent a lot of time in his part of the world, usually at the fishing at the Salmon Spectacular festival. The only experience I have with farming is getting chased out of a farmer's field when I was trying to catch trout on someone's private property. There are some beautiful, beautiful areas there.

That was a great speech, so thank you for that.

I was pleasantly surprised to be able to speak to the budget this morning and share a few thoughts. I have a few minutes to do that.

I'll start by saying that I was pretty optimistic about this budget, frankly. I had an opportunity, a few weeks ago, to attend a Skills Ontario training breakfast here in Toronto. A lot of members of the government were there. It was a great announcement—to spend an extra billion dollars on skills training, in addition to the \$1.5 billion that's already spent. That's money that's going to be going to people for some of the most important training that we can be doing now in the province, especially given the tariff situation. My friend mentioned the \$303 million, I think, for mental health funding. That's also good news. So there's a lot of good news in the budget, and I was pretty optimistic about it.

Obviously, the last 48 hours or so has soured a lot of people's expectations because, quite frankly, between Bill 5 and time allocation, this is not the way many of us see government operating and the way that is a responsible way to consult with the public and get folks' opinion. I'm a soccer fan, and unlike my disappointment with the Leafs—I am a Liverpool supporter, and we actually won this year. This budget, and especially the last 48 hours, kind of reminds me of when a team scores an own goal, which is when you shoot the ball in your own net. I think this was very much avoidable. What I've seen over the last 48 hours is a very clumsy kind of legislative agenda that has left a lot of people out.

I especially don't like the way that the First Nations that we have a responsibility to deal with fairly—how that has rolled out. I really appreciate the work that my friend from Kiiwetinoong has done in the last few days. He has done a great job—as well as my friend from Sudbury, our mining expert, who has done a great job. I'm really proud of my

colleagues for holding government to account, which is our job.

I got a call yesterday about a water leak at Welland Hospital, a hospital in my riding. It was a really bad water leak—so bad, as a matter of fact, that they had to shut part of the hospital down, and a whole bunch of surgeries had to be rescheduled. It's an old hospital, and it needs to be rebuilt. That's one of the things that I fought for in the election. I believe most of the people in that area of my riding, in Welland, voted for me because I've been talking about it for years and that's the most important issue to them.

Years ago, under a former government, the health system actually tried to shut down the Welland Hospital completely. My predecessor, Cindy Forster, fought tooth and nail, along with the mayor at the time, and the NDP MP at the time, Malcolm Allen. There was a huge public outcry, and they ended up saving the hospital. Everyone recognizes now what a huge mistake that would have been, under that former government—to close the hospital down. But they have reduced emergency surgeries at Welland Hospital. Everyone in this house has certainly talked about that. It was supposed to be temporary, but it became permanent. After-hours surgical procedures no longer happen there.

People coming from other parts of south Niagara, where, in Fort Erie and Port Colborne, urgent care centres are slated to close in 2028—if they end up at the Welland Hospital, where we already have, by the way, a huge EMS problem and a huge ambulance off-loading issue, they would then have to wait for another ambulance, to be taken to Niagara Falls, where, yes, a new hospital is being built, which the minister continues to raise whenever I ask a question, but that's not going to be finished until 2028-29.

So health care in the Niagara region is a huge mess.

It absolutely amazes me that in a budget where so much money is spent, there is not more specific health care infrastructure being rolled out.

Specifically, even in Niagara, where the South Niagara Hospital, which is actually in Niagara Falls—those people in south Niagara can't actually figure out why they call it the South Niagara Hospital, because it's actually in Niagara Falls—the ability to move forward with those plans is wrapped up with the rebuild plans for the Welland Hospital. In order to do all of that and to renovate and rebuild the Welland Hospital, they need a planning grant, which is simply money that could have been in the budget that would go towards starting the process of planning the rebuild of that hospital.

Here we are in a situation we all know about, and money is being—we're talking about spending money on infrastructure as stimulus as we go through the tariff issues. We have continually raised the importance of rebuilding hospitals, building new hospitals, addressing the infrastructure issues in our schools, which is a huge problem. And that creates jobs.

I had a young man from the carpenters' union join my campaign team in the election. He just showed up and said, "I want to go out and campaign." I said, "By the way, why

did you show up?" He said, "Well, you've been fighting for a new hospital in Welland, and carpenters build hospitals."

To be fair, I think this government has done a pretty good job of dealing with the skilled trades. They put a lot of money into training centres. I talked earlier about the skills training money that was rolled out in the budget.

Here's an opportunity to address specific issues in our ridings and make life better for people by providing better health care, giving them hope by pushing forward plans to build new facilities, like the hospital in Welland. We could keep some of the urgent care centres open that are closing around the province—all kinds of opportunities that I feel were lost in the budget.

**1010**

Obviously, I'm going to continue fighting for that money.

I hope the government realizes that when we ask questions in the Legislature—we often hear a bunch of numbers rolled out, but when people at home listen to the answers that the government gives, they don't see that money flowing, actually, where they live in their communities. What they see are problems. They see ambulance off-load delays. They see emergency departments scaling back. They see urgent care centres close. They see 18-hour waits. So the government can talk about all the numbers they want, throw them out here in question period, but somebody sitting there listening to this knows that nothing is improving in their community.

One of the ways that we can give people hope and improve things is if we use budgets to actually flow money to communities for that much-needed infrastructure—so that was a disappointment, not seeing that.

We've talked many times about housing. My colleagues from St. Catharines and Niagara Falls asked a question the other day about the south Niagara waste water treatment plant that is absolutely crucial to the Niagara region if we want to continue building housing. All of the mayors have come together, and they've approached this government and asked for that infrastructure guarantee. They've asked for a one-third/one-third/one-third split with the federal and provincial governments, and they basically feel they've been brushed off by this government. Here we have this budget—once again, a chance to put real infrastructure dollars specifically in the budget to move things like that forward to help meet housing targets. Yet, it hasn't happened, and the municipality is being brushed off when, in fact, if we could move forward with that treatment plant, the result would be being able to move forward with housing. Niagara has been pretty successful and has tried very hard to work with the government, even municipalities—smaller ones like the one I live in, Thorold, which has been begging for housing targets so they can get in on funding, and they haven't been able to do that. There was mention of that in a recent bill, and I hope that happens.

Certainly, these infrastructure dollars, if we're spending this money—and we've all seen the budget forecast. No government has ever spent the amount of money that this



government is spending and plans to spend. So people want to see something. That's their money. that's their tax dollars. They want to see something in their communities happening, especially when there are crucial needs in health care and in housing, which are the two issues that I most certainly heard about the most in the election campaign.

Folks will know that next Wednesday, I have a private member's motion coming forward to eliminate hospital parking fees. That's the third issue that I campaigned on in the election. My issues were health care, housing, and hospital parking fees—because just before the election, in an untimely kind of decision, the health system decided to once again jack up parking fees. Most of the people in my riding feel that no one should have to worry about paying for parking when they go to the hospital. Right now, people are spending hundreds, even thousands of dollars out of their pocket to access care, whether it's for regular treatments, emergency visits, or to support loved ones. Most people feel—and I see that from the tens of thousands of folks who have signed our petition—it's unfair to charge health care workers and patients and their families to park. The workers are literally going to work to save lives.

We had one person in Niagara, who came forward during the election, who had spent \$7,000 on parking fees for visiting two sick family members in the hospital. They didn't have enough money to pay their rent already, and they don't know how they're going to pay those bills. That's not something that should be happening in our health care system—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I truly apologize to the member, but it is now time for members' statements.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** As we celebrate AccessAbility Week and look forward to Portuguese Heritage Month, I want to thank the Minister of Finance for providing \$16 million in the 2025 Ontario budget to help our friends at the Luso Canadian Charitable Society provide a new facility in Hamilton for Ontarians with disabilities.

I also want to congratulate several organizations in Mississauga–Lakeshore on their recent grants from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Armagh House, Peel's only transitional housing facility for victims of domestic violence, will receive \$764,000 for several initiatives, including a new accessibility ramp between their two buildings.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region will receive \$436,000 for exciting new Reading to Animals programs to help youth with disabilities learn to read.

Options Mississauga printing service, which just celebrated their 30th anniversary, will receive \$36,000 for

more accessible equipment to help their employees with intellectual disabilities provide a wide range of services to customers, just across the street from my constituency office in Port Credit.

Speaker, I want to congratulate all these non-profits again, and I want to thank them for everything they do every day to help remove barriers to accessibility and inclusion for people living with disabilities in Mississauga and across the province of Ontario.

### SUPERSTACK

**MPP Jamie West:** Speaker, today I'm going to talk about the Superstack, which I know is near to you in your hometown, in Capreol.

The Superstack has a special place in my heart. Construction started the year I was born. Growing up, you would watch the plume and you would watch the Superstack while driving home on Highway 69. It was a beacon, letting you know you were almost home.

I worked at the smelter for 17 years. When I was hired and I told my son—he was a toddler at the time—where I was working, he said, "You're going to make clouds."

Well, the year I was elected was the year that we stopped making clouds. The clean-air project that showed that mining could be done sustainably and in a safe way was finally completed and captured all the SO<sub>2</sub>.

In the 17 years I spent in the smelter, I'd look at the stack very often. Smelter workers can tell what's going on in the plant by what's coming out of that stack. You'd know how hard your shift was going to be or how easy it would be. There were some days when you would see a tiny little trickle come out, and you would know you would be working really hard that night.

The Superstack has always been something important to me, and the reason I want to talk about it is, because of the success of the clean-air project with Vale and the partnership with the steelworkers and the contractors who worked on it, we're going to start to disassemble that. After 53 years, the icon of my city is going to start to come down. I think it's a positive thing for mining and for my community that we had that effect on the environment and that we've moved forward to show that in Sudbury we lead the way when it comes to green mining.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I was in Sudbury when they were building it, actually, and I remember when there were some workers trapped on the very top, enduring a storm. Do you recall that?

I recognize the member for Ajax.

### TOWN OF AJAX

**Mr. Rob Cerjanec:** It's an honour to rise today and wish the town of Ajax a happy 70th birthday this year. It's important to remember where it all started. Before Ajax's founding as a town, it was the site of a wartime munitions centre during World War II—the largest shell-filling and assembly plant in the entire Commonwealth.

This past December, the government of Canada recognized the historic significance that Defence Industries Ltd. and the people who worked there—primarily women, who were known as the “bomb girls”—played in the Allied victory.

And just last week, the town of Ajax unveiled a heritage plaque outside the plant manager’s apartment to highlight its significance to our town’s history.

Ajax’s journey from a wartime munitions centre to the vibrant, diverse and growing community we see today is a testament to its resilience, its innovation and its spirit.

As the member for Ajax, I’m proud about how engaged and passionate our community is about its future, and I’m proud to serve as their representative. We’re already getting stuff done together right here in this House.

Happy birthday, Ajax.

Congratulations to all the students in Ajax who are graduating this June. Whether you’re graduating from secondary school and moving on to this next chapter in your life in the workplace, an apprenticeship, or post-secondary, or for our youngest learners in kindergarten, may you have a wonderful summer full of fun, sun, and time with friends. Congratulations.

1020

### SHROOMFEST

**MPP George Darouze:** On Friday, May 2, the 18th annual Shroomfest took place in Metcalfe. This men’s-night-out fundraising dinner and auction got its name from the area being one of Canada’s largest mushroom producers. Event sponsor Carleton Mushroom Farms produces more than 10 million pounds of mushrooms each year.

The event was started by Al and Judy Graham as an event to support charities and non-profit organizations. Speaker, 100% of every dollar raised is donated to local charities, hospitals and programs for seniors and youth.

Al and Judy ran a catering company for many years. After catering many women’s-night events, they decided to start a men’s-night fundraiser. Judy was the driving force of Shroomfest, doing all the administration and organizational work.

The event is approaching \$1 million for money raised for the community. Last year’s event raised a record \$157,000; Al says this year’s total will be more.

A year ago, on May 14, 2024, Judy Graham passed away.

Al has continued Shroomfest with a strong team of volunteers, along with generous donors and sponsors.

Shroomfest has become a beautiful legacy for Judy Graham. She gave her heart and soul to this event and to our community.

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Last night, the Ontario NDP successfully stalled the passing of Bill 5 at committee—a contentious and unconstitutional mining bill that strips away environmental protections, rips the Endangered Species Act, kicks workers in the face,

overrides Indigenous sovereignty and even municipal bylaws and provincial laws, using the excuse of Donald Trump’s tariffs. Only on Tuesday did this government receive over 500 submissions to Bill 5. The next day the government accelerated the clause-by-clause review, which would have allowed them to pass that bill.

Under questioning, we confirmed that the government’s committee members never read the submissions—how could they? There were 500 of them. Yet they wanted to pass Bill 5 under the cloak of darkness, when the journalists and most observers had left the building. This is dirty politics. It’s irrefutable evidence that this government was never interested in public feedback.

First Nations chiefs have advised the government that development is indeed welcome, but only with free, prior and informed consent. Without this, they will bring back Idle No More, a 2012 movement that led to country-wide protests and road, highway and rail blockades.

Speaker, the Premier and his government have been warned. On Monday morning, when the bill comes back to committee, the thunderous roar of the north will be ready to greet them, and so will we.

### VOLUNTEERS

**MPP Billy Denault:** It’s always a privilege to have the opportunity to share the wonderful things taking place in the Ottawa Valley.

I want to recognize volunteers and all they do for us in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

This past Saturday, I had the opportunity to join the Palmer Rapids Lions Club to celebrate the club’s 35th anniversary. Such an important milestone was made more apparent with the long list of accomplishments the club achieved over the course of its service to the community.

On Sunday, a local community champion, Gerald Tracey, was recognized for his lifelong community volunteer service with the redesignation of Centennial Park to Gerald Tracey Park. His long list of service and advocacy to the community of Bonnechere Valley and to the Ottawa Valley as a whole fully encapsulates why this dedication is deserving. May it be a beacon to everyone on what you can accomplish with enough grit and determination.

Today, there is a volunteer appreciation day event in Barry’s Bay to recognize the many volunteers for community organizations like Hospice, Valley Manor, Barry’s Bay and area home support, and St. Francis Memorial Hospital. While I am not there physically, I am there in spirit. I want to acknowledge all that you do and extend my appreciation to every one of you.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our communities. When your volunteer base is healthy, your communities are healthy. And we are pretty fortunate, in the Ottawa Valley, to have some pretty healthy communities.

I want to take the time to commend all those who do so—your efforts are so vital to our rural communities, and they are appreciated not only by myself but no doubt by all of those here in the House today.

## MARISA SMITH

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** It's an honour to rise today to celebrate the recipient of the 2025 Lois Fairley Nursing Award, Marisa Smith. The Lois Fairley award is presented annually by the Windsor-Essex chapter of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, in recognition of exemplary compassion, professionalism and exceptional dedication to patient care and nursing.

Following her incredible career start at Erie Shores HealthCare, Marisa now works as an operating room nurse at Windsor Regional Hospital. In her two years there, she has proven to be a steady, calming presence, ensuring patients are comfortable and well cared for from pre-op to recovery.

Marisa's clinical experience, expertise and compassionate demeanour make her an invaluable part of the Windsor Regional Hospital team. She ably helps surgeries run smoothly while making sure each patient feels respected and at ease.

Marisa, congratulations, and thank you for your dedication to nursing and to our whole community. You've already made a remarkable impact, and we look forward to seeing your legacy continue to shine.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Mme France Gélinas:** Last Friday, there was a deadly accident on Highway 101, just near Foleyet. Two people were seriously injured. A minor coming off shift, fully trained in first aid, was the first one on the site and was able to help the people seriously injured. He knew to call 911, so he called 911.

Do you know what happens when you dial 911 in my riding? You get, "This number is not in service." You call again, and then you get, "This number is not in service," so you dial 0. The person who answers the phone at 0 tells you, "No, you have to dial 911. This is an emergency." But there is no 911 service in Nickel Belt. The police are there. The ambulance is there. The fire truck is there. But you have to memorize the 1-800, 1-877 and 1-866 numbers that change dozens of times just on that highway.

A 71-year-old man from Chapleau died. The other man is in serious condition in the hospital. Their families are wondering: What if Ontario did what every other province did and brought 911 everywhere? Would their loved ones still be here today? I wonder the same thing.

## TAKE YOUR MPP TO SCHOOL WEEK

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to share highlights from my recent visit to Gananoque Secondary School as part of Take Your MPP to School Week.

I was accompanied by director of education Ron Ferguson, superintendent Lori Taylor, and trustees John McAllister and Michel LaBonté.

We were warmly welcomed by students and led through the school by principal Christena Harrow, whose passion for student success was clear throughout the visit.

We dropped in on the Power Up Program, where students were getting involved in a lively art project.

We also visited a grade 9 math class, where students were actively engaged in learning the Pythagorean theorem.

Admittedly, I was more in my element speaking with the grade 10 civics and careers class about the role of an MPP and the importance of civic involvement at a young age.

Our tour concluded in the school's hospitality space, which has a well-equipped kitchen facility that supports hands-on learning and career exploration. I learned how the program teaches students more than just food prep. It builds real-world skills like teamwork, time management and customer service that apply not just throughout the kitchen but throughout their life.

Speaker, it was a pleasure to visit Gananoque Secondary School to see first-hand the dedicated students and staff.

I have just one thing to say: Go Trojans!

REPORT, FINANCIAL  
ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: a report entitled 2025 Ontario Budget Note, from the Office of the Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I would like to welcome the many injured workers who travelled to be here today to mark the first official Injured Workers Day taking place this Sunday, June 1. There are members here representing the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups, the injured migrant workers support group, and the Injured Workers Community Legal Clinic. Welcome to your House. Thank you so much for coming.

**Hon. Graham McGregor:** I beg your indulgence. We have lots of guests this morning from the veterans' community—many former active service members and organizations that support our veterans. We had the honour, with some of my PC caucus colleagues, to award these folks the King Charles III Coronation Medal this morning, and I want to welcome them to the House.

1030

Please welcome Lieutenant Colonel, Ret'd, Peter MacLaurin, treasurer of the military family resource centre; Rick Seymour, CEO of Together We Stand Foundation; James Hogarth, national executive director of Helmets to Hardhats Canada; Jonathan White from the Boilermakers; Jeff Musson, founder of Coding for Veterans; Laurie Ogilvie, vice-president, military family services, Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services branch; Second Class Sergeant, Ret'd, Russell Dalton, regional manager of Commissionaires Great Lakes; Vic Sing from the Royal Canadian Legion; Alisia DeMelo from the Commissionaires Great Lakes; Corporal, Ret'd,

Christopher Lock; Namita Joshi, chief program officer of True Patriot Love; Nick Booth, CEO of True Patriot Love; Commander Paul Smith from HMCS York; Lieutenant Commander Stefan Pohl, HMCS York; Corporal, Ret'd, Alan Roy, Royal Canadian Legion; Bombardier, Ret'd, Todd Stride, senior manager of the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services branch; Lieutenant Commander, Ret'd, Rob Francis, board member of the Vimy Ridge foundation; Richard Martin, chairman of Wounded Warriors Canada; and, last but certainly not least, Captain, Ret'd, John Atkin, Commissionaires Great Lakes.

Let's give them a big round of applause. Thanks for—  
*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Stop the clock. I recognize the member for Ottawa–Vanier.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I would like to welcome Colin Saravanamuttoo and Erin Ryan from World Animal Protection, and Kira Berkeley from AEL Advocacy, who is also from my riding of Ottawa–Vanier. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** I would like to recognize Ibrahim Siddiqi, who is from my riding of Oakville North–Burlington—he is page captain today—along with his parents, Sophia and Yelman Siddiqi, and siblings Aysha and Yusuf.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Today I would like to welcome two of my staff members, Nicolas Machado and Jack Perrow, to the House.

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** It's nice to be able to introduce Margo and her family, who are here for our rally for Bill 6 and to show support for our Legislature and all its members.

It's nice to see you, Margo.

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** I'm delighted to welcome grade 5 students visiting from Our Lady of Sorrows in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. They will be joining us in the gallery soon.

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** I'm pleased to welcome Ross Toms from Richmond Hill, a recipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal, to Queen's Park.

I'd also like to acknowledge the following King Charles III Coronation Medal recipients who were unable to join us today—but they will be receiving the medals in June. They include Chungsen Leung, Maryam Rashidian, Michael Lai, Stephen Yau, and Mul Raj Sethi.

I'm also pleased to welcome my constituency and legislative team members to Queen's Park: Vinus Lee, executive assistant; Will Cho, special adviser to Minister Raymond Cho and executive assistant to myself, as the PA; Madison Gordon, legislative assistant; and Frederic Lai, constituency office manager.

I'd also like to welcome Sina Jafari, a dedicated and exceptional volunteer at my constituency office.

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** I'd like to welcome Father Alexander Griffiths from the Toronto Oratory. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** I'd like to welcome the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**MPP Tyler Watt:** I'd like to welcome the following OLP interns: Richelle Furtado, Devon Jarovi, Sydney Murdock, Gurraj Dhillon, and Stacy Kiseliouk. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My brother Ethan Wood and Alison Bell are visiting here at Queen's Park. Welcome to your House.

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you, Speaker. A point of order: I just would like to advise members of the House that the night sitting scheduled for this evening has been cancelled.

## INJURED WORKERS DAY

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I seek unanimous consent of the House for a moment of silence in recognition of Ontario's first annual Injured Workers Day and in remembrance of all workers who have been killed, injured, or who have suffered from an occupational disease at work in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** MPP Stiles is seeking the unanimous consent of the House for a moment of silence in recognition of Ontario's first annual Injured Workers Day and in remembrance of all workers who have been killed, injured, or who have suffered from an occupational disease at work in Ontario. Agreed? Agreed.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** You may be seated.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, let's review for a second what Bill 5 does. It guts environmental laws. It weakens protections for endangered species. It forces a massive landfill on a community that doesn't want it. It overrides the rights of First Nations. It gives government ministers the power to declare no-law zones, wherever they choose, whenever they want.

So my question to the Premier: Did he really think he was going to get away with this without a fight?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Response? I recognize the member from Bay of Quinte.

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Thank you to the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

There is a consensus across Canada that we need to get things done faster, and it's one that cuts across political stripes.

Look to British Columbia, where the NDP government introduced legislation designed to fast-track approvals. In his own words, NDP Premier David Eby said, "At a time

of uncertainty caused by Donald Trump's tariffs, it's more important than ever that we create more good-paying jobs by delivering the critical infrastructure projects people need—faster.” This is a Premier who the leader of the Ontario NDP has praised for doing some great work and taking on big problems and getting results.

Now is not the time for political games. We are facing a once-in-a-generation crisis, and Canada knows that we need to move faster. The federal Liberals know it; the NDP in BC know it; and this Ontario PC government knows it—why doesn't the Leader of the Opposition?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the Leader of the Opposition for supplementary.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I want to start by thanking everyone who has spoken up against this legislation, from First Nations leaders to the workers to the thousands and thousands of people who have called in and emailed to say no to this shameless power grab—because that's what it is.

Last night, opposition members did what we could to stop this bill at committee stage. And so now we have given the Premier a couple of more days to listen to the people and maybe to think it over.

But let's just go to where this needs to end. Will the Premier scrap Bill 5?

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Thank you to the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

As we know, ladies and gentlemen, there is a chill on right now for investment. Because of the uncertainty and the instability in the global markets, investors and businesses are hesitating on investment decisions. They don't know if they can make an investment for the next 10, 15 or 20 years, when they don't know what the political and economic landscape will be like over the next 12 months.

We know that when that dam breaks and all that held-back capital gets let free, we will be in the toughest competition that we have ever had for jobs, for investments, for making sure that we're providing a great future for the people of Ontario and their children—to have high-paying jobs that will pay the bills and make sure they put food on their family's table.

That is what we are standing up for. And if you are not standing up for that—there's your camera—do us a favour: Let everybody know.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Through the Speaker. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, the only thing creating anxiety and uncertainty in the province of Ontario right now is Bill 5 and this government. This has been an absolute mess. Nobody wants to take responsibility for it. It has been like playing whack-a-mole with all the ministers. Who's going to stand up today and take responsibility for this mess?

1040

This is a moment when people want to take action to strengthen Ontario, to fight back against Donald Trump. But this bill is not about that, and the people will not be fooled. It is about this Premier wanting to use this moment

to grab more power. The people did not give this Premier a mandate to suspend all laws or to toss out their constitutional rights.

Back to the Premier: Given the harm that this is going to cause to communities, to ecosystems and to our path toward reconciliation, will the Premier scrap this bill?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Response—and I'll remind the member: through the Chair.

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Thank you to the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

I'm not the leader of a party—and you've pointed out that I'm not a minister either. But if I was the leader of a party, I might not point out that I'm losing a fight with a backbencher. And whether I do this from the backbench, the balcony or standing on a soapbox with a bullhorn on Bremner, the result is going to be the same.

This government has stood up for the people of Ontario. We have created good-paying jobs and attracted high-quality investments. We are going to continue to do that, to deliver for the people of Ontario, and we will not be pushed off by you or anyone else.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

### RESPONSABILITÉ GOUVERNEMENTALE

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, I want to go back to this issue because I think it's important for the people to know what this Premier and this government are up to here. They are creating no-law zones in the province of Ontario. Ils créent des zones sans lois, et ils ouvrent la porte à la corruption aussi. They're giving themselves unchecked access to power. It's a power grab. It's that plain. It's that simple. That's what they are doing.

Let me be crystal clear: The government wants to go into your community, your neighbourhood, and they want to suspend all laws, and they're going to use Donald Trump as their excuse to do it. But we know better.

To the Premier again: Why would anyone be okay with this government—a government under criminal investigation by the RCMP—creating no-law zones?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** To the Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries.

**Hon. Sam Oosterhoff:** The member opposite, once again, has demonstrated that the members of the opposition will absolutely pass no chance to fail to stand up for Ontario's economic sovereignty. Once again, they have shown they are not willing to stand up for progress. They're not willing to stand for legislation or for progress that will support northern Ontario.

The reality is, it can take up to 15 years to approve a mine in Ontario. That's unacceptable. We trail many of the world's leading proponents of mines. That's why we're bringing forward changes that will actually support unleashing the power of the north, providing opportunities and fighting back against Donald Trump.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I'll tell you what we'll do: We'll stand up for Ontarians when this government will not.

Let me be clear: They thought they could fool everybody into thinking this was about mines, that this was about the north. Well, guess what? It's not. It's a power grab, plain and simple.

No consultations. No laws. No guardrails. The government wants a blank cheque for unlimited power, and that's what this bill delivers them. That is not how it works in Canada. That is not how it works in Ontario.

Ontarians are not going to stand for this. That is why people in every corner of this province are speaking out against this bill.

Again, to the Premier: Why would anyone trust a government under RCMP criminal investigation to have unlimited power with no-law zones?

**Hon. Sam Oosterhoff:** Let's talk a little bit about what we're seeing across the nation. We're seeing a consensus, with the New Democrats in British Columbia moving forward with legislation to accelerate major projects. We're seeing even the federal Liberal government place commitments on the table to ensure that major projects are getting moving in the province.

And yet, here in Ontario, until recently, we had some of the slowest permitting times in the OECD. That's unacceptable. This Premier and this government know that the potential for Ontario is unlimited if we can ensure that we're bringing forward measures to speed that up.

We are taking action, through this legislation, to ensure that the prosperity of Ontario and Ontario's economic sovereignty is meaningful today and into the future.

When will the members of the opposition stop their games, stop their theatrics, and move forward with meaningful progress through these types of legislation?

I hope that the member opposite—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It's really hard to figure out who is responsible for this mess because every time we ask this question, we get another parliamentary assistant or another minister responding. Like I said, it's like playing whack-a-mole with the ministers here. Nobody will take responsibility for the mess that they have created with this bill.

Speaker, we are in a very difficult moment in the province of Ontario. This bill is creating more uncertainty, more anxiety than we have seen in decades. This is a government that has a record for flip-flops, for reversals, for making a mess of legislation—and where this bill ends up is in the courts. That's where this ends up—again, in the courts, wasting time.

Will the Premier, once and for all, scrap this bill? And does he ever get tired of being on the wrong side of history?

**Hon. Sam Oosterhoff:** I can assure all members of this chamber and all those watching today that we will continue to do the work needed to move Ontario and Ontario's economy forward, regardless of the theatrics that we see coming from the members of the opposition.

When they say no to this bill, they say no to every job that creates in rural and remote communities; they say no to the opportunities that this opens for Ontario workers, that this opens for Ontario industry and, frankly, for the families who rely on those jobs; they say no to Ontario's economic sovereignty. But we shouldn't be surprised. We've seen this before from the opposition members. They obstruct, they play theatrical games, but they refuse to support common-sense measures that move Ontario's economy forward.

We're seeing a consensus across the country, across the nation, that we need to get major projects approved faster in this province and in this country, and we're on the front of making sure that becomes a reality.

I hope that the member opposite will encourage her team to support this legislation to get that across the finish line.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. John Fraser:** My question is for the Premier.

I know that many of us had a late night in committee, and I didn't think that we would actually know that we would learn so much about sleep deprivation in real time while we were experiencing it.

So, Speaker, will the Premier do the right thing and kill Bill 5 and just go back to the drawing board?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, Northern Ontario Large Urban Mayors were here, met with the Premier. These are the mayors from Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, Sudbury, Timmins. They want to see generational projects and investments land in northern Ontario so that our economies can continue to prosper. That is why they came out with a letter in support of Bill 5. They know that as a province we need to move faster. We can't have projects taking 15 years to get shovels in the ground, or we'll see companies and jobs flee our province, just like they did when the Liberals were in charge.

We were elected on a mandate to protect and grow Ontario's economy, and that's exactly what we're going.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Supplementary.

**Mr. John Fraser:** That's all well and good, but I don't think I've ever seen a government put forward as many amendments to their own bill as an opposition party—in the double digits. It points to a bill that is seriously flawed, and the government knows it, because they put all these amendments forward. Once again, the Premier is in a hurry, and the government is making a mess.

Will the Premier kill Bill 5, go back to the drawing board and at least try to get it right?

1050

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** In the speech from the throne from the federal government the other day—we heard it from the King's own speech: We need to move faster to get job-creating projects approved. In the King's own words—the government of Canada will work with provinces to finally achieve the goal of “one project, one review.” It doesn't

matter if it's in Ontario or the NDPs in BC or the federal Liberal government—we all have recognized the need to move faster.

The competition to land investments is going to be unlike anything we've ever seen. We're living it right now—the chill that is on business. If companies have to wait 15 years to get a shovel in the ground, they're going to invest somewhere else.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Sitting through committee last night, I think that all of us kind of got the same feeling—we were thinking greenbelt, ministerial zoning orders, the “notwithstanding” clause. It just felt like Ford is just going to slip into reverse again.

Speaker, through you: Will the Premier do the right thing and kill Bill 5, go back to the drawing board and get it right?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** In the words of British Columbia's NDP Premier, David Eby, “Now, we cannot allow slow permitting processes and bureaucratic processes to delay what we know has to happen. That will cost us” when we can least afford it. This is someone who the leader of Ontario's NDP has repeatedly endorsed and praised.

Everyone is on the same page. We need to do things faster in the country to unlock our true economic potential. Well, almost everybody agrees; I see a few over here who don't.

The Liberals and the NDP in this House continue to oppose every single measure that we put forward that cuts unnecessary red tape and bureaucracy. They don't want to grow our economy. They want to see our projects tied up in red tape for 15 years.

Keep your political theatrics. We will deliver results.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. John Fraser:** Back to the Premier: The Premier and his ministers love to crow about how they're protecting Ontario. But they didn't protect the people of Dresden. In fact, the Premier broke his promise to the people of Dresden. He didn't protect the taxpayer here in Ontario. When it came to Ontario Place, he protected the interests of a foreign-owned spa that had little or no money and no experience. And most egregious of all, the Premier is not protecting what little is left of his government's relations with First Nations.

I'm going to ask the same question because I haven't heard an answer: Will the Premier simply kill Bill 5, go back to the drawing board and get it right?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Brantford—Brant.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Speaker, let me reassure the leader of the third party that our government is committed to working in full partnership with Indigenous communities to ensure the legislation provides clear, reliable assurances that their rights will be upheld and respected. The bill will enhance transparency, reinforce the duty to consult, and support long-term relationship building.

Speaker, this is about getting it right together. We are focused on ensuring the legislation reflects a path forward that supports economic opportunity, while honouring our commitment to reconciliation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** If you take a look, Speaker, at Bill 5—and I am glad that the minister mentioned the King, because I want to talk about another king. The powers in Bill 5 are kinglike, right? What it essentially says the Premier can do is—“I'm going to do whatever I want, wherever I want, with whoever I want, and the laws, well, they don't apply.” That sounds to me a lot like the ability to make a decree. We all know what a decree is, because we see it south of the border. There's somebody making a lot of decrees down there, and democracy is teetering.

So I'll just ask once again, because I haven't heard anything that even comes close to a reasonable answer: Will the Premier kill Bill 5, go back to the drawing board and get it right?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Brantford—Brant.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I find it difficult to listen to this today from the leader of the third party. Last night, we had the opportunity to have meaningful debate about amendments to Bill 5; instead of that, the opposition chose to filibuster for five hours, instead of engaging in a meaningful clause-by-clause debate. That time could have been spent to review the legislation and discuss proposed amendments constructively. And yet, last night, they chose theatrics over progress. They said no to every job that this bill would create and no to Ontario's economic sovereignty. They showed their true colours, standing in the way instead of getting things done.

We remain focused, on this side of the House, on delivering results for the people of Ontario.

This is an ambitious bill, and like any significant piece of legislation, it includes amendments that deserve serious, thoughtful debate. That's the purpose of committee, not theatre.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the leader of the third party.

**Mr. John Fraser:** The member was there last night, so he would realize that there was an ability for the committee to sit between 8 and 8 today, and every government member on the committee voted against it. They could have been sitting today, and you voted against it. You voted against that amendment. You could have done it. I don't understand. You guys don't know what you're doing.

I want to go back to what I said earlier. The thing about decrees—if you want to wonder why there's a problem with First Nations and how they feel about what the Premier is doing here—is that they know a lot about decrees. They've seen a lot of decrees—and that's what this bill does. So maybe on the other side, they could take a look at the bill at face value and the kind of power it delivers to a single person—kinglike—and change it.

Kill Bill 5, go back to the drawing board, and get it right.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The government House leader.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** We did learn some things last night about the third party. We learned that now that they're an official party, they have more resources. I think I learned last night that they bought an application, ChatGPT Pro, because I think 90% of their speeches came right out of ChatGPT. They could have decided last night to use those five hours to put partnership over partisanship.

I've been here for 15 years; I haven't seen more 20-minute pee breaks than I saw last night. It's pretty obvious.

We could have had meaningful conversation. We could have had meaningful discussion. We could have dealt with the amendments on Bill 5 that were as a result of the public hearings that we had, and the ministers.

I think we did learn something else last night. We've already heard today that you've got New Democratic Premiers in BC and Manitoba who are on board with getting things moving faster. We've got even—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Question?

#### FIRST NATIONS CONSULTATION

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** ᑦᑦᑦ, Speaker. ᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ

This is what some of the First Nations are saying:

"We signed treaties because you couldn't beat us. We are not a conquered nation. We signed treaties because we decided we can live together."

"We are Treaty 9 signatories, not stakeholders. Our ancestors did not give away our lands to be taken by governments."

To the Premier: Will your government uphold the treaties and Aboriginal title?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Brantford—Brant.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Our government respects First Nation and treaty rights under section 35 of the Constitution and is committed to fulfilling its duty to consult. Our government, by fulfilling the duty to consult, fosters strong Indigenous relationships, supports reconciliation and promotes prosperity. Clear, transparent consultation fosters stronger First Nations relationships and a more stable business environment, enhancing economic opportunities.

We want to be clear: The proposed legislation is about unlocking Ontario's true economic potential, not over-riding Indigenous rights or environmental safeguards. The duty to consult will not be compromised as part of this process.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member from Kiiwetinoong.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Referencing section 35 of the Constitution is still blowing smoke.

There have been many opportunities to rescind Bill 5, but instead, the government is pushing forward a bill that will violate First Nations' inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights.

First Nations are loud and clear: If the bill passes, First Nations and rights holders say they will be idle no more.

Will the government learn from the past and start again, with First Nations at the table?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** First Nations are lead proponents on legacy infrastructure projects.

The special zones outlined in this bill will support both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, businesses and people.

We are working hand in hand with First Nations communities on environmental assessments and infrastructure projects such as Watay Power and the Berens River bridge, and this is the key. By forging true partnerships with First Nations communities, particularly those located near major development opportunities, we are building pathways towards lasting economic reconciliation the right way—together.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Speaker, 25 amendments to Bill 5—that's how many amendments I submitted because Bill 5 is wrong; it's beyond salvageable. But who else had to make 25 amendments, some at the last minute, because they also know that this bill is bad? This government.

Thousands across Ontario are telling us Bill 5 is wrong.

Will the Premier admit they blew it, kill the bill, go back to the drawing board, and take this opportunity to simply pass a new "one project, one process" bill—the piece of Bill 5 I know all parties support?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Energy and Mines.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** We just came from an announcement this morning to ensure our province remains an energy superpower by putting half a billion dollars on the table to get critical minerals processed here in Ontario. To enable that vision, we need to get on with building mines in the province.

We've made clear that there is a public policy challenge facing every province and the national government. Even New Democrats in BC accept this premise.

The Liberals of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Liberals of this country, have accepted what some provincial governments have not, or provincial parties have not, which is that the status quo is not working.

The "one project, one process" vision the member rightfully notes is an anchor of this bill to accelerate responsible resource development.

We've allowed for amendments to the bill to strengthen the area of consultation, because of critical perspectives shared from Indigenous peoples. That's a responsible government in action, listening and responding. We've committed to consultations through regulation. We've committed to listening and investing.

But what we've also committed to doing is challenging the status quo, because it's not working for this country.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member from Kingston and the Islands.



**Mr. Ted Hsu:** In BC and with the feds—we see them moving ahead without grabbing the unchecked executive power that we see in Bill 5 and south of the border. The government is complaining about delays in committee now, we heard this morning and last night.

Will the Premier go to the public—the ones who gathered in front of Queen's Park yesterday, the residents of Chatham-Kent or northern Ontario, First Nations across the province, the groundswell of opposition across the province? Will the Premier go to them, admit that the opposition stopped his deeply flawed Bill 5 yesterday, and then cry about wasted time? Really?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Speaker, it's always fascinating to hear Liberals lecture governments on respecting local voices.

If it wasn't the Liberal Party who imposed the Green Energy Act—ignoring the will of every rural community in the province because you knew better.

Unlike the Liberals, who dismissed the local democratic expression of communities north, south, east and west, it was this Premier who codified a requirement of local consent on energy expansion. Imagine that. Imagine actually fulfilling a commitment to the people of Ontario.

I want to thank my colleagues who stood with us as we pursued an agenda of change, because the world has changed. The world has radically changed with the election of President Trump.

If we want to achieve self-reliance, if we want to be strong as a country—the member is rolling his eyes as if it is an inconvenient truth—it's either we prevail or China prevails; either we stand up or some regime abroad wins the day. We're choosing Canada every single day.

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** My question is for the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

Protecting workers means creating conditions where people feel safe, respected and supported every time they go to work. As Ontario grows, the demands on our workforce grow too. That means more jobs, more job sites, and more people relying on clear and effective safety rules. Our government understands that. That's why we're focused on prevention, not just response.

Through our Working for Workers plan, we're making workplace safety a top priority. This is about more than just policy. It's about standing up for the people who build our province and drive our economy forward.

Speaker, can the minister share how this legislation protects workers and shows Ontario's leadership by once again putting people first?

**Hon. David Piccini:** I want to thank the member for that question and for having me in his community of Whitby the other day for a very important announcement.

When it comes to protecting workers, this government always listens, takes ideas and brings them to this place, which is why I was proud to stand with that member and incredible leaders like Steve Chaplin from our Prevention Council; Jason Ottey, who has been a champion of this at

Local 183; Hugh Heron from Heathwood Homes; and the Mikey Network to announce that, yet again, through Working for Workers 7, our government is taking a first in Canada: requiring defibrillators on job sites over three months in duration. Speaker, it's taking an important step.

When seconds save lives, we've got to step up and show the workers of this province, as we build a stronger Ontario, that we have their backs, and that's exactly what we're doing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Whitby.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you to the minister for his continuing leadership.

Ontario's workers are the backbone of our economy. They build our homes, roads and cities, and they deserve a safe place to work. That's why our government isn't just setting new rules; we're helping employers follow them.

Through Working for Workers 7, we're making it easier to get life-saving defibrillators on construction sites. We're giving clear guidance, sharing best practices, and working with the construction industry to get this right. It's about creating safer job sites by working together with employers and workers. When workers know their job site is protected, they can focus on doing their very best work.

Speaker, can the minister outline how this support will make it easier for employers to follow the rules and help reinforce Ontario's role as a leader in workplace safety?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Again, thank you to the member for that question.

Speaking of partnership, I want to thank the Residential Construction Council of Ontario's Andrew Pariser, who was also there. He has also been an advocate.

Speaker, employers, labour leaders and government are all coming together to advance this important initiative through Working for Workers 7. We're making sure that protecting workers doesn't become a burden, by providing supports for employers to put these on job sites through the WSIB. We're going to keep standing up to protect workers.

That builds on important steps we've taken—like being the first jurisdiction to require properly fitting personal protective equipment on all job sites for all body types. That has been an important piece that has led to a 30% increase in women registration in apprenticeships—because this side wants to build.

We're seizing the moment, we're building a stronger Ontario, and we're ensuring a healthy and safe workforce to do the job.

1110

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** My question is for the Solicitor General.

The Toronto Star has obtained two internal Solicitor General investigations into the horrific two-day-long collective punishment carried out at the Maplehurst Correctional complex in 2023. Some 200 inmates were strip-searched, handcuffed and made to crouch in hallways in

their underwear. Staff across the organization are implicated in the violence that the prisoners experienced. One report describes “an absence of competent managerial oversight from the beginning to the end of this incident.”

I’ve met with the families of the sons who were strip-searched. I have asked them, “What question would you like me to bring forward?”

They would like to know, when will the Solicitor General break his silence, apologize, and condemn these violent actions?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** This matter is under investigation and the member opposite knows it.

The member opposite also knows that this government has set a very high standard for professional conduct. We will ensure that everyone in Ontario who keeps Ontario safe upholds that high standard, and when they don’t, they will be subject to consequences.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Toronto Centre.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Hiding behind an investigation is not leadership.

The most damning details in the Maplehurst reports are that at least 11 staff, including managers, actively misled investigators, while others engaged in a code of silence. Hours of critical video footage has gone missing, due to so-called “technical issues.”

One inmate was tied up like a “Christmas turkey” while his cellmates were forced to sing Christmas carols by the guards.

When will the Solicitor General end this cover-up, stop making excuses, and fix the prisons?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** I’ll repeat this again to the member opposite: This matter is under an active investigation.

This government, led by Premier Ford, has sent a message all throughout this province that everyone who helps keep Ontario safe must uphold the highest standards of professional conduct, and when they don’t, there will be consequences. That’s why this matter is under investigation.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** This is for the Premier.

We have seen this before. The government pushes a bill, faces backlash, then scrambles to cover its tracks. We saw it with the greenbelt. We saw it with Dresden. Bill 5, now, is being rushed through without consultation or oversight.

Speaker, my question to the Premier, through you: Why is the Premier always governing by cover-up instead of collaboration?

We just heard in this chamber, “Idle no more.”

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I will caution the member on her choice of words.

I recognize the member from Bay of Quinte.

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

This bill is absolutely critical. At a time when there is so much uncertainty and so much instability in global markets, we need to make sure that when that dam of pent-up capital breaks free, we are in the right place to be competitive on a global scale for those jobs, those high-quality investments that we know are going to keep people in Ontario employed and that are going to make sure they can feed their families and pay their bills.

That’s why we have put this legislation forward—and this is nothing new. Countries all over the world are doing special economic zones. Our friends in the United States are doing special economic zones.

We need to make sure that we are globally competitive to secure the future for Ontario and continue to protect everyone in Ontario, everywhere in Ontario, and that’s exactly what we’re going to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Toronto—St. Paul’s.

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** The Premier’s pattern is clear: Push laws that benefit insiders, ignore the experts and the communities, and then clean up when caught.

Now, with Bill 5, they have rejected fair process, they have ignored First Nations leaders, and they have gutted environmental protections.

What is it going to take before the Premier learns that accountability is not optional?

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** It is easy to do nothing. It is easy to sit on our hands and watch the rest of the world eat our lunch. We are not going to do that.

We are going to continue to stand up for the people of Ontario. We are going to continue to attract those high-quality investments, those good-paying jobs, just as we’ve done by securing the future of EV production in Canada. That was going to pass us by. This government sprang into action and drew \$46 billion of investment—just like we’re doing in life sciences, bringing over \$6 billion of investment and 4,800 jobs; just like we’re doing by bringing tens of billions of dollars in tech investments.

We need to make sure we’re competitive for the future. That is what is going to continue to drive our economy, and that is how we’re going to make sure that we deliver prosperity for everyone in Ontario, everywhere in Ontario. We are not going to apologize for doing that.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**MPP Monica Ciriello:** My question is for the Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform.

We all know that the threat of auto theft is on the rise. We are seeing it in our communities. Families are concerned, and criminals are getting bolder.

But while others talk, our government is taking action. We’re not sitting back; we’re stepping up to protect people and their property. This means giving police the tools they need to catch criminals and stop theft before it starts. Thanks to the Premier’s leadership, we are making smart investments to stop this growing threat. We’re backing our officers, not with just words, but with real support.

Can the associate minister explain how our government is helping police crack down on auto theft and keep Ontario communities safe?

**Hon. Zee Hamid:** I'd like to thank the incredible member from Hamilton Mountain for her tireless advocacy on that question.

Our police officers demonstrate extraordinary bravery and courage every single day to keep us safe. In fact, earlier this month, we celebrated Police Week, a time when we remembered, reflected on and celebrated the sacrifice and bravery of our policemen and policewomen in uniform. To them, I say once again, thank you for your service and for your sacrifice.

Under the Premier's leadership, our government is doing everything we can to keep communities safe and protect our police services. We just announced a \$57-million investment in the Joint Air Support Unit, to purchase two H135 helicopters, to add to five more. These seven choppers will give police an enhanced area to cover and put a squeeze on would-be criminals.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Zee Hamid:** Good question.

Operated by Niagara Regional Police Service and Windsor Police Service, these helicopters will protect Ontario's roads and highways from carjackers and auto theft, but also from stunt driving, impaired driving and racing, and keep our communities safe.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member from Hamilton Mountain.

**MPP Monica Ciriello:** Thank you to the associate minister for his leadership on this file.

Auto theft goes far beyond lost property; it impacts how safe people feel in their daily lives. It threatens the safety and security of our neighbourhoods, our roads and our communities. People deserve to feel safe at home, on the street, and behind the wheel.

That's why our government continues to take strong, decisive action to stop crime and protect what matters most. Under the Premier's leadership, Ontario is showing what real public safety leadership looks like. We're not waiting; we're leading.

Can the associate minister explain how our work to fight auto theft fits into the broader commitment to protect Ontario and keep communities safe?

**Hon. Zee Hamid:** Our government is focused on keeping communities safe across Ontario.

We're proposing new legislation through the Ministry of Transportation that, if passed, would give police enhanced search and seizure powers. It would also prohibit ownership of illegal keyless entry devices, fob programmers and related software, stopping car thieves before they even start.

I've already mentioned the investment of \$57 million to purchase two new helicopters, which builds upon \$134 million already committed to the greater Toronto and Ottawa regions.

We're also supporting police services with initiatives such as the Preventing Auto Thefts Grant, the Major Auto

Theft Prosecution Response Team, and the OPP-led Provincial Auto Theft and Towing Team.

I'm proud to say we're seeing great results. Auto theft, last year, went down by 17% across Ontario, and it's down 40% in Peel and Halton this year; in the member's beautiful city of Hamilton, it's down 8% this year. While these results are encouraging—

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Question?

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** People deserve great transit infrastructure and services.

Instead of transit and services, people are very upset about the secrecy and disrespect they are getting instead from Metrolinx.

**1120**

The GO expansion project is the biggest public-private partnership contract in Ontario's history. This contract worth billions or tens of billions is collapsing or has collapsed. A major component of the contract is gone, and Ontario taxpayers don't even know the basic details. When we or the media or community members ask questions, Metrolinx will not answer, and it doesn't seem to have to.

Metrolinx should not be allowed to keep the public in the dark in Ontario with impunity.

Why does Metrolinx think that they do not have to answer Ontarians?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Our government and Metrolinx continues the largest expansion of public transit in Canadian history and, for that matter, in North America. We are investing over \$70 billion over the next 10 years—including the electrification of the line and improving services.

Just last year, we increased service levels, from an operational perspective, by over 300 trips per week. On that member's line, on the Lakeshore East line, we increased—over 33 trips a week.

We're delivering real service, real upgrades for the residents and transit riders across the province.

On top of that, we have invested in programs like One Fare that save commuters \$1,600 a year.

We will continue to invest in these projects despite the fact that the Liberals and NDP vote against every single one of these investments.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Oshawa.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Ontarians have invested billions of dollars in transit projects, and Metrolinx won't answer questions about the ongoing chaos of the Eglinton LRT, the collapsing GO expansion P3 contract, the undisclosed problems with the Hurontario LRT, or the Mimico GO mess.

Day after day, we are hearing these disturbing reports about Metrolinx, yet Metrolinx is choosing to keep the public in the dark. We are getting the runaround from people whose duty it is to be accountable to the public.

It is this government that appoints the members to the Metrolinx board of directors, and that board has not met in over six months, and it is not doing its job. That is not acceptable.

It is very concerning that Metrolinx is allowed to keep quiet and keep secrets from the public.

Metrolinx is showing blatant disrespect for the taxpayers of Ontario. Is that okay with this government?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Madam Speaker, what is not okay is the opposition continually fighting against every single one of our investments into public transit—whether it be the Ontario Line, whether it be the Hurontario LRT, whether it be the Hamilton LRT, or many other transit projects across this province. It's a shame that the NDP and Liberals have to vote against every single one of them. Think about it for a second. The Ontario Line will move over 400,000 people a day. We've got transit lines that will take 28,000 cars off the road. The opposition—the Liberals and the NDP—who have opposed us and every single one of these transit projects, refuse to support them. That's a shame.

This government is getting shovels in the ground. We're building transit. We're building public transit. We're investing in the future, and we're investing to ensure we have accessible and reliable public transit for generations to come.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** We've seen what happens when leaders use the language of "protection" to centralize power, silence opposition, and sidestep democratic oversight. Just look south of the border. Now this Premier is doing the same. Bill 5 hands sweeping, indiscriminate, blanket authority to ministers, overriding local decision-making, gutting environmental oversight, all under the banner of protecting Ontario.

Speaker, why is the Premier following Donald Trump's playbook—dismantling democracy and installing an economic protection racket?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the Minister of Energy and Mines.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** In order to stand up to President Trump, to oppose his agenda of ensuring American dominance at the expense of Canadian workers, we are determined to ensure we get resources—remove them from being landlocked, and get them out of the ground, get shovels in the ground. The benchmark of our success as a nation is getting the resources out of the ground to new markets. We have to diversify our exports—because in the US, over 90% of rare earths are dependent on China. In the European Union, over 95% of rare earths, again, are dependent on China.

We have an opportunity to step it up, and so we brought forth a bill that allows us to pursue "one project, one process," to cut down the permitting timelines by half, and we've done so while increasing investments—\$3 billion for Indigenous equity to own the projects we're talking about.

We're going to continue to invest, but we're also going to continue to expect better, to get on with building our country and our economic future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Kanata—Carleton.

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** Bill 5 gives ministers blanket, unchecked, indiscriminate power to rewrite rules behind closed doors, without consultation or accountability.

I don't want to hear any more about what British Columbia is doing. Their bill is not a sweeping blanket authority. It is about determining specific provincially significant projects that may be eligible for fast-tracking, and they have committed to consultation and co-operation. It's much different than Bill 5.

Speaker, why is this government so determined to use unchecked, indiscriminate power instead of a targeted approach to support significant projects?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I know it is an inconvenient truth for the member opposite to hear—that there are governments in this land, across the political spectrum, who stand for getting projects done and done faster. It may be inconvenient to you that the federal Liberals—in fact, you share ridings with federal ministers who are pursuing an ambitious agenda of two-year turnarounds, from five.

You're well outside the political mainstream if you think the status quo which you helped create is working for anyone. You are literally enabling the most egregious violators of human rights and environmental protections to win the day, because you'd rather land-lock our resources at all costs for political opportunism, instead of standing up for Canada's economy and ensuring we get the job done.

#### WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** My question is for the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity.

Women across Ontario want to build a better life for themselves, their families and their communities. But too often, they have faced barriers that make it harder for them to get ahead. They need real support to find a job, start a business, or get the training they need to succeed. They want careers with purpose, stability and growth. That's why programs that support women are so important, especially for those facing violence, poverty, or starting fresh in a new country.

Our government is showing strong leadership by investing in programs that help women rise, rebuild and reach their full potential.

Speaker, can the associate minister share how these investments are helping more women gain the tools to grow, succeed and thrive?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** It is truly an honour to stand for the first time in this 44th Legislature, in Parliament, to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, on being the

first woman to sit in this chair. You are showing many of us in this room, as well as many watching, that there is no seat a woman can't sit in.

Madam Speaker, this fits with what our government is committed to doing, and that is empowering women, expanding economic opportunities and creating clear, achievable pathways to lasting success.

Through the associate ministry of women's social and economic opportunities, we offer a variety of programs that are designed to equip women with the skills, knowledge and experience to improve their economic security. We know that's vital to a woman's safety and success for their family and their future. Madam Speaker, through WESP, the Women's Economic Security Program, and the Investing in Women's Futures Program, we are doing just that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Oakville North–Burlington.

1130

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** Thank you to the associate minister for her commitment and leadership.

Women across Ontario are ready to step into new careers in skilled trades, in technology, and as entrepreneurs, but they need support that works.

That's why our government's investment in the Women's Economic Security Program and the Investing in Women's Futures Program is so important. These programs offer hands-on training, career support, and real pathways to jobs, education or starting a business. We're already seeing tangible results. Thousands of women are gaining new skills, growing their careers and, importantly, building a better life.

Our government is showing strong leadership by helping women rise, rebuild, and reach their full potential. It's not just about today, it's about shaping tomorrow.

Speaker, can the associate minister share how these programs are helping more women lead, succeed and build Ontario's future?

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** I want to thank the member for Oakville North–Burlington for being such a champion. She has an organization called Halton Women's Place—and it's doing phenomenal work to ensure that women have access to the critical programs that our province is offering.

Through the Women's Economic Security Program, we have invested over \$26.7 million to help women get the necessary training to enter the skilled trades, technology fields, and entrepreneurship.

We also added an additional \$15-million investment that was provided to the Investing in Women's Futures Program. This is providing women across the province with employment-readiness training and personal development support.

Madam Speaker, in my role as associate minister, I have witnessed first-hand the life-changing impact these programs are having on women all across the province. I know these programs are going to continue to empower and build confidence in women as they pave new

pathways for the next generation of young women in Ontario.

When women succeed, Ontario succeeds.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Speaker, there are over 500 submissions in opposition to Bill 5 in committee. Hundreds of constituents of mine have reached out to my office in opposition to Bill 5. This bill is a dangerous colonial overreach that tramples on the inherent and treaty rights of First Nations.

Chief Donny Morris from KI First Nation said, "These lands are not Ontario's to do with as they wish. They are our ancestral lands. We have always been here and are going nowhere ... nothing is happening up here without our consent."

My question to the Premier and this government is, will you listen to the people of this province and withdraw Bill 5?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Brantford–Brant.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** As I've mentioned before, the answer is yes, we will consult. Our government is committed to working in full partnership with Indigenous communities to ensure the legislation provides clear, reliable assurances that their rights will be upheld and respected. The bill will enhance transparency, reinforce the duty to consult and support long-term relationship building.

Speaker, this is about getting it right together. We are focused on ensuring the legislation reflects a path forward that supports economic opportunity while honouring our commitment to reconciliation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Scarborough Southwest.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Speaker, we have heard from hundreds of people across this province who say there was no consultation, no consent. Environmental groups have described this bill as one of the most regressive and harmful bills they have ever seen in Ontario. Ontarians understand the importance of responsible development, but Bill 5 doesn't get us there—not development, and this is not a mining bill. We all want a strong economy, but this bill doesn't do that. It's a power grab at the cost of clean water, healthy ecosystems and our future generations.

Once again, will the Premier do the right thing and withdraw Bill 5?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Last night, the opposition had the opportunity to have meaningful clause-by-clause debate.

Do you know what they did last night, Speaker? They filibustered. They took turns, every 20 minutes, speaking about nothing in order to stall meaningful conversation about what we're doing with this bill.

That time could have been used to review the legislation and discuss proposed amendments constructively. But last night, the opposition, en masse, decided to choose theatrics over progress. They said no to every job that this bill would create and no to Ontario's economic

sovereignty. They showed their true colours, standing in the way instead of getting things done.

### FIRST NATIONS CONSULTATION

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** To the Premier: First Nations leaders are united in saying that Bill 5 violates their treaty rights. Legal experts are warning that it will be tied up in court for years. The government had a chance yesterday to slow down and to do this right, but it refused.

Will the Premier finally admit that Bill 5 is broken and start over with the proper consultation, or is he determined to rule by exhaustion?

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Brantford—Brant.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** As I've mentioned before this morning, our government respects First Nation and treaty rights under section 35 of the Constitution. We are absolutely committed to fulfilling our duty to consult. Our government, by fulfilling this duty to consult, fosters strong Indigenous relationships, we support reconciliation and we promote prosperity. Clear, transparent consultation fosters stronger First Nations relationships and a more stable business environment, enhancing economic opportunities.

We want to be clear—I'm being clear with the opposition: The proposed legislation is about unlocking Ontario's true economic potential, not overriding Indigenous rights or environmental safeguards. The duty to consult will not be compromised as part of this process.

### MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'd like to wish a very happy birthday to our friend Jennie Stevens today.

### WAYNE ASHBY

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I also recognize the leader of the third party on a point of order.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Point of order, Speaker—and I appreciate your indulgence: I just want to say a very brief thing about a friend of mine who passed away. He's being interred today, and I can't be there. His name is Wayne Ashby. We worked together. He was a wonderful man with a beautiful smile.

I'll always remember one thing that he said to me. We worked together, and we were having a friendly disagreement. He looked at me and with a straight face he said, "You're just like the brother I never wanted." I've never forgotten it. It will stick with me for the rest of my life.

Rest in peace, Wayne.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** On behalf of the Legislature, our condolences.

### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Oshawa has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Transportation regarding Metrolinx impunity. This matter will be debated on Tuesday following private members' public business.

### DEFERRED VOTES

#### TIME ALLOCATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 3, relating to allocation of time on the following bills: Bill 24, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes; Bill 10, An Act to enact the Measures Respecting Premises with Illegal Drug Activity Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to public safety and the justice system; Bill 11, An Act to enact or amend various Acts related to health care; and Bill 13, An Act respecting primary care.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1139 to 1144.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Folks, you may want to start heading back to your chairs, your seats. If you're not in your seat, you cannot vote.

We have a deferred vote. On May 28, 2025. Mr. Clark moved government notice of motion 3 relating to allocation of time on the following bills: Bill 24, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes; Bill 10, An Act to enact the Measures Respecting Premises with Illegal Drug Activity Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to public safety and the justice system; Bill 11, An Act to enact or amend various Acts related to health care; and Bill 13, An Act respecting primary care.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Quinn, Nolan
Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Racinsky, Joseph
Bailey, Robert	Hamid, Zee	Rae, Matthew
Bouma, Will	Hardeman, Ernie	Riddell, Brian
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Harris, Mike	Rosenberg, Bill
Bresee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Sylvia	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Trevor	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Stan	Jordan, John	Saunders, Brian
Ciriello, Monica	Kanapathi, Logan	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, David
Cooper, Michelle	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Graydon
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Laura
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lumsden, Neil	Surma, Kinga
Darouze, George	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Denault, Billy	McGregor, Graham	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dixon, Jess	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Downey, Doug	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.

Fedeli, Victor  
Firin, Mohamed  
Flack, Rob  
Ford, Doug

Parsa, Michael  
Piccini, David  
Pierre, Natalie  
Pirie, George

Vickers, Paul  
Wai, Daisy  
Williams, Charmaine A.

Brady, Bobbi Ann  
Bresee, Ric  
Calandra, Paul  
Cerjanec, Rob  
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon  
Cho, Stan  
Ciriello, Monica  
Clark, Steve  
Coe, Lorne  
Collard, Lucille  
Cooper, Michelle  
Crawford, Stephen  
Cuzzetto, Rudy  
Darouze, George  
Denault, Billy  
Dixon, Jess  
Dowie, Andrew  
Downey, Doug  
Fairclough, Lee  
Fedeli, Victor  
Firin, Mohamed  
Flack, Rob  
Ford, Doug  
Fraser, John

Hardeman, Ernie  
Harris, Mike  
Hazell, Andrea  
Holland, Kevin  
Hsu, Ted  
Jones, Sylvia  
Jones, Trevor  
Jordan, John  
Kanapathi, Logan  
Kerzner, Michael S.  
Khanjin, Andrea  
Leardi, Anthony  
Lecce, Stephen  
Lumsden, Neil  
McCarthy, Todd J.  
McCrimmon, Karen  
McGregor, Graham  
McMahon, Mary-Margaret  
Mulroney, Caroline  
Oosterhoff, Sam  
Pang, Billy  
Parsa, Michael  
Piccini, David  
Pierre, Natalie

Riddell, Brian  
Rosenberg, Bill  
Sandhu, Amarjot  
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh  
Sarrazin, Stéphane  
Saunderson, Brian  
Scott, Laurie  
Shamji, Adil  
Smith, Dave  
Smith, David  
Smith, Graydon  
Smith, Laura  
Smyth, Stephanie  
Surma, Kinga  
Tangri, Nina  
Thanigasalam, Vijay  
Thompson, Lisa M.  
Tibollo, Michael A.  
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.  
Tsao, Jonathan  
Vickers, Paul  
Wai, Daisy  
Watt, Tyler  
Williams, Charmaine A.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Begum, Doly  
Bell, Jessica  
Bourgouin, Guy  
Burch, Jeff  
Cerjanec, Rob  
Clancy, Aislinn  
Collard, Lucille  
Fairclough, Lee  
Fife, Catherine  
Fraser, John  
French, Jennifer K.  
Gates, Wayne  
Gélinas, France

Gilmour, Alexa  
Glover, Chris  
Hazell, Andrea  
Hsu, Ted  
Kernaghan, Terence  
Lennox, Robin  
Mamakwa, Sol  
McCrimmon, Karen  
McKenney, Catherine  
McMahon, Mary-Margaret  
Pasma, Chandra  
Rakocevic, Tom  
Sattler, Peggy  
Shamji, Adil  
Shaw, Sandy  
Smyth, Stephanie  
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)  
Stiles, Marit  
Tabuns, Peter  
Tsao, Jonathan  
Vanthof, John  
Vaugeois, Lise  
Watt, Tyler  
West, Jamie  
Wong-Tam, Kristyn

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day):** The ayes are 71; the nays are 38.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** We have a deferred vote on private member's notice of motion number 4.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1148 to 1153.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Please take your seats.

MPP Shaw has moved private member's notice of motion number 4.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Begum, Doly  
Bell, Jessica  
Bourgouin, Guy  
Burch, Jeff  
Clancy, Aislinn  
Fife, Catherine  
French, Jennifer K.  
Gates, Wayne  
Gélinas, France

Gilmour, Alexa  
Glover, Chris  
Kernaghan, Terence  
Lennox, Robin  
Mamakwa, Sol  
McKenney, Catherine  
Pasma, Chandra  
Rakocevic, Tom  
Sattler, Peggy  
Shaw, Sandy  
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)  
Stiles, Marit  
Tabuns, Peter  
Vanthof, John  
Vaugeois, Lise  
West, Jamie  
Wong-Tam, Kristyn

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Allsopp, Tyler  
Anand, Deepak  
Bailey, Robert  
Bouma, Will

Gallagher Murphy, Dawn  
Grewal, Hardeep Singh  
Gualtieri, Silvia  
Hamid, Zee  
Pirie, George  
Quinn, Nolan  
Racinsky, Joseph  
Rae, Matthew

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day):** The ayes are 26; the nays are 84.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negated.*

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Scarborough Southwest has given her notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the parliamentary assistant to the Premier regarding Bill 5. This matter will be debated on Tuesday, following private members' public business.

There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 1 o'clock.

*The House recessed from 1157 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Introduction of visitors? I recognize the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. Joseph Racinsky:** Wellington–Halton Hills, Speaker.

I just wanted to wish my grandfather Bert Hutchinson a very happy 88th birthday.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I'm sorry. You're so young. I've always—Wellington–Halton Hills. I apologize.

Speaking of not young, I recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** That's very good. Thank you very much, young Madam Speaker.

I would like to welcome to the House the incredible team of MCCSS, helping us every single day with the great work that you do. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you so much for everything.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** In the gallery today, I'd like to welcome, from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, director general Lawrence Liang and deputy director general Ethan Liao. Please give them a warm Canadian welcome.

## 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. Meghan Stenson):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 2, An Act to enact the Buy Ontario, Buy Canadian Day Act, 2025 and the Ontario Free Trade and Mobility Act, 2025 and to amend various other Acts / *Projet de loi 2, Loi édictant la Loi de 2025 sur le Jour « Achetons ontarien, achetons canadien » et la Loi ontarienne de 2025 sur le libre-échange et la mobilité et modifiant diverses autres lois.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed. The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

*Report adopted.*

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated May 29, 2025, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

## INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

### SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND STUDENTS ACT, 2025 LOI DE 2025 SUR LE SOUTIEN AUX ENFANTS, AUX ÉLÈVES ET AUX ÉTUDIANTS

Mr. Calandra moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to child, youth and family services, education, and colleges and universities / *Projet de loi 33, Loi modifiant diverses lois relatives aux services à l'enfance, à la jeunesse et à la famille, à l'éducation et aux collèges et universités.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the minister wish to briefly explain the bill?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Yes, Madam Speaker. This bill, if passed, would strengthen government oversight, accountability and transparency in the public and post-secondary education systems and the child and youth services sector. As part of our plan to protect Ontario, the changes would also help promote the safety and well-being of children and students across the province.

Speaker, parents deserve confidence that school boards are making decisions in the best interests of their children's education, and that's why we are ensuring that every dollar invested delivers results for our students. Along with our partner ministries, the measures we are introducing will build on our government's ongoing work to ensure students, children and youth benefit from the supports they need to reach ultimate achievement.

### MPP PENSION AND COMPENSATION ACT, 2025 LOI DE 2025 SUR LA RÉTRIBUTION ET LE RÉGIME DE RETRAITE DES DÉPUTÉS

Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to pensions and compensation for members of the Assembly / *Projet de loi 34, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les pensions et la rétribution des députés à l'Assemblée.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the minister wish to briefly explain the bill?

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** I do, thank you. I rise today to introduce the MPP Pension and Compensation Act, 2025, that, if passed, would end the current member of provincial Parliament pay freeze, as MPP salaries in Ontario have been frozen since 2009. As well, this act, if passed, would create a new MPP pension plan that would be integrated with the Public Service Pension Plan, also referred to as the PSPP.

Our government is proposing these changes because ensuring MPP compensation and benefits are reasonable and competitive would help to continue to support the attraction and retention of quality candidates to continue serving as MPPs. I value and have deep respect for public service. Regardless of political stripe—federal, provincial, municipal—when you put your name on a ballot and when you work hard for your constituents, we need to continue to attract talented, dedicated, hard-working public servants who want to advocate on behalf of their communities and to make a difference.



Madam Speaker, today's measure is a measure of respect for all elected public servants. I am proud to propose an end to the salary freeze and to integrate the MPP pension plan with the Public Service Pension Plan.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### MARBRO HOLDINGS LTD. ACT, 2025

Mr. Mamakwa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr4, An Act to revive Marbro Holdings Ltd.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

### CAPTIVE WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT, 2025

#### LOI DE 2025 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ANIMAUX SAUVAGES EN CAPTIVITÉ

Madame Collard moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 35, An Act to protect captive wildlife and to establish a licensing scheme for zoos / Projet de loi 35, Loi pour protéger les animaux sauvages en captivité et pour établir un régime de délivrance de permis pour les zoos.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the member wish to briefly explain the bill?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I want to start by thanking my colleague from Kanata–Carleton for co-sponsoring the bill. If passed, the bill would create a regulatory framework to ensure that those who own and care for wild and exotic animals do so in a way that maintains the well-being of the animals and ensures the safety of the public. The act creates a licensing scheme to operate zoos in Ontario and it also establishes a licensing process and inspection process.

1310

### HEAT STRESS ACT, 2025

#### LOI DE 2025 SUR LE STRESS DÛ À LA CHALEUR

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to protect workers from heat stress / Projet de loi 36, Loi visant à protéger les travailleurs contre le stress dû à la chaleur.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the member wish to briefly explain the bill?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I'm introducing this bill with my co-sponsors MPP Pasma, Vaugeois and West. It's intended to set up a legal framework for setting standards in workplaces for protection from heat and requiring the Minister of Labour to set out rules so that people are not injured on the job from heat exposure.

### FEWER FLOODS, SAFER ONTARIO ACT, 2025

#### LOI DE 2025 VISANT À RÉDUIRE LES INONDATIONS ET ACCROÎTRE LA SÉCURITÉ EN ONTARIO

Ms. McMahon moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act to proclaim Flooding Awareness Week and to promote public awareness of flooding issues / Projet de loi 37, Loi proclamant la Semaine de la sensibilisation aux inondations et visant à sensibiliser le public aux enjeux qui leur sont liés.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Does the member wish to explain the bill?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I'd love to; thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I'm just basically reviving Bill 56—if you recall, my very first private member's bill—where I cordially spoke to each and every one of you and got to know you, and so I'm enacting it. What it would do is that it would claim the fourth week of March in each year as flooding awareness week and also require the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to publish information on a government website about flooding issues.

Finally, the bill requires information on flooding issues to be sent out to taxpayers along with their municipal tax bill, and the minister is required to send that information to households in territories without municipal organization.

We just want to keep your residents, all Ontarians, safe.

## MOTIONS

### CONSIDERATION OF BILL 34

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House, the order for second reading of Bill 34, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to pensions and compensation for members of the Assembly, be immediately called; and

That the Speaker shall immediately put the question on the motion for second reading of Bill 34 without debate or amendment; and

That upon receiving second reading, the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order shall immediately be called; and

That the Speaker shall immediately put the question on the motion for third reading without debate or amendment; and

That the votes on second and third reading of the bill shall not be deferred; and

That if a recorded division is requested on the second or third reading votes on the bill, the division bells should be limited to five minutes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent that, notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House, the order for second reading of Bill 34, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to pensions and compensation for members of the Assembly, be immediately called; and

That the Speaker shall immediately put the question on the motion for second reading of Bill 34 without debate or amendment; and

That upon receiving second reading, the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order shall immediately be called; and

That the Speaker shall immediately put the question on the motion for third reading without debate or amendment; and

That the votes on second and third reading of the bill shall not be deferred; and

That if a recorded division is requested on the second or third reading votes on the bill, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes.

Agreed? Agreed.

*Motion agreed to.*

MPP PENSION  
AND COMPENSATION ACT, 2025  
LOI DE 2025 SUR LA RÉTRIBUTION  
ET LE RÉGIME DE RETRAITE  
DES DÉPUTÉS

Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to pensions and compensation for members of the Assembly / Projet de loi 34, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les pensions et la rétribution des députés à l'Assemblée.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to the order of the House, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Bethlenfalvy has moved second reading of Bill 34, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to pensions and compensation for members of the Assembly.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

MPP PENSION  
AND COMPENSATION ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LA RÉTRIBUTION  
ET LE RÉGIME DE RETRAITE  
DES DÉPUTÉS

Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to pensions and compensation for members of the Assembly / Projet de loi 34, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les pensions et la rétribution des députés à l'Assemblée.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to the order of the House, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Bethlenfalvy has moved third reading of Bill 34, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to pensions and compensation for members of the Assembly.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

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

*Third reading agreed to.*

PETITIONS

ENDANGERED SPECIES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** This petition is with regard to Bill 5 and maintaining the Endangered Species Act. The body argues that whereas we need an Endangered Species Act to protect the environment and species in Ontario and given that we always have to ensure that decision-making is not concentrated in the hands of a single minister, the undersigned call for defeat of Bill 5 and maintenance of the Endangered Species Act, 2007, while ensuring economic growth does not come at the expense of biodiversity and ecological integrity.

I agree with this petition. I'll sign it and give it to page Shreyas for submission.

LANDFILL

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I have a petition from Dresden CARED against removing the environmental assessment for the York1/Whitestone Fields Limited landfill through the proposed Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025. The people in the area of the landfill are very concerned about the environmental impact of the reopening of this closed landfill and ask that the Legislative Assembly, in fact, stop Bill 5, stop the abandonment of the Environmental Assessment Act and preferably act to ensure that this landfill is not opened.

I agree with the petition, I sign my name and I give it to page Leif to bring to the table.

1320

## ROAD SAFETY

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I have a petition here signed by about 3,600 people from Thunder Bay, and it's really a petition to get warning lights at the intersections when Highway 11/17 goes through the city, because there are so many accidents, particularly with trucks. We would really like to see warning lights installed leading up to the lights at every point on the expressway as it goes through the city.

I fully support this petition. I see it has a great deal of local support, and I will give it to Emma.

## ENDANGERED SPECIES

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition that is signed by many residents across the province who join in the unprecedented opposition to the government's power grab in Bill 5. These petitioners are particularly concerned about what Bill 5 does to the Endangered Species Act. They note how important the Endangered Species Act has been in protecting the biodiversity of our province by providing science-based assessments, listings of species and comprehensive habitat protections. They're very concerned about the proposal in Bill 5 to replace the Endangered Species Act with this new Species Conservation Act, which they point out will significantly weaken protections for at-risk species.

They are also concerned, as are so many other Ontarians, about the excessive concentration of decision-making power that this legislation gives to a single minister or the Premier and the lack of transparency and accountability that that entails.

Therefore, they call on the Legislative Assembly to defeat Bill 5, withdraw Bill 5, and to maintain the Endangered Species Act, 2007. They support development, but they do not believe that it has to come at the expense of biodiversity.

I fully support this petition, affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Sarang.

## VISITOR PARKING FEES

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** Myself, as well as residents in St. Catharines—and I want to thank Steve Walton for gathering thousands of signatures for this: ban paid visitor parking at multi-unit residential apartment buildings. Parking meters are being installed at multi-unit rental apartment buildings all across St. Catharines by corporate landlords. Visitors to these buildings—and most of them are visiting seniors, including medical personnel, support workers—are being charged hefty parking fees or could possibly face a hefty fine for parking. St. Catharines city council joined on in 2023 and asked the province of Ontario to ban paid visitor parking at multi-unit buildings. Residents across the St. Catharines area—as well as across Ontario, Waterloo, Guelph and other areas—are asking for this to happen.

The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it would like to direct the Minister of Housing to issue an order that states that owners of residential multi-unit apartment complex buildings are banned from installing parking meters and charging visitors to park and spend time with their senior adults or even friends. Seniors are finding that it's difficult to have visitors come and visit them for their mental health or even to get their medication.

Speaker, I fully support this petition. I'm going to affix my name to it and, again, I'm going to send it down to the desk with Julia—got to get a pen; sorry. And I want to thank Steve Walton once again for getting these signatures.

## WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, I am presenting a petition calling for legislation for heat limits in the workplace. Now, as you're well aware, as the world gets hotter, as the climate crisis progresses, more and more workers are put at risk. People are at risk of developing chronic disease as well as quite literally dying in the workplace.

This petition calls on the Legislative Assembly to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act so that there is legislative protection for workers in hot workplaces which, in the past, were fairly heavy industrial but increasingly now are all over the place—warehouses, schools, nursing homes etc.

I agree with this petition, I affix my signature and I give it to page Emma to present to the table.

## TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** A petition calling for real rent control now:

"Whereas average rent has increased over 50% in the past 10 years;

"Whereas average monthly rent in Ontario is now over \$2,000...."

As people increasingly are facing a crisis, an inability to buy food or other necessities because of soaring rents, there is a call for rent control that will put in place rent control between tenancies; put in place a public rent registry so tenants can find out what tenants paid in the past; and access to legal aid for tenants that want to contest an illegal rent hike.

I agree with this petition, I affix my name and I give it to page Sarang to present.

## ENDANGERED SPECIES

**MPP Jamie West:** I have a petition entitled "Withdraw Bill 5—Maintain the Endangered Species Act, 2007."

This has to do with Bill 5 which we're debating lately. There's a section of it that has to do with changing the Endangered Species Act with a new schedule that basically would allow the minister to have oversight. The idea that the people who are signing this petition want to emphasize is that there's already a third-party, arms-length, non-partisan group that makes scientific-based

decisions about protecting endangered species. They are urging in the petition “that the government of Ontario withdraw Bill 5, maintain the Endangered Species Act, 2007, while ensuring economic growth does not come at the expense of biodiversity and ecological integrity.”

I believe that we should be making science-based decisions that are non-partisan and not have the power of making decisions in the minister of the day who—we may not like the minister of the future. Whatever applies to the minister today will happen in the future.

I’ll affix my signature. I’ll provide it to page Leif from Sudbury for the table.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### PLAN TO PROTECT ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2025

#### LOI DE 2025 SUR LE PLAN POUR PROTÉGER L’ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 27, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 24, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 24, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Bethlenfalvy has moved second reading of Bill 24, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*Second reading vote deferred.*

### PROTECT ONTARIO THROUGH SAFER STREETS AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES ACT, 2025

#### LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L’ONTARIO EN RENDANT LES RUES PLUS SÛRES ET LES COLLECTIVITÉS PLUS FORTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 8, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Measures Respecting Premises with Illegal Drug Activity Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to public safety and the justice system / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2025 sur les mesures visant les lieux où se déroulent des

activités illégales liées à la drogue et modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la sécurité publique et le système judiciaire.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Downey has moved second reading of Bill 10, An Act to enact the Measures Respecting Premises with Illegal Drug Activity Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to public safety and the justice system.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*Second reading vote deferred.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Orders of the day.  
1330

### MORE CONVENIENT CARE ACT, 2025

#### LOI DE 2025 POUR PLUS DE SOINS COMMUNES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 14, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act to enact or amend various Acts related to health care / Projet de loi 11, Loi visant à édicter ou à modifier diverses lois en ce qui concerne les soins de santé.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Jones, Dufferin–Caledon, has moved second reading of Bill 11, An Act to enact or amend various Acts related to health care. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

Orders of the day.

### PRIMARY CARE ACT, 2025

#### LOI DE 2025 SUR LES SOINS PRIMAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 13, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act respecting primary care / Projet de loi 13, Loi concernant les soins primaires.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Jones has moved second reading of Bill 13, An Act respecting primary care. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”  
In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*Second reading vote deferred.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** Orders of the day.

#### TIME ALLOCATION

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 50 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 6, An Act to enact the Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025 and to amend the Trespass to Property Act respecting sentencing, and Bill 17, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to infrastructure, housing and transit and to revoke a regulation;

That when the orders for the bills are next called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of each bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the votes on second reading of the bills shall not be deferred; and

That, if a recorded division is requested on the second reading votes on the bills, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes; and

That upon receiving second reading, the bills shall be ordered for third reading, which orders may be called the same day; and

That when the order for third reading of Bill 6 is called, 30 minutes shall be allotted to the debate, with nine minutes for the members of His Majesty's government, nine minutes for the members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, nine minutes for the members of the third party, and three minutes for the independent members as a group; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill 6 without further debate or amendment; and

That when the order for third reading of Bill 17 is called, 30 minutes shall be allotted to the debate, with nine minutes for the members of His Majesty's government, nine minutes for the members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, nine minutes for the members of the third party and three minutes for the independent members as a group; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill 17 without further debate or amendment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly):** The member for Essex has moved government notice of motion number 4.

I recognize the member to begin the debate.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Our government has been clear from day one: We have heard loud and clear from municipalities that they need more tools to protect their communities and public spaces. These concerns are driving this government to deliver through our Safer Municipalities

Act. Our government ran on a commitment to return public spaces to the public. We know, as the people of Ontario know, that an encampment is not a solution to homelessness; it is, rather, a public safety concern. That is why we are acting now.

For far too long, public parks have been a place of concern for families. We are giving law enforcement the tools they have requested to protect our communities. This action builds on more than \$75 million in investments and programs that provide long-term stable housing and temporary accommodations for vulnerable individuals currently living in encampments so they can access safe spaces, as well as nearly \$550 million to create 28 homelessness and addiction recovery treatment hubs, HART hubs. We are making every effort and investment to connect people to the care they need where and when they need it. Every Ontarian deserves to feel safe at home. We will continue delivering on this government's plan to create more homes for the people of Ontario.

We all know that it's not business as usual in the face of the economic chaos and uncertainty caused by US President Donald Trump. That's why we are taking action now. Under Premier Ford our government is addressing this challenge by accelerating planning and approvals and cutting the time it takes to get shovels in the ground. We are providing immediate relief to home builders by deferring development charges until occupancy and speeding up the construction of long-term care by removing development charges on this vital public good. Taken together, these ambitions and these reforms will help us speed up home building in Ontario and ensure everyone has a place to call home.

We ran on a promise to protect Ontario, and protecting Ontario means rising to the moment when it arrives. Now is the time to act. Ontario and our partners are not waiting for things to change; we are driving change ourselves, championing Ontario, protecting our industries and communities and ensuring it remains the best place in the country to live, work and raise a family.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**MPP Robin Lennox:** I'm very pleased to speak on this time allocation motion about a bill that I feel is very important for us to get right. Bill 6 has tremendous impact for communities across this province and particularly for people in our communities who are unhoused, who are living outdoors, who are precariously housed and worried about becoming homeless, and also for the community of people who use drugs, who are currently combatting the overdose crisis every day.

When we talk about those communities, for me it's very personal. These are people who I've spent the vast majority of my time over the past several years in conversation with, walking with, socializing with, people who I know are incredibly valuable members of our community, who are generous, who would give you literally their last dollar if you asked for it.

1340

I can even share one story: I had two people who I knew and was caring for, one of whom was a gentleman who had been in and out of hospital a number of times with a really disabling injury that was incredibly painful; he couldn't walk. And he was unhoused. He was not allowed into any of the shelters. He did not have any other supports or any other places to go, and so he was trying to survive outdoors, waiting for a surgery, unable to walk or take care of himself.

But one day, we found ourselves in a group—myself, this gentleman and another woman, a pregnant woman who had been admitted to hospital because she was able to access a new care pathway we had started, which was called the Program for Substance Use in Pregnancy, where you could admit someone to hospital at any gestational age if there was no other reason but that they wanted to stabilize from their substance use disorder. This is a program that doesn't exist anywhere else in the province other than Hamilton, where I'm from.

She was taking this really brave step because she wanted desperately to be able to parent her child. She had also been homeless. She had also had a number of really awful early childhood experiences herself, bad experiences in care, and she wanted something different. She wanted a fresh start, and so she was taking this brave step and coming into hospital. She had nothing. She didn't even have shoes at the time that she was admitted.

And so, somehow, this gentleman and this woman found themselves talking about their shared experiences outside of the hospital together, and this gentleman had happened to have just had \$10 left over from his ODSP cheque that month. He gave that \$10 to this other woman because he wanted her to be able to buy something to wear on her feet in hospital so that she could be more comfortable, so she'd be able to stay there, so she'd be able to achieve her goal of getting well and parenting her child.

And so, when we talk about this community of people, the people who are going to be impacted by Bill 6, I hope that we can have as much empathy, as much compassion and as much care for our neighbours and the other members of our community as these individuals have for everyone else who they meet. The folks who we talk about when we talk about the community of people who are unhoused or the community of people who use drugs are incredibly brave and supportive and community-driven people. They deserve our support, just like they would offer their support to us if we found ourselves in the same similar circumstances.

But instead, the opposite is happening, and right now in Hamilton, people living outdoors on what we call the rail trail, or our trail in the forest, are being actively told to hide. They're being told that by police officers who are coming onto the trail to forcibly evict them, oftentimes saying that they're doing trail cleanup between the hours of 12 a.m. and 5 a.m. But what we know that really means is that they are tearing down people's homes, their tents; taking away their belongings, sometimes the only belongings they have; and moving them along. That's the

entire approach that Bill 6 would have legislated into provincial law.

I think it's shameful that we would tell people in this province to hide, to become invisible, because we don't want to see them in their attempts to survive against the policies that we have created, that have made them vulnerable in the first place. We have forced people into legislated poverty. We have dwindled down the housing market to the point where it's essentially unaffordable for just about anyone on a low income, even if you're working. We have taken away community mental health supports. We have made cuts to most social service programs. We have made cuts to education programs. We have tried to drain our public services to the absolute minimum, and then we're surprised that the people in our communities are struggling. And rather than actually taking responsibility for those failures, we're blaming the people who are the victims of our failures, our mistakes.

And so I would ask that we try to do something different, that we try not to just end visible homelessness but that we actually try to end homelessness. It is so very possible. Because we agree, everyone in the NDP caucus agrees, that no one should have to live in a tent. No one should have to. It's not a housing facility. It is not a permanent, dignified place to call home. But the problem is that, right now, there is nowhere else for people to go. The shelters are full—and by the way, shelters were never meant to be housing. They're incredibly expensive, they're not an efficient use of resources, and they don't actually set people up with the solid ground that they need to build their lives.

So we agree: No one should have to live in a tent. But this bill is not going to get us there. And like so many other organizations have come out and said since this bill was announced, like the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, we cannot enforce our way out of a homelessness crisis. It will cost us millions and millions of dollars, and it will accomplish absolutely nothing. It will not house one single person who needs housing in this province. What it will do is that it will fill up our jails, and perhaps that's part of the strategy. But the unfortunate side of that is that it costs seven times more to put someone in jail than it does to house them. So even if all you cared about was the dollars and cents, it's just not smart policy.

*Interjections.*

**MPP Robin Lennox:** I'm hearing members from across the aisle say that instead we should just let them be in parks. Well, no, actually, you have the power, as the one sitting on the government side, to house them. Instead of throwing up your hands, instead of saying, "This is too hard," you could actually do your jobs. That would be incredibly refreshing.

Let me tell you about the people who are doing their jobs. We have people working in our communities, people offering supportive housing, agencies that are finding new sites, that are scrambling to find funding, that are finding the outreach staff and the housing workers who are doing incredibly compassionate, evidence-based, effective

work. And do you know what they said just this last week when I asked them, “What do you need in order to realize supportive housing in our community?” They said, “We need the province to step up.” They said, “We need the province to actually give us the money to do our work effectively.” That is what we are hearing from mayors. That is what we are hearing from community supportive housing agencies, from mental health agencies, from health care workers, from hospitals, from outreach workers, harm reduction workers—everyone. They are saying, “Where is the province in this fight?”

Well, what the province is doing is trying to perform. They’re saying, “Let’s put something on paper that looks like we’re doing something when we’re actually doing nothing.” And the only thing we’re going to see is, in a few more years, we’re going to see more people with criminal records that have expanded, who have spent more time in incarceration, more people who have died outdoors, more people who have died of overdose, and we’re not going to see a single thing improved. We’re not going to see any change in our parks. We’re not going to see any change in our public spaces. All we are going to see is this government trying to scapegoat more people who are unhoused, who are vulnerable, who are poor, because again, they will have missed the mark and they will have failed.

But we do have solutions. We could invest immediately in supportive housing. For every dollar you put into supportive housing, you could save two dollars. Why aren’t we doing that? There are people and projects ready to go. They could put shovels in the ground, they could fill spaces, except for the lack of funding.

And the thing is, even if all you cared about was public opinion, 80% of people in this province support a supportive housing-first approach—80%. Because people understand that we need real solutions, not just words, not just scapegoating; 80% support this. And we should be representing them.

The thing about this is that if you actually spoke to any of the stakeholders, they would say that they know supportive housing to be cost-effective, to improve health outcomes and to give people the solid ground that they need to build their lives, which means getting back into school, getting new jobs, reconnecting with their families, contributing to their communities, volunteering. These are things that we should all want. These are good goals for us all to seek. But we’re not seeing it.

**1350**

And then there’s the matter of addressing public drug use. While this government has proposed that we should address public drug use by giving people \$10,000 fines or putting them in jail, we actually have other things that might work—in fact, we know would work because we’ve seen them work.

One of those things would be reopening the supervised consumption sites that you closed with your previous legislation. We can talk about the review of evidence for safe consumption sites out there, and I might be a bit more academically inclined than some, but I find it incredibly

compelling when I hear that the highest level of evidence we have, which is a systematic review, has consistently, across the board—more than 100 studies globally—shown that safe consumption sites save lives, reduce overdose deaths, reduce overdose in the 500 metres surrounding a site, increase the safety of the use happening in communities, decrease the presence of drug litter in the 500 metres surrounding a site and decrease crime in the 500 metres surrounding a site.

These are the things that your bill says you are seeking to do, but you are moving in the complete opposite direction. It doesn’t make any sense, and everyone—every single person who has any expertise in this area—is saying the exact same thing: We are moving backwards. You are putting us 10 years behind. And that’s okay. We’ve all been here before; we’ll do the work again and we’ll continue to find solutions, even when our government isn’t standing up. But we shouldn’t have to because we should be able to learn. We should be able to learn how to do things differently.

While this government, as the Auditor General found, did not assess the impact of closing safe consumption sites, researchers in Toronto did. They estimated what the impact of closing the sites would be in Toronto, and they found that we would see an increased rate of overdoses occurring, increased harms in our communities, and that is what we are seeing. That is what our constituents are reporting to us, that closing the supervised consumption sites has only escalated the crisis and left people with more closed doors and fewer places to go.

But again, we have solutions to this health crisis—and that is what it is. It is a public health emergency. That’s not me saying it; that has been declared nationally. And it’s been declared nationally because thousands of people have had to die for us to recognize this as a public health emergency.

And so, when we’re addressing an emergency, we have a number of ways that we can approach this. First would be by increasing the funding and support for mental health and substance use programming in our communities. If you ask anyone working in the community right now, there is a huge wait-list for counselling, for psychotherapy, for access to residential treatment, for access to detox facilities.

Youth, in particular, are drastically underserved. We only have one concurrent disorders program for youth in this province. There is not only one city that is experiencing a crisis in its youth in terms of mental health and substance use.

We can also invest in addiction medicine consult services for every single one of our hospitals so that, no matter where someone presents, if they have a substance use disorder, they are able to access treatment in the moment they need it, where they are, with the health professionals who know how to manage it. That is how you manage a crisis.

We also have two Health Canada-approved treatments for opioid use disorder that are not on the formulary in Ontario. Years of advocacy to try to get them on the

formulary has left us nowhere, and this government—though we speak about treatment, we haven't seen any advances in treatment for opioid use disorder in this province in years and years.

We have seen announcements about the HART hubs as some form of a transitional model away from supervised consumption sites, and that would be very interesting, except that none of them are open. In fact, I'll correct myself: Nine of them are open—a small fraction. And of those nine, they are not operating with the full scope of services that you promised. In fact, one of them where I recently inquired is advertising as a HART hub, has received your funding, but is only offering laundry, meal service and case management. Now, under what type of model would you call that comprehensive, full-scope care for people who have mental health and substance use disorders? That is just not cutting it.

Again, why aren't we having any accountability as to when the other HART hubs will open? How we will actually assess whether they are meeting their goals, and how we are going to assess whether they're having the impact that this government intends for them to have? The reason we don't have that accountability is because this government probably knows they're not going to break the back of the crisis with the HART hubs. It's not going to be an adequate substitute. And so, of course, why have a report card that you're not going to score well on? Even though this government might be happy with a score of 60% in some areas like pharmacare, I doubt the HART hubs will even reach that threshold of effectiveness.

Again, I would urge this government to consider reopening the supervised consumption sites as part of a comprehensive spectrum of care, from harm reduction to treatment, that we know works and that we know people in our province need.

Lastly, I'm going to talk about process. This motion is a time allocation motion. It's aimed to try to skip the committee process by which we examine bills. This is particularly concerning when we talk about a bill like this that is going to have tremendous impact for so many communities and that is centred on an issue that impacts so many people in our province. Homelessness and the overdose crisis are two of the greatest crises that we hear in our communities every single day. Legislation on how we address those crises shouldn't be determined by a few people in a closed room, many of whom aren't even elected. Those are the people who are putting forward these policy ideas, and they deserve more of an examination than just a vote.

When we take bills to committee, again, I'm new to this work, but my understanding is that the process is intended to actually enhance the work, to do it better. Anybody who does anything in writing or film or business or any other area—when else would you accept your first draft as the best draft? We don't even teach children to do that in schools.

So this is basically working with the back-of-the-napkin version of policy and then asking everyone to stand up to vote without ever having a time to really examine it,

to take the time to invite other people with other perspectives—because that's not a bad thing to do; it's actually a great thing to do. Even if—and perhaps especially when—you have a very strong view on an issue, it is exceptionally important to invite people who see it differently, because they're going to see your blind spots. They're going to offer you pieces of wisdom that you might not have heard. They're going to tell you about articles that you haven't written, about evidence that exists that you would never know about. They're going to offer you experience.

When I think about the people on this side of this aisle, there is an incredible wealth of experience and knowledge that you could draw from to be able to inform this bill: people who have worked in the housing industry, who have worked on city council, who have worked in health care and hospitals, who have worked at the bedside, who have worked with children. These are all people who'd be able to inform and offer something to this policy, and beyond what they could bring as individuals, they are also representatives of hundreds of thousands of people across this province who deserve to have their voice heard in how we make legislation, because when you bypass committee and you bring things just to a vote, you are silencing people who are actually supposed to have representation in this House.

And so, I would say that the message that this is sending to stakeholders who would have come to delegate, to people with lived experience, to researchers and experts who could have offered their evidence to committee—this is a deep, deep shame. Again, we should never accept our first draft, and so I would speak against this time-allocation motion.

I will share my time with my colleague for Ottawa Centre.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** I also stand to speak in opposition of this motion this afternoon. I really like the example given at the end by the previous speaker. I don't ever remember accepting the first draft that I wrote of anything, and not actually looking for ways that it could improve.

**1400**

These two bills make for six bills this week that will never invite public comment in this Legislature or the clause-by-clause scrutiny that they surely deserve, if this motion passes. As a new MPP, I am surprised and deeply concerned how often this government seems to treat democratic processes and transparency like a quaint tradition they can simply choose to ignore at will. I have to believe this is not normal. I have to believe that we should not normalize this. We also should not be normalizing the Premier's recent attacks on the judiciary and his constant threats to use the "notwithstanding" clause.

What the Premier is saying when he says that is that what he says should go, that even if the courts say that you have those rights, he is going to ignore them. Honestly, that should concern everyone in Ontario, Speaker, whether you voted for this government or not. I'm quite sure that every member of this Legislature, including the members



opposite, want to ensure that no government in Canada can run over your individual rights.

This time allocation motion will prevent Bill 6 from going to committee. But if we did, we would be able to hear the Canadian Civil Liberties Association's assertion that the government of Ontario should invest in long-term, human rights-based solutions that respect charter rights, federalism and domestic and international human rights obligations.

The National Housing Strategy Act enshrines the right to housing in domestic law. The National Housing Strategy Act recognizes the right to adequate housing as a fundamental human right affirmed in international law, and that "housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of the person and to building sustainable and inclusive communities."

Ontario courts have found that where there are no adequate alternative options available to individuals, the ability to occupy public spaces through encampment and provide shelter for oneself is in fact protected by section 7 of the charter. This government knows that in committee, if we were to hear Bill 6, they would hear that it is headed for a charter challenge, and they are preconditioning the public that the judiciary is standing in the way of cleaning up homelessness. But the courts, the evidence and the people of Ontario know what to do about homelessness.

I cite, as well, another recent public opinion poll, where 80% of Ontario respondents said that to solve homelessness, governments need to "prioritize providing housing, mental health, and addiction services to help individuals transition out of homelessness and find long-term stability." I hear this in my own community in Etobicoke-Lakeshore. We've got a rising number of people that, very unfortunately, are living homeless. People are saying to me, "How are we getting upstream from this? How are we actually preventing this?" They want answers to that. I don't think that the answers are found in these two bills. Are we going to even have a chance to discuss that—whether it would have the impact?

This week, my colleague the MPP for Kitchener Centre and I introduced a private member's bill on homelessness. It calls for us to actively manage addressing the 25% increase in homelessness in the last two years and the prediction that we're going to go from about 80,000 to 300,000 over the course of the next 10 years, and recognize that people who are suddenly without a home—that there are also major impacts for communities as well.

So if we did not pass this motion and we went to committee, we might have the opportunity to learn more about what those solutions are at hand that do protect Ontarians, like the need for 36,000 supportive housing units, according to Addictions and Mental Health Ontario, and how those investments pay dividends to avoid health and social services costs. In fact, the data on that—that's a study that actually the government themselves undertook. The data on that would say that if you actually put a dollar into supportive housing, you would actually see a return on that investment of \$1.60. Again, we talk about the cost of incarcerating people versus putting people in supportive

housing. And even if you made that choice, it would even be better because you'd have a reduction in your costs in the health care system and the social services to support it. But once again, if we pass this motion, we have no opportunity to actually have that kind of a conversation.

If we went to committee, we would also hear that this rising housing crisis is very much an affordability crisis. Yesterday, I met with representatives from food banks across the GTA. They're seeing a growing number of people who are working but need food banks to eat so they can stay sheltered—or have lost their shelter, live in their cars and then they put their suit and tie on to go to work every day. Their mental health, understandably, is at risk as they struggle to become rehoused.

We also know that 61% of Ontarians are worried that they too could lose their shelter if their financial circumstances changed. Given our economic precarity—which you have consistently underscored as what we're trying to address here—and high unemployment, homelessness is something that a majority of Ontarians are worried about.

Bill 17 also, as we've highlighted—and boy, I wish we could have a more robust discussion at committee about—has some gaps in that regard as well. But maybe, if this is our route, the government will consider our other bill related to homelessness as an opportunity.

In conclusion, I'm here as a new MPP. I represent the people of Etobicoke-Lakeshore, and I really do try to take this work seriously since I've been here. I appreciate listening to other people's perspectives, even the ones that I don't necessarily agree with. I try to listen carefully. I hope that I will have the opportunity to reflect the people I represent, here and in committee, as we discuss the laws that we're passing together. And I hope that maybe even some of my own experience would be useful, or even some of the experts and people in my community or people with lived experience who I could even be able to bring forward into these committees and into these discussions, in areas of health care, in areas of homelessness, in areas of housing. They could actually offer some insight to improve these bills. We all could benefit from that.

I think that maybe that's what I'm the most struck by, coming here as a new MPP: that there just appears to be such a confidence that it's right without considering that maybe there are some other ways that we can think about this, and maybe there are things that we can integrate that could make it even better. That's what I think—that's what democracy is, and that's what our constituents are looking for from all of us.

So I will say I find it very disappointing that we are now considering passing two motions in this regard and six bills. We came back to this Legislature quite late, in mid-April. We could have come back sooner, spent more time on some of these bills. But now, we'll rush them through, and I think it's a shame, because I think that we actually could have all done a whole lot better together, especially on some of these important topics, especially on the contents of Bill 6 and Bill 17.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**MPP Catherine McKenney:** I drew the straw to talk about these two time allocation motions, and I find it rather incredible, having landed here just a couple of months ago, just how little dissent is tolerated by this government—almost like a contempt for the opinions of others, and I would suggest even for the opinions of a lot of the people that you represent. I know that when I made the decision to run to hold this seat, a seat that we all are quite honoured to take—but it also comes with a great deal of responsibility. That responsibility is to come here and to consider what is best for people in this province.

1410

We'll have disagreements; there's no doubt. We have disagreements with people that we often think the same way with. We all have disagreements with people from across the aisle. But I would suggest that with thoughtful discussion, we probably agree on most things. We probably all agree that we should have a good, well-funded public education system. We want our kids to be able to prosper. We want our kids to be able to get a good primary education, go on to high school. We want them to be able to go into a university, maybe end up here one day, listening to us.

We all want health care for everyone in this province. I'm sure there's no one that would stand up here today and say, "I would rather that there were a few people—maybe I could name them—who we weren't going to give health care to." If they get ill, we want them to be able to go see a doctor. If they get very ill, we want them to be able to go into a hospital. It's not something that we disagree on fundamentally.

Housing: I think we can all agree that we would like everyone to have a nice place to live. It doesn't have to be big. It doesn't have to be fancy. They're all different. I probably live in a different place than a lot of my colleagues. I probably live in a different place than you. Where I don't live, thankfully, is in a tent in a park. I think we can all agree, certainly, that no one should live in a tent in a park, down by a riverbed, tucked away, in grave danger. I can't imagine that anyone in this Legislature would ever stand up and say, "I think it's okay that people live in encampments." I think we would all agree that people probably shouldn't even live in shelters. We should all be able to live in a home.

When I leave here today, get on a flight, I cannot wait to get back to my house. Again, my house is likely different than other homes. Some of us live in single-family detached homes, some of us live in farm homes, some of us live in multi-residential, but we're all excited at the end of the day to go home. Imagine if you were walking home and then all of a sudden, somebody just says, "You know what? There's no home for you anymore, and there's no room at the shelter, so you might want to pitch a tent." That is the actual reality for people—it is actually their reality. These were people who, like all of us, went to school, had parents, did their best. Sometimes they were injured. Many construction workers were injured. They for whatever reason perhaps developed a mental illness or an addiction, and as a result, they ended

up without housing, and that's where they are today. But they're not really different than we are.

I always take issue when we refer to people who are living in encampments or who are living in a shelter or have mental illness as "vulnerable." I would suggest this to you: At least the people I have met and that I know who have lived without housing and who have lived with mental illness and with addictions are not vulnerable. The systems that we have created for them are vulnerable. They are marginalized.

We have marginalized people because, quite frankly, it is difficult to look at people who are suffering so badly. It is difficult—it is for me, too—to walk down a street and to see someone sitting on the pavement. It might be cold. It might be wet. I'm on my way home, I'm going into that house, and they're going to stay there. That's hard to look at, right? I have a hard time with it.

I think sometimes we tell ourselves, "You know what? They're probably a little bit different than we are. Maybe they don't think the same way we do. Maybe they don't have the same fears we do. Maybe they don't care about their friends the same way we do. Maybe they don't have the same thoughts that we do." But they do, because when you take someone who is unhoused and you provide them with supportive housing, we know—it was actually through the Mental Health Commission of Canada that a former federal Conservative government put in place At Home/Chez Soi. It was housing first. It was a housing-first project, and it showed, it demonstrated, how you could take somebody out of chronic homelessness, with mental illness, with addictions—those people that we think are just, "They don't even want to be housed," but they do. And when they're taken into housing, there is a 92% success rate that they are still housed after two years—92%.

People want housing. They want to be able to go home at the end of the day. They want a key. They want to open that door. They want a bed. They want to be able to feed themselves. That is the reality. That is what happens when we actually provide the housing to people and the supports that they need.

They do not get that in shelter. Shelters are not homes. They do not get that when they go into a tent. A tent is not a home. But for people today without anything, there is nothing else. There is no other option except that tent. And what we're talking about today is stripping that away before we provide them housing. I don't understand it. I don't understand how we could consider taking away the only place, the only thing someone owns, before we provide them housing.

And we can do it. We don't even have to build aggregate housing. That housing-first, At Home/Chez Soi was actually scattered housing, and it works. It's working in municipalities everywhere. We just need to scale it up. We don't need a new way of housing people. We know what works. Housing first is when you take someone who is chronically homeless and you ask them, "Where in this city do you think you'd like to live?" They might say, "You know what? My family is on the east end" or "You

know what? I have friends over here” or “I want to get out of the downtown” or “I want to be in the downtown.” You give them that agency. You house them, and you wrap around those supports. You wrap around those supports. Sometimes they’ll lose that housing, but it’s a 92% success rate if you do it properly. People stay housed. It’s what they want.

I met a man in 2019—again, at city hall; I met a lot of people at city hall who were unhoused and unsheltered. I remember this man in particular because he was kind enough to answer a lot of questions I had: the types of questions we might ask at committee, or somebody might ask us at committee, or we might be able to ask somebody who comes to committee, if we just listen. I remember I said to him—this is 2019, in Ottawa, middle of winter: “How many people are outside sleeping?” Because that was his reality. He said, “About 40.” It was 2019. I thought, “It can’t be. Forty people?” I actually went out with him one night at midnight. There was kind of a code. Nobody had written it down, but if you were unsheltered and unhoused, you were allowed to sleep on certain grates, on certain streets, under certain bridges and in certain parks. You could go there after dark and had to be out before the sun came up, so you were invisible. Forty people; today there are over 300. And those 40 people are not likely part of that 300. Those 40 people have probably perished. Their lifespan is half of ours. It’s half of ours. They freeze to death. They die young. Without housing, we cannot heal people.

1420

We have a responsibility. We have a responsibility in this Legislature not to cause harm. And Bill 6 is going to cause harm. Bill 6 is going to ensure that we are never, ever going to end chronic homelessness. You cannot take someone who is so desperately poor, without housing, without shelter to go to, with only a tent, and fine them \$10,000. You can’t do it. And you can’t put them in prison. Because even if they get out safely, which they likely won’t, they will not be able to recover. They will not be able to get housing. They won’t. Nobody will give them housing. They will have a record. Why would we want to compound what is happening? And then, when they don’t have housing and they have been out of prison now, where are they going to go? In all of your communities, they are going to be outside.

Bill 6 is not a solution for anything. It is performative at best. But it is cruel. It is cruel to take our failures as a society and dump them on people that we have caused to be homeless. It is our policy failures that have done that. I ask you to go back and look at the At Home/Chez Soi. Again, it was a Conservative government. I give Stephen Harper full credit for that study.

I want to tell you one last story. Again, when I was on council, there were many rooming houses in this area that I represented. These rooming houses were often overflowing. People who were there, they didn’t have the key to the rooming house. They were bunking in rooming housing. They were like one step away from being in a tent. I used to, on occasion, go with a public health nurse

who would visit people in rooming houses. I remember this one time in particular there was a young man in the rooming house. He was very charming; he was very poor. There was something about him that just made you want to hang out with him. So we did. We hung out. He was funny. He asked me if he could walk with me while we went to visit other rooming houses. I said, “Yes, of course.” We were walking and he said to me, “I’m going overseas next week on a holiday.” I said, “You are?” I made this judgment, right? I said, “You are?” I didn’t believe him. He said, “Yes, yes, yes. I’m going with my parents.” He was about in his mid-twenties. I said, “Oh, you are?” He said, “My father is actually, like, a surgeon. I grew up in Rockcliffe Park.” If any of you know Ottawa, it’s actually where Mark Carney’s from. It’s one of the ritzier places in the city. I thought, “Okay, if his parents, who care about him and love him, could not prevent him from falling into homelessness, you know what? There’s no one here that can stop your children.” You think about that. This could be one of yours. It was an incredible kind of awakening, really.

But today things have gotten so much worse. And if Bill 6 is our answer, I’ll tell you this: Not only could we not stop one of our own children from falling into homelessness and ending up in an encampment, but if this is our answer, you can be guaranteed that you will have grandchildren who are living without shelter.

This is not the answer. This is not the answer to people who are unwell, to people who are living in deep poverty, to people who we have left behind, to people who just need compassion. It doesn’t even cost us a lot. It saves us money. There are answers to this. Bill 6 is not the answer. Quite frankly, the fact that we are rushing this through—we are not even going to listen to anyone. The fact that one person—two, maybe three—are making this decision and we cannot have anyone come and ask questions of us I just find astounding.

I don’t know how to respond to my constituents when they ask me, “What did you do to fight it? What did you do to stop this?” I have to say, “I did nothing. I stood up for 20 minutes and gave it my best shot. But we weren’t even allowed to bring you in here so that you could ask us questions.”

I would ask that we allow both of these motions, but especially Bill 6, to go to committee. Let people come in. Meet people. Meet the people who you are making this decision for. It is a dangerous decision, it’s a cruel decision and it’s an unnecessary decision.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Before I go to further debate, can I just invite all members to keep their side conversations a little quieter? Thank you.

Further debate?

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** I’m pleased to take this opportunity in the House to speak to the time allocation motion that is before us, which would accelerate the consideration of Bills 6 and 17.

I make my remarks within the spirit of our Legislature’s motto, which is “Audi alteram partem,” or “Hear the other side.” I think it is of paramount importance that we live up

to that value, especially as we consider the very significant importance of these two pieces of legislation—legislation which both impact housing on different sides of the spectrum and in different ways, but housing nonetheless, which we know is one of the major crises that we face here in Ontario. At the very crux of the matter is, how are we as a Legislature—how are you as a government—going to address the housing crisis, making sure that we get it right, that we build the homes that we need? And for those who can't get access to those homes, what are we going to do to make sure that those individuals stay safe?

Presumably we have had this time allocation motion introduced because there isn't enough time to go through the usual parliamentary steps and scrutiny to make sure these bills before us meet the usual standard.

I acknowledge that we face a crisis in our province right now that relates to housing and to encampments. But I struggle to understand why there is such a rush to do it when this government has not hesitated to take four months off before this parliamentary session began and, in a week, will take something like another three months off after this parliamentary session comes to an end.

**1430**

We've seen the consequence of not respecting due process with legislation before. We've even seen the consequence when due process has been followed and the government hasn't listened to the consultations that came out of public hearings and clause-by-clause review. We are discussing housing, and so there are many relevant examples. In the last seven years, we've had more than 10 pieces of housing legislation. Usually one piece of legislation reverses what was in the last piece of legislation—necessary to correct errors, to flip-flop and go back and forth. First, we're getting rid of development charges; then you're bringing them back; now they're getting deferred. If we had a government that followed due process, that did its homework and listened carefully to what stakeholders and community members had to say, we could reduce those greater-than-10 pieces of legislation to a smaller number and get it right. By failing to do that, not only have we lost seven years of time to solve the housing crisis, we've also created policy chaos, an environment in which home builders don't know how to plan their projects. Because they may do it in one political landscape, and with another piece of legislation their projects may not pencil because their financial projections don't make sense because of something that was changed in a subsequent piece of legislation.

The consequence of not getting housing right is very—we face it right now. We're supposed to be building 150,000 homes every year. The budget indicated this government doesn't think it'll get started more than 78,000, and the CMHC has already made it very clear that this government will actually not build even 50,000.

Which then leads to the next problem: housing precarity, homelessness, and encampments—encampments which have proliferated under the watch of this government.

Bill 17 ostensibly is an approach to build more homes; Bill 6 is the government's purported solution for what to

do to people who don't have homes. The solution there is to criminalize them: to essentially argue that our homelessness crisis and that our encampment crisis exists because there are weak laws on crime. And because that is their thesis, Bill 6 essentially proceeds to say, "If someone shows signs of mental health challenges or addiction, they should go to jail." Let's not forget, we don't have the places in prison to send them there, if that was even the appropriate place for them to go. Let's not forget that those individuals, who actually are seeking help for mental health and addictions challenges, have nowhere to turn. Not a single emergency department shift of mine goes by that I don't see or personally treat someone who is looking for help with an addictions or mental health challenge, and especially as it relates to addictions challenges, I have almost nothing to offer them. Maybe a naloxone kit; maybe a pamphlet about a clinic that they can go to on a walk-in basis that's only available a couple of days a week, that they may or may not be able to get to. Ideally, they'll call in to let them know they're coming in advance, but many of them don't even have a phone.

And so, people who have nowhere else to turn can't get access to care, even the ones who make it to the emergency department—and I have almost nothing available to help them. These are individuals who are being told there's nowhere left for them to go except, apparently, to jail, even though we don't have the spaces for them.

Bill 17 introduces a series of tepid, half-hearted, lacklustre, lukewarm measures to address the housing crisis. And while I will stop short of saying that there is anything offensive in that legislation—and we will ultimately support it—it misses so many opportunities. It merely offers to defer development charges when it could waive development charges, and it still just talks about stuff. It's been years that we've been hearing this government talk about looking at building code amendments to single stair egress—literally years—and this bill commits to more years of looking at that. It fails to implement any of the Housing Affordability Task Force recommendations. It does not go far enough. As John Michael McGrath said, it's best described as evolutionary at a time, with the crisis that we face right now, that it should be revolutionary.

I want to be really clear: I have always said, from the moment that I was elected, that, as an MPP sitting on the opposition side, I see my role as being far more than saying no. I don't think of myself as a member of the opposition. I try to think of myself as a member of proposition, one who occasionally will say things are bad and can't be voted for, but more often than not aspires to say, "This is all right, but it could be better." Given the opportunity to take Bill 17 to public hearings, I would love to help this government understand how Bill 17 could be better. I would love the opportunity to introduce amendments that could make this a bill that addresses our housing crisis with the seriousness and ambition that the current situation deserves. I wish that we could go to public hearings for Bill 6, so that we could actually hear the impact that this government's legislation and inaction has wrought upon some of our most vulnerable people in society.

I was at an event about a week and a half ago with a government member. I won't name this individual because I don't want to embarrass him and because I know that he was moved by this experience. We were meeting with a group of nurses. A nurse approached the both of us, but she was speaking directly to him because she knows where I stand on this. She said, "I need you to know that because of legislative changes that you have brought in, because of a HART hub that doesn't have enough capacity and the elimination of a safe consumption site, three of my patients who I've treated for years are now dead." I know that this particular government member won't say that in this House, so I will tell that health care worker's story for her. But I do hope that he's taken that back to your caucus meetings because it's a story that needs to be heard.

Behind every piece of legislation, behind every failed attempt at solving our housing crisis and at addressing the mental health and addictions challenge, there are vulnerable people whose lives are on the line. Some of those lives have already been lost. I'm warning everyone in this house: The Chief Coroner of Ontario will soon be releasing his statistics on opioid deaths for 2024. That will be our first insight into the impact that this government's legislation has had on people struggling with mental health and addictions. But at least in public hearings, we could have started to hear how devastating this government has been for the most vulnerable people in our society.

I will leave one more concrete example of how this government has failed to act and is instead rushing through things. There is a modular housing development at 175 Cummer Avenue here in Toronto that has been mired in bureaucracy. Bill 17 purports to remove bureaucracy, purports to get homes built faster. When that modular housing project, which was created to move people out of encampments—it would and will provide supportive and, if necessary, affordable housing to 60 families. It was mired in bureaucracy and the city of Toronto came and asked this government for a ministerial zoning order. A simple step that could have cleared at least an entire encampment in a humane, dignified and supportive way. This government said no to that.

I entirely reject the notion of the government members in this house that they have no choice, no options, no policy tools to help our most vulnerable. They had that opportunity, and they said no.

1440

The city of Toronto has prevailed through other mechanisms, no thanks to the members in this House—to the government members in this House. I warn that for any member who says our housing and homelessness crisis is due to crime and all options have been exhausted to resolve that, this is a very concrete example of significant options and significant inaction: significant options that remain on the table, and significant inaction by this government.

I implore all members of this House, there are good ideas and solutions and tools that remain to address people who are struggling from homelessness and encampments. Criminalizing them is not the solution, and there are

excellent tools and policy suggestions and levers that remain with Bill 17. We can put all of those on the table and make sure that every member hears those, if we have the opportunity to go to public hearings and we have the opportunity to go to amendments and clause-by-clause review. If you are willing to do that, as someone who considers myself a member of proposition, as someone who considers myself fully committed to elevating the best ideas and not being unnecessarily or inappropriately partisan, you have my commitment that in public hearings and in clause-by-clause review and amendments I will work with you to make sure we do the right thing, elevate the best legislation, bring forward the best ideas because I know we're not here for ourselves or for our parties. We are here for our constituents. And so I ask you to support me in opposing this time allocation motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I just wanted to speak on the issue of time allocation and how I'm not in favour of this and I would cordially, kindly, compassionately and caringly ask the government to reconsider. I know that they're listening so intently right now to my request, but I'm specifically worried about both bills and the whole pattern of skipping committee. We don't want to get in the habit of that. We want to hear from Ontarians, and we want to take the time and do it right.

As I mentioned the other day—I'm not going to sing it for you because I'm not the best singer—Billy Joel would advise you to do it right, get it right the first time. That's the main thing. Specifically, with regard to Bill 17, there are decent things in that bill, so I'm giving you a stroke for that. And now for a little bit of a poke. Well, it's just a reminder, actually, not a poke. I'm very worried about the green development standards for all of Ontario. The other day I listed the municipalities that have them already in existence, and they're working very well. They are mostly your municipalities, people, so you'd better be careful when you go to the grocery store this weekend. People know about this. But you can turn it around by ending this time allocation and letting us do the full process and going to committee.

Back in the day, if you recall—because things are a blur sometimes here because they go very quickly—when the green standards first came up last Parliament, not that long ago, you will recall the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing actually educated himself, enlightened himself and empowered himself on the green development standards. He wrote a letter. The bill was going to kill those standards, but he walked it back and essentially saved them. That's your own team member in the ministry who did that. I think that maybe you guys had forgotten that, so maybe it's time for a little revisit.

I'm going to read you his letter. Today, I'm not going to entertain you by impersonating his voice, sorry. You're going to have to listen to my own songbird voice, lyrical voice.

This is February 28, 2023:

"Re: Municipalities with an interest in green standards.

“Dear head of council and CAO:

“Ontario municipalities have been developing green standards that have introduced leading practices in North America for promoting energy efficiency, environmentally friendly landscaping, bird-friendly design”—because I know you guys like birds, especially the Queen’s Park hawk, who’s watching right now—“and other important sustainable design measures.

“We have heard from municipalities, building owners and occupants, design professionals and the general public about the importance of these green standards.” Wow, this is your own Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, your colleague whom I know you love. “The innovative approaches being implemented through the site plan control process will help move Ontario sooner to the goal of net-zero emission communities.” Woohoo!

“It was not the intention of the government through Bill 23”—did you hear that? It was not the intention of the government through Bill 23—“the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022, to prevent municipalities from using site plan control to promote green standards. One of the objectives was to focus site plan reviews on health and safety issues rather than architectural or decorative landscape details that increase costs and create unnecessary delays.

“Bill 23 was amended to maintain important Planning Act provisions related to sustainable design of landscape elements and to provide municipalities with the option”—many of those municipalities are your beautiful municipalities—“to require site plan drawings to show municipal green building construction requirements”—because especially now you want to create good jobs in Ontario, especially the Minister of Labour is thinking about that, and the green economy—“that will be authorized by the building code and established by municipal bylaw.

“The government recognizes the important work being done by municipalities through green standards to encourage green-friendly development and is committed”—the government is committed—“to supporting these efforts.”

Wow, my eyes are just popping off this page. I can’t even believe it. It’s heavenly to read this.

“While the building code already contains high standards for energy and water conservation, more needs to be done. As a first step, the ministry plans to commence discussions in the near term with municipalities, builders, designers, manufacturers and building officials to develop a new and consistent province-wide approach for municipalities wanting to implement green building standards that are above the minimum requirements in the building code.”

Wow, isn’t that fabulous? The government wants to work with municipalities to enhance the green standards. That is spectacular, like I won the lottery, hearing that.

“We plan to work with interested municipalities and other stakeholders on transitioning certain green building standards related to building construction (which are currently being implemented through the site plan process) into the Ontario building code. This will be achieved

through an interim building code amendment by the summer of 2023.

“For municipalities interested in promoting leading practices, this approach would maintain consistent construction standards in Ontario that provide important benefits to building product manufacturers, designers and builders, while also continuing to demonstrate Ontario’s commitment to enhancing green standards”—Ontario’s commitment to enhancing green standards, for those in the back row.

**1450**

“In addition, Ontario has consulted on advancing harmonization of energy efficiency requirements in buildings by aligning Ontario’s building code with selected national code tiers as minimum energy efficiency requirements in the next edition of the code in 2024. In future editions of the building code, Ontario will work with the national code development system to promote further alignment of national, provincial and municipal requirements for energy efficiency and other relevant green building standards.” Woohoo!

“I also wish to clarify that aspects of green standards that are not brought into Ontario’s building code because they do not involve construction (including green infrastructure, cool paving, biodiversity, tree plantings etc.)”—biodiversity; Bill 5, wow—“will continue to be optional standards that can be required through municipal bylaw and implemented through site plan control. To ensure these matters are understood, the ministry plans to update its online site plan guidance to reflect green building standards early in 2023.

“During the transition period, until the green standards are authorized in the building code, we would anticipate that municipalities will continue to use site plan control to address green standards to the extent possible.” That is amazing.

“I have asked”—his director; I’m not sure if I can name the name, so I won’t get in trouble with that—“director of the building and development branch, to connect with municipal officials on the proposed green standards to be included in the Ontario building code. He can be reached at....

“Sincerely,” the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, your colleague and friend and smart man.

Look, he saved the green standards for everyone, for all of us, for job creation; for energy efficiency; for comfort; for saving your residents, the occupants, money—win, win, win. Rebuilding the green economy—I love it.

That was dated, as we said, February 28, 2023, from your own member. So I’m sure you would want to do that again. So you need to take the time. Take a beat. Take a pause. Take a yoga breath, everyone. Do tree pose or something—not savasana yet, but a great yoga breath—and do it right the first time. Go to committee. Go through the proper process as we always do. We like committee. We like to be together. We come up with good things and amendments and whatnot.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I'm sure the parliamentary assistants are listening intently.

Also, just as another little fact, in case you weren't aware—I know you're very clever, but maybe you weren't aware of this: Big developers; reputable, credible developers, such as EllisDon—ever heard of EllisDon? Yes? Tribute—pretty great. Minto, Tridel—four big, credible developers who build our province are supportive of the green development standards. Even, actually, Rescon is supportive of removing parking minimums, which is in the Toronto green standards.

So there you have it. Don't even just listen to me; listen to the builders who build our province. I'm sure you don't want to get on the wrong side of them, because you have such strong desires to increase the housing targets. Last time, you rushed it. I'll forgive you for that, because we cleaned it up. This time, you don't want to rush it. You want to take the time. Forget about this time allocation nonsense. You want to do it right. You want to hear from us. You want to hear from stakeholders and residents. So take a sober second thought. Just do that. Breathe in and think about it. Take a pause. Send it to committee. Do the right thing.

The wording of Bill 17 needs to be clarified. It's way too open and way too vague, especially around construction and demolition. Legal professionals are even worried about that.

I don't know why we're rushing stuff through. We only sat here for seven weeks in those seven months before the election. I'm happy to be here longer. I'm happy to do the work, as are you, I know. So let's not rush things through. Do it right the first time. Take the time.

Thank you very much. I believe in you. You can do it. Let's end this time allocation nonsense. Namaste.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate? Further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Leardi has moved government notice of motion number 4 relating to allocation of time on the following bills: Bill 6, An Act to enact the Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025 and to amend the Trespass to Property Act respecting sentencing, and Bill 17, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to infrastructure, housing and transit and to revoke a regulation.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*Vote deferred.*

#### ROYAL ASSENT

#### SANCTION ROYALE

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of His Majesty the

King, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Julia Douglas):** The following are the titles of the bills to which her honour did assent:

An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025 / Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2025.

An Act to amend various Acts with respect to pensions and compensation for members of the Assembly / Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les pensions et la rétribution des députés à l'Assemblée.

#### 2025 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 29, 2025, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I just want to express my appreciation for the opportunity to stand up today to speak about the budget for 2025. I wanted to start out by talking about some big-picture items for the province. I know lots of people have been speaking about the budget, so I want to not speak generally about the budget but talk about a few things to get these points on the record and hopefully have the government and other members of the Legislature take note of them.

The first thing I'd like to talk about is artificial intelligence. This is something that, if you look at the financial markets, the equity markets, a lot of investment has been made in artificial intelligence in the last few years because of the potential that it has shown. In fact, more than potential; I think when Nvidia released its earnings yesterday, the market reacted very positively. Everybody's looking very carefully at how artificial intelligence is going to change our economy, change our society.

#### 1500

The Ontario budget talks about fostering the artificial intelligence—the AI—ecosystem in Ontario, and it aspires to something good and, I think, achievable, which is to make Ontario a global leader in artificial intelligence. The budget discusses a number of things, but I want to point out something that we could—in fact, there's an opportunity which presents itself right now here in Ontario.

The federal government has a program called the AI Sovereign Compute Infrastructure Program. It is \$700 million and it is going towards the construction of a supercomputer system, which is entirely contained in Canada—that is, the data is in Canada, the networks are in Canada, the hardware is in Canada, the people who maintain it are in Canada. The reason for doing that is, for artificial intelligence, you need a lot of computing power. In fact, that is why a company like Nvidia is doing so well.

So, the federal government wants to create a new, latest-generation supercomputer in Canada so that we can do things like, for example, work on data that cannot be

stored or go outside of Canada. This opens up a lot of artificial intelligence applications. As well, the pure computing power will open up a lot of applications.

The date for expressions of interest across Canada has closed and there seem to be three possible competitors: one in Quebec, one in Ontario and one in British Columbia. And I think this is an opportunity for the Ontario government to make a big leap in the artificial intelligence ecosystem in Ontario by supporting Ontario's bid, its competition against Quebec and BC in this AI Sovereign Compute Infrastructure Program, where the federal government, as I said earlier, is putting in \$700 million.

The Ontario entry is pretty impressive. First of all, it's based at Queen's University, where they have the talent, the ability to put together supercomputers, to run supercomputers. There are only a few people in the world who can do that, but we have somebody at Queen's—in fact, pretty much all of the supercomputers are on university campuses, because that's where you get the talent. But it's over 4,000 of the latest Nvidia graphics processing units, and the computing power of this new supercomputer proposed by the group at Queen's University is five times all of the supercomputing power in Canada combined today. So it's an enormous leap and I think it would be an enormous leap forward for the artificial intelligence ecosystem in Ontario.

I'm mentioning this because of the aspiration in the Ontario budget to make Ontario a global leader. This is something that the government could decide to support, and I hope it chooses to do that, but it would be a big leap forward.

The second thing I want to mention is, the government today in fact elaborated on something it mentioned in the budget, and that is \$500 million to support critical minerals processing in Ontario. The idea is, if we're going to mine the materials, to do the chemical processing right here in Ontario and to make sure that as much of the supply chain as possible is in Ontario.

What I want to put in front of the government is the following: Here in Ontario, we have the companies and we have technologies as good as anywhere else in the world to recycle certain critical minerals, in particular rare earths, which are mostly processed in China, so there's a national security element to being able to process rare earths in Ontario. They're expensive and they're dirty to process, so recycling is not only good for the environment, but it makes economic sense and it makes national security sense. We can do it in Ontario. I hope that this government—and that's why I'm mentioning it in the speech: I hope that the government of Ontario remembers that recycling of rare earths—magnets and the rare earths in them—should be part of the critical minerals supply chain that we should be supporting in Ontario.

I also wanted to mention the agricultural Risk Management Program which, in the budget, is going to be increased. In fact, it's already started: a \$100 million increase over three years. The Liberal Party made a commitment to increase the Risk Management Program last year and leading up to the election, and I'm glad that

the day before the election was called, the Minister of Agriculture did announce that the Risk Management Program would be increased. I talked about it a lot last year and I was pleased to hear the minister actually commit to that announcement the day before the election. I guess the election can do wonders.

I also want to mention a certain strategy that I think the government should rely more on, and that is procurement over grants. Just to give an example, in the budget, there is the mention of an Ontario Shipbuilding Grant Program and that's to support the shipbuilding capacity and in other improvements in our shipbuilding here in Ontario. But there's another way and probably a slightly more important way to support shipbuilders, especially at this time when we are in the middle of tariff threats from the United States and we have to make sure that workers are not shed—skilled workers who are organized in a certain way. We don't want to break up that organization or shed workers because of the tariff wars.

A way to do that—it's not grants; it's to procure the ships that you are going to procure anyway. For example, the Premier has spoken about procuring ships to patrol our borders, smaller boats, for example, the kind that the OPP might use. There is a shipbuilder in my riding, MetalCraft Marine, who makes ships for the United States Navy of that size, where you put a boat on the river and you can interdict, for example, illegal drugs coming across the border from the United States. It is much better to procure what you're going to procure anyway as a way of supporting jobs and making sure that these companies have the cash flow to survive turbulence from the tariffs.

The shipbuilding is just one example, but I think across the government, we should be looking at what we're buying as a government in Ontario, what we're procuring, and if we have any options to accelerate procurement during this tariff war, to make sure that our manufacturers have the cash flow to not be disrupted, we should be looking out for that.

One thing that I did not see enough of was support for rural infrastructure. We have a lot of decaying rural infrastructure, especially in eastern Ontario, and I didn't see a deal to partner with rural municipalities to start to fix a lot of the decaying rural infrastructure we have in eastern Ontario. An example I've spoken of before in this chamber is County Road 49, which remains one of the roads in eastern Ontario, perhaps all of Ontario, that's in the worst shape.

Let me start talking a little bit locally about my riding of Kingston and the Islands. The first thing I would say is that the spending increases in the budget—they're not where the people in Kingston and the Islands need it most. They're not in education; they're not in health care; they're not in housing.

The Premier has increased our public debt from \$23,000 per person when they took power to \$30,000 per person today. According to this budget, we'll be adding \$1,000 per person with the deficit this year. I would say that the average person in Kingston and the Islands doesn't feel



like this spending has gone towards making life in Kingston easier.

**1510**

The Premier spoke about removing tolls on part of the 407 and touted it as saving daily commuters an estimated \$7,200 annually. So you're welcome for that subsidy, is what the people of Kingston and the Islands would say, but we needed more spending on the basics, like health care, education and housing. Those things overall did not get a boost.

If you look, after inflation, in those three areas, spending is basically unchanged, and those are the basics of what people need. It's great to want to grow Ontario's economy, but it's hard to do that when people are not getting a quality education, they can't afford a house or can't afford rent, or they can't afford to sit in a hallway in a hospital, or to not even get to an emergency room in a rural area because it's closed.

By contrast, the government's budget mentioned alcohol a lot. Now, there are some things in here where we're supporting—Ontario wine, grape growers, markdowns at the LCBO. But alcohol gets mentioned 130 times in the budget, and there's not enough in the budget about hospitals, about health care, schools or housing.

The government also talks about making Ontario the most competitive place it can be, but without an increase in the base funding for colleges and universities—that's the place where people get a chance to be competitive on the world stage—we can't be competitive. There's no plan to reopen programs which had—for example, at St. Lawrence College, there were programs where the enrolment was pretty much all domestic students, where almost all students got jobs when they graduated. One of them is the four-year bachelor's of business administration program—so very strange. Almost all the students—domestic students—get a job when they graduate, and yet this is one of the programs that was cut. There are employers who are wondering, once the last cohort graduates, where they're going to be getting the skilled, trained employees that they need.

When it comes to elementary and secondary education, there's no real attempt to fix the problems in schools, the lack of educational assistants, violence in the classrooms and the school buildings that need to be fixed up.

When it comes to housing, home building in Ontario—we just found out today with a report—is about half the pace that we need to reach this 1.5-million-home goal by 2032. So there's a lot of ground to make up. The budget talks about \$50 million for modular housing—and that's \$50 million over five years—but when it comes to housing, that kind of money is very, very small. We have a chance to nurture a really important industry that can make building housing a lot less expensive. My recommendation to the government is to try to move forward much more aggressively when it comes to modular housing or other kinds of innovation in the building of housing.

There was a report released today by the Missing Middle Initiative and scored Ontario a C for its housing

efforts, and that's behind PEI and BC. We got a D- grade in urban density, and it highlighted Ontario's high development charges and slow approval processes.

In the last election campaign, the Ontario Liberals proposed eliminating development charges on smaller homes—and we campaigned on that, and I wish the government would implement that.

I have a couple of comments. I had some young people in my riding look at the budget and I have a couple of comments. They're actually pretty knowledgeable. One of them, Ethan, said, "By building more medium- and high-density housing, new units can go up quicker, and they will likely be more affordable for tenants." So this young high school student is following the housing issue closely.

Another young person, Athena, said, when it comes to another sector of housing, "Although there's an additional \$75.5 million for homelessness prevention, this is characterized as a top-up rather than a transformative investment." So Athena, another young constituent, understands that we do need a transformation when it comes to the homelessness and the addictions and mental health problems in Kingston. The number one concern of the downtown business improvement area and downtown businesses in Kingston is the homelessness problem, the mental health and addictions problem.

When it comes to health care—now, in the budget, here's one good thing—there is a plan to expand team-based primary care with money behind it. I remember speaking about team-based primary care in question period over and over again last fall, and I was pleased—again, another magic thing when this government has to face the people. Two days before they called the election, they announced funding for expanding team-based primary care to get family doctors and nurse practitioners to people, and that's in the budget.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Order, please.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I'm proud that this whole idea of geographic health homes and team-based primary care was piloted in Kingston. Kingston is a leader in that area. The former head of our school of medicine at Queen's in Kingston, Dr. Jane Philpott, is leading the primary care action team.

In Kingston, we've even achieved—there's one part of Kingston where, if you live in eastern Kingston, there's a clinic responsible for that area. And several times in the last couple of years, they have cleared the waiting list. They have cleared the Health Care Connect waiting list, which I think is pretty amazing.

But overall, health care spending is flatlining. It's not a priority for this government, so there's no plan to shorten ER wait times. There's no plan to do more for mental health and addictions. There's no increase to public health when we have a historic measles outbreak. In my area, the local health units merged to try to save money, but they still have a budget deficit. Public health is a really great way to spend money on health care. You get the most bang for your buck.

And so if I could just say one thing in conclusion—it is something that I think resonates with many: Never has so much been spent and borrowed to accomplish so little on what the people need most.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Questions?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I know that the member made a reference to the investments that this government is making in the expansion of connecting people to primary care providers. Some of those primary care providers are family doctors. Some of those family doctors are expanding in the province of Ontario and some of those primary care providers are nurse practitioners. They work in nurse practitioner-led clinics.

And most importantly, we are moving towards a model of patient-centred care, which involves people working in teams. I think a lot of people like that type of primary care. And so I would like to invite the member to comment on whether he endorses that kind of approach; that is, to expand primary care in the province of Ontario and connect more and more people to a primary care provider, whether it be a family doctor or a nurse practitioner. I invite him to comment on whether he endorses that.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Thank you for the question from the member for Essex. I spent a lot of time with him last night in committee until very late, so I am impressed that he's here today.

1520

I would say not only do I endorse it, but one of the things, if I didn't say it clearly, I meant to say in my speech is that I'm really glad that the government endorsed the team-based geographic health home primary care model that was piloted in Kingston and is starting to work quite well in certain parts of Kingston. It needs some work in other parts of Kingston, but that's kind of par for the course in a lot of the province.

I think that is the future for primary care, and I'm really looking forward to what we can accomplish during the four years of this plan, with the goal of making sure that everybody has a primary care health team in support of their own health and well-being.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I want to thank the member for his presentation. I also want to commend him on the personality he showed last night and for the knowledge he imparted about parasites, among other things. Thank you for that.

One of the things that really took me by surprise this morning was the vote of the Liberal caucus. This morning the NDP, once again, tabled their plan, Homes Ontario, something that was very popular, something that we talked about in the last session of government. This plan was so popular that federal Liberal leader and Prime Minister Mark Carney actually said that yes, the government should get back into the business of building homes. Yet this morning the Liberal caucus stood with the Conservatives in voting down this bold plan. Why did you do it?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I'm very glad that my colleague from the NDP asked a sharp question and not some kind of softball question. It's very important.

I think that the government should be supporting the building of housing, everything from supportive housing, affordable housing, throughout the different sectors of housing. But there are different ways to do that and setting up a bureaucracy—I hope I'm not being too offensive—setting up the Metrolinx of housing is not necessarily the best way to do that. I think there are other ways of reducing the cost and harnessing the enormous power of the private sector to build the housing that we need. That's the difference in approach that we have.

I thank the member. There's a book that I would recommend about parasites that he should read.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I want to thank my colleague from Kingston and the Islands, first of all, for the very brave battle that he led last night at committee, attaining some very important objectives with the support, I will say, of our colleagues in the NDP because we all agree on that thing, that Bill 5 should go forward. I have to say I'm equally impressed to see you here this afternoon because you must be totally sleep-deprived and you're still making sense.

You've talked about some of the stuff in the budget that's not responsive. Obviously, we can't support the budget because it's not addressing the important needs. What is it that it's not addressing in your riding that you would have liked to see in the budget?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I think that the most important need in Kingston and the Islands is housing. In the municipal election of 2018 housing was the number one issue. It's something we've been dealing with for a long time. We've made some progress, but I would say that almost every social problem has a connection with housing. Having housing across the whole spectrum of different housing types, having more housing can help us deal with every social challenge that we have. That's the number one issue. I think the government could be much more aggressive when it comes to supporting the building of housing in our communities.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands. I always enjoy his remarks. He's really a tough act to follow.

I just wanted to ask, through you, Speaker: In our budget, the government is stepping up with a bold and targeted response to global economic pressures and we've created the \$5-billion Protecting Ontario Account, which would shield jobs and industries from the fallout of US tariffs. I know the member opposite is also on the US border and, certainly, his community has been impacted by trade more than, I'd say, anywhere else. I wanted to understand whether the member opposite is in support of that measure in the budget, and hoping he can elaborate on its impact in his community as well.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Yes, in fact, my riding is the only Liberal riding that borders the United States.

If I could take this opportunity, I want to mention Horne's Ferry, which is a private ferry that connects Wolfe Island with Cape Vincent, New York. It's been around for a couple hundred years. There are families on both sides of that ferry. It's a private ferry. The last member of the Horne family who wants to run that ferry passed away recently, and we have to figure out a way to make sure that that ferry runs. I don't know what it's going to be or what the right way to do it is. The government doesn't necessarily have to get involved, but I do want to make sure that the government is aware that this ferry is probably not going to run this summer.

What I will say in response to the question from my friend, if I can say that, please, from Windsor is—he was also there last night, and I commend him for being here today. I would say that, yes, I support playing defence and making sure that we support workers and companies so that they have the cash flow to survive any disruption. We should also be playing offence, building new trading relationships outside of the United States, around the world.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** A quick question from the member from Kiiwetinoong.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch to the member from Kingston and the Islands. I almost fell asleep listening to you. It wasn't because I wasn't listening, but it was just because last night was a late night.

But seriously though, in Kiiwetinoong, there are two fires that are near a community. Deer Lake is an impossible evacuation. There are about 1,500 people there. The airport was burning—right by the airport. Webequie, just across two kilometres away—there's a big fire that's happening there right now. You can see it on social media.

When we talk about emergency force firefighting, last year the amount was \$177 million. This year, it's \$135 million. That's a \$42-million cut. I don't know where they're going to—it's still only May. Do you think this is fair, when you start cutting these types of funds for forest firefighting?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** A very quick response from the member from Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I think it's important to know that, if you look at the historical budget of firefighting, it does go up and down depending on whether the fire season is severe. For example, in 2018, it was pretty high. So the government should be adjusting.

I also want people in southern Ontario to know we've had a cold, damp spring, but in northwestern Ontario and Manitoba, it's been dry. We need to recognize that—it's a bit far away from Toronto, but the conditions there have been very different. We have to make sure we watch those fires and take care of the people there.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Good afternoon to everyone in the House. It's truly an honour to speak to you today about

Ontario's 2025 budget, A Plan to Protect Ontario. This is a budget that puts communities like mine, Windsor–Tecumseh, and our shared priorities front and centre. It's about protecting workers, supporting families and building an economy that's truly more resilient, more self-reliant and more future-ready than ever before. We know we're facing global uncertainty. We have US tariffs, various supply chain disruptions and a lot of risk. But through it all, our government remains focused, determined and committed to ensuring that the people of Ontario, especially the people I represent in Windsor–Tecumseh, don't just get by, they get ahead.

We know that economic threats, like the tariffs imposed by the United States, impact real people head-on in my community and many communities across the province. These tariffs strike at the heart of industries like automotive, tool-and-die, the mold industry—all of which are critical to our local economy. It's what we do.

**1530**

Exports are really the biggest part of our economy. That's why this budget includes a \$20-million investment in the 2025-26 fiscal year to mobilize new training and support centres across Ontario. I'd like to speak a bit about them. The centres support laid-off workers, coordinate access to job search assistance, retraining programs and they help workers transition into high-demand fields. We've already seen a few deployed in my community, and we're already seeing the benefits.

We have 530 workers from Unifor Local 444 who were displaced when production volumes at Stellantis went down, so our government was there to help them gain some new skills; 289 syncreon workers from Local 195—syncreon manufactured parts that were insourced, again, from Stellantis. Stellantis took back that work. Now those workers are receiving vital support. In fact, they're being led by our worker action centres, and they're especially needed.

We had some federal challenges. Syncreon workers were hoping to get their full EI benefits and not have their severance payments deducted but, unfortunately, the federal government was unable to make that change on their end, which was a policy during the COVID pandemic. So we're hopeful that we made a difference here, and we're proud to back our local unions and reskilling programs. Through our Skills Development Fund, we've invested \$15.5 million in Windsor projects since 2021, and I'm sure that number is destined to grow.

Let me highlight just a few. The IBEW Local 773: They're receiving over \$5.5 million to train more than 600 new electrical workers and build a cutting-edge training facility, so it's really providing a fortressing of our industry by having those workers on hand. Actually, what's even greater, and I'll get into it in a little bit, is the reach of that program.

We have the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network, which is a \$3-million investment supporting 1,500 workers in the EV and battery sectors. It includes an Automotive Innovation Challenge for students.

The Ironworkers Local 700: Over half a million dollars to train at least 170 ironworkers with upgraded equipment and instruction.

And our friends at the Carpenters and Joiners Local 494 in my hometown of Tecumseh: a \$1.8-million addition, creating 5,600 square feet of new training space. If you walk in their doors right now, you're going to see dozens of students, predominantly women, who are learning that trade.

I wanted to also mention LIUNA Local 625, our friends there: \$2.3 million for a partnership between the UHC—Hub of Opportunities, Women's Enterprise Skills Training, and St. Clair College—helping more people enter the trades and earn bigger paycheques for themselves and their families through pre-apprenticeship programs.

So let's also talk about health care, because access to health care will save lives and strengthen our communities. It was just the end of last year we were able to announce the first contract for the long-awaited Windsor-Essex regional acute care hospital. And this year's budget certainly ensures that that promise is moving forward—after years of delays, broken commitments under previous governments and a glaring absence in the 2018 budget after the then Minister Hoskins said it was going to be there in black and white and that's a promise to take to the bank. Our community could not take that promise to the bank very clearly.

We're also investing in people. Through the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant, we're training more nurses, paramedics and medical lab technologists and keeping them right in our community. So if you're a student at Collège Boréal, St. Clair College and the University of Windsor, that's over \$90 million in support already delivered through that program, and you're benefiting from those institutions in my community, but also institutions across Ontario.

Windsor-Essex has also been announced for \$6.3 million annually for one of the 28 new homelessness and addiction recovery treatment hubs—the HART hubs—providing comprehensive care to people struggling with addiction, helping them recover and rebuild. I, like many, am looking forward to seeing them at full strength as quickly as possible. I know that different partner agencies are raring to go, and everyone's working very hard to ensure those services are up and running.

We're also expanding primary care with over \$235 million going province-wide. Last year, I had the privilege of announcing \$1.9 million for the Windsor-Essex branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association. So they opened a community health centre. It's going to mean 8,000 more residents, predominantly in the Windsor West part of the community, but certainly they're part of my community, too. That's 8,000 more residents who will have primary care through that funding.

We're investing in long-term care, with many projects coming forward: continuing funding for brand new homes in the riding of my friend and colleague the member for Essex; a brand new facility planned for Amherstburg. I look forward in the coming weeks to hopefully be part of

the grand opening of the Brouillette Manor—which was under past budgets, mind you, but boy, what a world of difference for the residents of that home.

Madam Speaker, our future also starts in our classrooms, and that's why our government is investing over \$30 billion over the next decade to build more schools and child care spaces across Ontario. Many are expanding, including one school across from my office, the École Saint-Thérèse, and another school literally in my backyard, école Sainte-Marguerite-d'Youville, which is where I actually did grades 7 and 8.

We're also expanding Northwood Public School. That was announced in this budget. Northwood is a much-beloved school in south Windsor. I've already, actually—my career has been fairly lengthy in government; I worked on a development application for the last expansion. But it's showing how the continuing growth in our economy locally is attracting families, and I'm really happy to see that. That's 184 new student spaces because of the growth of the economy, not the contraction of the economy that our community was previously experiencing. It's a broader commitment to education infrastructure.

Just since I've been elected in the last three years, schools like Catholic Central, Eastview Horizon, Beacon Heights and James L. Dunn have already been completed. I know more are on the way, including one that I know everyone at St. Joseph's high school is really looking forward to, with eight new classrooms. We are building classrooms that prepare students for the future with modern facilities and access to career pathways in the skilled trades, health care and technology. But to truly build a stronger economy and make sure that we don't lose out on these gains from the last couple of years, we need to lay the physical foundations: roads, highways and high-quality infrastructure.

So in this budget, our government is continuing to move forward with the long-awaited widening of Highway 3 between Essex and Leamington, named after a former member of this Legislature, Bruce Crozier. It's Bruce Crozier Way, if you see the signage. Even though it was long promised, it was not delivered until just the last three years.

We're also investing in another long-awaited project in my community, the Banwell Road-E.C. Row interchange. That was known to be needed back in the late 1980s, and no government found reason to fund it locally, and this government did, and I appreciate that very much.

Also, the new Highway 401 interchange at Lauzon Parkway, which will open up the Sandwich South lands for economic development and housing is much needed. Otherwise, there is really no prospect for building in our official plan intentions. All these also are in support of the next REV battery plant, located at Banwell and E.C. Row, and a new regional acute care hospital on County Road 42, so not far from Lauzon Parkway.

Actually, one thing I'd like to highlight too in this budget is the Connecting Links Program. For anyone who doesn't know what that is, it's basically that if a provincial highway goes through your community, you really want

to keep local control for permits, so typically the municipality owns that highway instead of the province, but it may be signed as a provincial highway.

We're increasing annual funding for that program from \$30 million to \$45 million. That will benefit roads like Huron Church Road in Windsor, which is the gateway to Ontario, with 7.5 million vehicles, each and every year, crossing on Huron Church. It was looking pretty ragged up until 2018, and every year since that time, the Connecting Links Program has made sure that we're not seeing exposed rebar, rusted curbs and just broken concrete like we used to; we're actually seeing a high-quality road that fits the image we would like to project for the province of Ontario. And through the Ontario Made Manufacturing Tax Credit, we're supporting Ontario's processors and manufacturers, providing an estimated \$1.4 billion in tax support by 2027-28.

**1540**

Madam Speaker, I also wanted to highlight the Invest Ontario Fund. It's being boosted by \$600 million, and I can tell you what Invest Ontario's meant, just for my riding—just my riding alone. The NextStar Energy EV battery plant: 2,500 direct jobs and 2,600 spin-off jobs. That includes the Minth project, which was just announced a few weeks ago—1,110 jobs; and investments from Bobaek North America and DS Actimo, which will be suppliers to NextStar. Our local workforce is going to be dramatically increased because of these investments that are leveraged from Invest Ontario, so I would love to see as many communities in Ontario benefit from our economic might that we have and spread, really, the benefits of these investments. I've certainly got a lot; I would love to have more. We have 10.7% unemployment, but job creation is bar none at the root of why this budget is written the way it is.

As a border community, security is not an afterthought for us; it's a daily reality. So I was very pleased to see the investment of \$57 million for the new H135 helicopters, one of which will support Windsor police, patrolling our border with the latest technology. Right now, the OPP has a boat, the Windsor police has a boat, but there's minimal federal presence on the international border, so really the eyes and ears have to be locally. I know this is something that President Trump has mentioned as an issue that he has with Canada, that he feels that our borders are too porous, so the helicopter's a good way to demonstrate that we're taking this issue seriously.

We also have the dedicated major auto theft prosecution response teams. We're going to have one down our way helping to dismantle organized crimes for local police. And the continued rollout of Operation Deterrence, which is a comprehensive strategy involving 39,000 hours of border patrols, 41,000 vehicle inspections and significant seizures of guns, drugs and stolen vehicles. It's very important that we do take the border seriously, because if we're going to get away from the imposition of tariffs and the added uncertainty and risk, we need to prove that we mean business; that we're taking the issues that the United States has identified—and sometimes rightly—seriously,

not just ignoring them. And we're also cracking down on money laundering, ensuring Ontario's not a safe haven for organized crime.

All these investments protect families, safeguard our economy, ensure that border communities like Windsor–Tecumseh remain safe and prosperous.

I wanted to stress how tailor-made this budget is for the needs and priorities of my community, and for anyone listening—and I know many of them are working at the moment—but I hope that you see what I see: that this is a budget that reflects your voices, your concerns and your hopes for good jobs, safe streets, better health care and truly a strong future for our children. We're building not just for today but for the next generation, and we're doing it responsibly. Ontario's finances are in the strongest position that they've been in over a decade and it's demonstrated by the two credit rating upgrades in 2024 and truly a clear path to balance in 2027 and 2028.

I think that this point needs to be raised: that when we accumulate debt, when we are adding on operating costs in our budget to future generations which just keep on growing and growing, that cost does need to be repaid. The imposition of debt is not something we should take lightly. It does have a real impact and limits the opportunities of our future generations because they have to pay our bills instead of us prioritizing what's more important to us. And we don't know what they're going to face in their lifetimes. Will they see a pandemic? Will they see an economic collapse? And will they have the tools that they need to deal with those measures that they'll be responding with? It's very important that that path to balance be maintained and that we stop adding onto our debt.

So, Speaker, I will conclude. I'm very proud to support this budget. We're protecting together what matters most and building a future that is strong, secure and full of opportunity. I think it's what we all want: to go learn some skills, find what interests us and what we're passionate about, create a career from that and just work hard, provide for our families and have a great quality of life. I know those are the aspirations this budget is seeking for us across Ontario and particularly my community of Windsor–Tecumseh.

Thank you to everyone who's here this afternoon to continue to engage on the budget. Have a great rest of the afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Questions?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh for his speech. I have a question about the protect Ontario fund. It's a \$5-billion fund, and I have some questions about who is going to get this money and what criteria are you going to use to decide who gets this money. I'm getting calls and questions about whether this money is going to go to foreign companies or whether it's going to go to Ontario businesses or Canadian businesses. Could you please help us understand what's going to happen with that fund?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Just to the member opposite, I couldn't hear which fund you were referring to. Could you repeat it for me?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** It's the protect Ontario fund. It's the \$5-billion fund in the budget.

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Thank you for your indulgence on that.

Really, it's designed for businesses, for critical support to protect jobs and to transform those businesses and grow strategic sectors of the economy. Ultimately, we want to target those that are doing business in Ontario, that are employing Ontarians, and we want to provide it as liquidity relief. If you are employing Ontarians and you are giving a good quality of life to someone, then you will almost certainly qualify for the conditions of the fund. It's an emergency backstop for Ontario businesses that have exhausted their otherwise available funding. If you're doing businesses in Ontario, it's available to you.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**Ms. Lee Fairclough:** Thank you very much for your remarks. I actually really enjoyed listening and learning a lot about your community and how this budget will translate for them.

I know you're also quite business-savvy, so maybe I'll pose the question to you. I'm concerned when I look at some of the big line items, like health care, like education, like post-secondary. I highlighted the 1% increase that's forecasted in those budgets, and, knowing that we've got existing labour agreements, knowing we've got inflation in medical supplies, etc., I just don't know how we're going to afford—even the hospitals and others in your area, how they're going to actually afford to operate with those kinds of increases. Do you have anything that would actually reassure me a little more than I feel right now when I look at that budget?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for her question. I know she brings a lot of history from the health care sector. I know when I was actually running in the election—my first time—I met with one of my local hospitals who reminded me that they had to face a 1% reduction every year prior to this government taking office.

I can say that there's no 1% reduction here. It's definitely an increase, in fact: an investment of about \$56 billion in the next 10 years for the infrastructure for health care; \$43 billion in capital grants; \$103 million in additional planning grants supporting 50 hospital projects; 3,000 more hospital beds, enhancing access to quality care; and building a connected, people-first health care system.

Ultimately, we need to leverage the assets we have, ensure that we are providing more direct, more primary care. There are ways—I've heard this across the board, even at committee hearings. There's a lot of money in the system, and we need to use it more wisely to get more services to more people.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Next question?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** It's my understanding that the words "climate change" were not uttered once in the hundreds of pages of this budget. This is an existential crisis that threatens the very survival of our species, and I'm wondering why, if you've ever talked to chambers of commerce, insurance companies, you would ignore something that cost the city of Toronto \$4 billion in three hours.

1550

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank my friend the member for Kitchener Centre for her question. This budget includes significant investment in infrastructure to make more climate-resilient communities. So whereas the specific words of "climate change"—we do certainly acknowledge climate change. The government has given me the opportunity to visit the climate change conference last year and again, hopefully—fingers crossed—this year as well to demonstrate the province's commitment to environmental protection.

Really, for communities like the city of Toronto and many, many others, including the city of Windsor, they are looking for that infrastructure investment to help offset the impacts of flooding and reduce our environmental footprint. It's the whole purpose of going to an electrified economy and having EV investments, reduce the carbon emissions, reducing our impact, nuclear energy—getting away from other sources that are more polluting and developing that technology so that other countries can adopt it instead of choosing polluting technologies.

The budget does include significant investment to ensure that the effects of climate change and the reduction of pollutants is part and parcel of our package.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Question?

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you to our member for Windsor–Tecumseh. Just like what you say, my community in Richmond Hill is also very impressed with what we're doing just so that we can protect all Ontarians and all the investments that we still have for education, for health care, for infrastructure.

Can you tell me a little bit more of what we are doing to generate more revenue as well as attracting investments into Ontario so that we have a brighter future, please?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I think it's a great question. I think back to an investment that I was able to announce through my previous role with economic development. It was a tool shop in my riding, and they were able to use the funds that the province had provided to reshore work that was previously in China. That meant jobs were here. It meant the revenues were now being—I guess the company would have had the revenues otherwise, but the spending, the supplies were all here. We're building on that concept to support businesses that invest in buildings, machinery and equipment through the Ontario Made Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit so that we can generate that wealth, generate the jobs, give families paycheques they can rely on and depend on through the OMMITC—it's a 15% non-refundable version of the credit—and increase the tax credit rate for Canadian-controlled private corporations

from 10% to 15% and lower costs by an additional \$1.3 billion in support for the next three years.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Question?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I listened to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh and his remarks on the budget. I heard him talk about St. Clair College. Certainly, he recognized the importance of that institution to the local and regional economy.

I'm sure he's aware that earlier this month, St. Clair announced 18 programs were being cut, 69 positions were being eliminated. The college has a deficit of \$6.5 million, so there are likely to be more programs gone and more staff who are going to be laid off. Across the province, we're seeing more than 400 programs have been suspended at our institutions.

I wondered if the member would comment on the fact that 80% of apprenticeship programs in Ontario are delivered by community colleges, and yet his government is removing \$1.2 billion of funding for colleges and universities. Does he recognize how destabilizing that is in the face of all of the economic uncertainty that Ontario is facing because of Trump's tariffs?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank the member from London West for their question. Ultimately, I know St. Clair College has reached out to me because a big chunk of their program limitations are as a result of recent federal changes. They have declassified some of the types of programs that are eligible for international students, for example. And so that's meant that in-demand career options that we need are being withheld by the federal government. We're unable to bring in the workforce that we need for our community.

We have opened up skills training. St. Clair College has received funds through the Skills Development Fund. But also, the government is investing an additional \$207 million over three years, starting this fiscal year, in the Ontario Research Fund—research and infrastructure—to provide institutions, including St. Clair College and many, many others, with the funding to acquire infrastructure and engage in global research and development.

So we can rebuild and grow our college system in a new path, one that isn't as reliant on international students and that helps to support domestic students to achieve their potential.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** It's always an honour to rise and speak on behalf of the residents of Humber River–Black Creek, my lifelong home. I wish all of you a good afternoon. I hope you all have a great weekend.

I'm very excited to talk about the budget. I spent a lot of time looking at it, reading it, and something happened during that time of research. I wouldn't say it was quite like an epiphany; I kind of felt like I got unstuck in time. As I was reading it, I forgot what year I was in. I did not know what year it was. As I looked back and I thought about it, I couldn't tell the difference of this year to last year to the year before. I couldn't tell the difference of the

last seven years to the 15 years before it. In fact, it feels like one long year, with little changing.

And this morning, lo and behold, at the time of a vote on an ambitious plan, a plan supported by the Prime Minister of this country, a Liberal Prime Minister, a bold plan to get the government back into building homes, the Conservatives and the Liberals reached together—strong grip of each other's hands—and voted no. They voted no to a bold plan.

**Interjection:** Shame.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Shame, yes.

And it really struck home something I had realized; it's that I can't tell the difference between Liberals and Conservatives at all—not here in the province of Ontario. It's like they're just the exact same.

And so I did a little bit of research. I went away from the budget, and I found a document written and placed online on May 7, 2018. It was written by the Ontario PC Party. It was called—and I mean, this is weird, because it was called “Protect Ontario” back then. I don't know if they've got, like, a crystal ball or whatever it was. It was called “Protect Ontario.” You guys are—by the way, I commend you on the taglines. I mean, your bills have great titles. What's in them needs a little work, but the titles are always good.

So it said—check this out—“10 Things Kathleen Wynne Would Like You to Forget.” I'm going to read a little bit about this. We have a member that comes in who loves to read.

“As much as Kathleen Wynne desperately tries to change the channel, this election campaign she is going to have to defend a 15-year Liberal record of”—okay, now get this—“scandal, waste, and mismanagement.” Now, does that ring a bell for anyone? I mean, have you heard anything? Has this been—

**Interjection.**

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Yes, I did that, right?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Order.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** “Here are 10 things Kathleen Wynne is crossing her fingers that the people of Ontario will forget during tonight's debate. She shouldn't hold her breath.”

Now, guys, do you see any parallel here?

“(1) Skyrocketing hydro rates: Compared to 2003, the average Ontario family now pays more than \$1,000 more on their hydro bills each year. Ontario is now home to the highest electricity rates in the entire country. While families across the province are being forced to choose between heating and eating”—weird, right? That happened seven years ago—“Liberal insiders have gotten rich at their expense.” Does anyone remember their last hydro bill? Has it gone down?

**Interjection:** Yes.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Okay, we've got one guy. He's got a special deal.

Now, their electricity bills, I don't think there's one person in this chamber—and you know, in this chamber, and this is one of the best things about Legislature, you can

tell a lie, but you can't be called a liar. But of course, no one here would ever lie, right?

1600

**Interjection:** It's unparliamentary.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** It is unparliamentary.

So what happened is, they said, "Vote for us. We're going to bring down the electricity bills." Seven years later, they've just gone up and up and up and up. All the contracts that they said were terribly negotiated under the Liberals—they haven't touched those. They haven't worked on those. It's the same.

But then they veered into the gas file. So when Enbridge came here, they said, "Hey, can we tack extra costs onto the backs of gas payers, the people paying for natural gas?" Well, first they went to the energy board. The energy board said, "No, you can't do that." Imagine; they always rubber-stamp everything. Wow, the Conservative minister was here so quick. He was on the news saying, "We're going to walk that back." So they took \$1 billion and put it on the backs of the gas payers. To everyone that has a gas furnace, this government added \$1 billion to them.

So on the energy file, it's gone up. They said, "Vote for us. We're going to bring the cost of electricity down." Guess what they didn't do? They didn't do it. I can't tell the difference.

"(2) Cancelled gas plants: The Liberals cancelled two gas plants to save a few seats during an election year. This cost Ontario taxpayers a whopping \$1.1 billion"—I mean, these guys are saying, "Hold my beer" to the Liberals in terms of waste, right?—"and a senior Liberal operative was recently sentenced to four months in jail for deleting emails surrounding the decision. Kathleen Wynne was the co-chair of the 2011 Liberal election campaign when the decision was made, and she personally signed an important cabinet document during the gas plants scandal. One of Kathleen Wynne's first decisions after the 2014 election was to cancel a committee that was searching for answers surrounding the cancellation."

Has this government had to walk anything back? Have they had to cancel any of their shenanigans? Wait, can you think of one? I'll just name one: How about the greenbelt? Do you remember the dance? During the election, it was like, "Hey, let's open up the greenbelt." And then, people said, "No." "Okay, sorry about that." Then it came out again: "No." "No, sorry." What they did was erode the powers of conservation authorities, because who cares about farmland, right? Who cares about drinking water? Who cares? Do they care about consultation? They tell you yes; I don't know.

What did they do? Well, they brought the legislation in anyway, because these guys, apparently, are made of Teflon, really. They kind of are. And so they brought this in, and what did they have to do? They had to walk it back. I believe in coincidence, by the way. You had developers in and around the time being issued MZOs, land that was undevelopable for anything other than improving a farm. Coincidentally, within weeks or days of making donations, all of a sudden, 7,000 acres got opened up. And what did they have to do? They had to walk it back.

Does this remind you of the Liberal government at all? Kind of, right? It feels a little bit like the same thing.

What else? "(3) The fire sale of Hydro One: As a result of Kathleen Wynne's Hydro One fire sale, Ontario taxpayers now help to foot the bill for the six-million-dollar man and golden parachute severance packages." It's not like there's 47 VPs of Metrolinx, right?

But look: Who started the sale of hydro in this province? I don't know. It might have been a Conservative government; remind me. But the fire sale—can you think of any fire sales these guys have conducted? I remember, as a child, going to this place called Ontario Place. I remember watching IMAX films, running through the fields, learning things. It was great. And then these guys decided, "Do you know what would be better than an IMAX film? A luxury pedicure." That is what they said would be a lot better than that.

And so, get this—what a deal, though, right? Now, the gas plant was \$1.1 billion. The AG reports that these guys—now, remember, the people of Ontario elected them in to negotiate with Donald Trump. Check this out for a negotiation. This is really interesting.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Through the Speaker.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Through the Speaker; I apologize.

They paid \$2.2 billion to get \$1.1 billion back in 95 years. Then, apparently the business that they gave us away to, some of the details of their financing is not exactly what we had understood it to be. I don't know. I didn't read those details particularly, but does that sound like a good deal?

So the government of Ontario, the taxpayers of Ontario, paying \$2 billion to give away Ontario Place and then in 95 years, in the 95th year—what is \$1 billion in today's terms? Like 25 cents? I don't know. This is what they negotiated. Does that remind you of the Liberals? I don't know. It kind of made me feel like nothing changed, and they criticized it. They were so mad about it.

"(4) Cuts to front-line health care: Liberal cuts have created a hallway health care crisis in Ontario. We now have the longest wait times in Ontario's history. The Liberals have fired more than 1,600 nurses. The Liberals cut physiotherapy services for seniors. The Liberals froze hospital budgets. The Liberals have slashed physician services, and cut medical residency positions." Does anyone think there are any issues with our health care system right now? Can anyone see any room for improvement? How about the fact that these guys are paying \$100 an hour to agency nurses of which, like, \$25 an hour goes to the administration cost? Or the fact that they brought in Bill 124? What happened was nurses, health care workers, were not being able to get the respect they wanted in their roles so many of them joined private agencies. We're seeing the privatization of health care.

Does anyone notice our surgery wait times decreasing in the last seven years? No, they're increasing—weird, right? That's what's happening: increased wait times. So what ends up happening is that we are seeing increased



wait times for diagnostic tests. We are seeing emergency room closures. Imagine that: Places where you can't even go to your emergency room. We are seeing the privatization of health care. Money that is going into hospitals and public delivery of health care, funnelled out by the millions and millions into the private sector. You know what some call that? Well, that looks like planned obsolescence of public health care kind of, doesn't it? Feels like that.

So is the health care system improving? I heard a no on the government side—that's a new one, eh? So what happens is we are seeing the dismantling of our public health care system. In fact, they're making it worse than the Liberals ever did.

“(5) School closures: Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals have closed more than 600 schools—more than any other government in our province's history.” But right now, they are making a play for supervillainy of the year with the threats they're making to school boards.

So get this: They are forcing through—and they've got school boards in a chokehold to administrate cuts because we are seeing students getting less per dollar invested in their future than we've ever seen in the history of the province. They're being told to be fiscally responsible by this government. Imagine: The same government paying \$2 billion to get a billion back in 95 years for Ontario Place is looking at school boards and saying to them, “Guys, be responsible with your money.” I don't know if they've got vodka in the water coolers in the back there. I don't know what's going on because some of the decisions—I said I don't know, Speaker. I don't know. I'm not saying it's there. I don't know.

“(6) Broken election promises: Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals”—Speaker, can I get more time, by the way? There are only seven minutes left. Broken election promises—I can give you tons. We talked about one of them: the greenbelt. That's a promise they made over and over and over and brought it back, but due to the Teflon-like nature of their skin, they seem to weather it. They could make raincoats out of that material. So what did we see?

Another one: election—shameless advertising. I mean, we've got the Hansard. They were up in arms about the fact that the Liberals changed the rules so that they could try to stay elected and use public funds to shamelessly advertise themselves on things that weren't public service announcements. Lo and behold, we had an election in the fall so we could all slide on ice on stairways and hopefully people wouldn't show up. They got their wish.

1610

What ended up happening is that they spent \$40 million, and get this: Even though Conservatives argued about what should and shouldn't be allowable expenses on shameless self-advertising, something like 75% of all the ads that they put out there were things that the Auditor General said were essentially shameless advertising, the kind of stuff they criticize. Weird that they would continue to do that, right? But they did it.

Oh, now this is something you'd never expect from a Conservative: Number 7, doubling the debt. Wow. “Over

the last 15 years, Ontario's debt has more than doubled to help pay for Liberal scandals and waste.” I mean, you just replace the word “Liberal” with “Conservative.” It's the same thing.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** They're agreeing. One guy over there is agreeing with me.

“Ontario taxpayers now pay \$1 billion a month on interest payments which crowds out all the services families depend on like health care and education.”

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** One of my friends is always good for a heckle. He's back. I love it.

So, doubling the debt: In 15 years, the Liberals added \$300 billion to the debt of Ontario, but not to be outdone, the Conservatives, who've been here for seven years, have added around \$120 billion. Now, I don't know if it equivalates it. You're right; it's a little less than the massive amount of debt. But guess what? It's debt, and half a trillion dollars. That's what we're projected to be at very soon: \$450 billion and counting, right? But this is coming from Conservatives, the same ones telling school boards to smarten up with their spending.

Now, can anyone tell you that the health care system has improved? There are 2.5 million Ontarians without a family doctor, nurses and health care workers leaving the public health delivery in droves—it goes on and on—higher fees, auto insurance rates through the roof, grocery costs, gouging, all sorts of things. They said during the pandemic, “Hey, everybody, call the consumer hotline,” and 30,000 complaints were made. Not one—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** The member reminded me about the \$1 billion they gave to the 407, so I want to thank the government member for reminding me that they gave a billion dollars—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Stop the clock. I am sorry to interrupt, but I'm going to.

The crosstalk isn't going to continue, and perhaps the member who does have the floor can rein it in a tad, to help to keep the temperature down this afternoon. Thank you, and we can hear him without his additional amplification.

I will resume debate. The member from Humber River–Black Creek

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Speaker, my favourite kind of debates are the interactive type.

Look, Liberal waste, \$8 billion on eHealth, \$2 billion on smart meters, \$6.2 million on the salary of the CEO of Hydro One—I mean, it goes on and on, and guess what?

**Hon. Mike Harris:** Don't forget gas plants.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Gas plants—but these guys have done a fantastic job in equaling the Liberals when it comes to government waste and spending, lining the pockets of Liberal insiders.

Number 11 that didn't exist on this list was the whole cash-for-access scandal. And where the Liberals took money from insiders, these guys just give it out, and they

give lots of it out. I mean, ask anyone about the greenbelt. They did so much.

And so, as I wrap up, I thought to myself, “How is it that the Liberal government stayed in power for 15 years?”, because I know Conservatives were spinning like a lathe, frustrated with how that happened. And really what happened was that it was the Conservative leaders of the time that handed it back to them. You remember McGuinty? It was private school religious tax credits, and it’s crazy because at the time, if you looked at the Liberal rhetoric, it was really a lot of fearmongering about radicalization in schools. They really went above and beyond to talk about that. It was really over the top. People would really be offended to understand what that campaign was about.

And then, most recently, when the Conservatives—because they would walk into every single election with a lead in the polls and find a way to fumble it. That’s why none of the government members were allowed to actually debate, because every time the election comes, their strategists say, “Guys, rule number one: shut up, let us handle this,” right?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Language.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Because the last leader at the time said, “Hey, we’re going to fire 100,000 public workers.” He didn’t exactly say that, but he was walking into a victory and that came out, and then it became “save public jobs” and then they lost the election—no wonder.

What has saved this government for the last seven years? I don’t think there has been a luckier government in the world, because it was only a year and a half in after they won in 2018—and, as you can see, these were the 10 things Kathleen Wynne wanted you to forget, and they’ve only made it worse. So what they did was, it was scandal after scandal. Remember, a billion-dollar cut to public health, and they had to walk that back—another thing they had to walk back. It was embarrassing, right? So all of this stuff happened, and guess what: a pandemic. Then, after their handling of the pandemic, when their base especially were wanting to, like, get at them—trust me, they were getting in a lot of trouble for that—Justin Trudeau said, “Hold my beer,” and he did his great PR at the end, and the government said at the very end, that, hey, it was his fault they won.

So I want to tell you this in the time that’s remaining, and I’ll probably get into this into the question part: You don’t need to call an election. There have been crises that have saved you time and time again. In fact, when polling numbers get very low, I think I’m going to be ducking for cover. You just need to look at the polling and the popularity—I see the Speaker edging to get up. I look forward to questions, my friends.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Questions?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I’m just curious: In this budget, I see a lot of investments in expanding gas power, which is more polluting. Since this government came into office,

they’ve undone all the work to shut down coal plants, so our grid is now as dirty as it was in 2018.

Why do you think the government is investing in the most expensive and polluting kind of power when we know the IESO says that solar and wind are half the cost? Why have they banned the cheapest, most affordable kind of energy and invested in the dirtiest, most expensive kind of energy?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I want to thank the member for the question. Well, I raised this in debate. I mean, when the gas sector needs something, when they need money, especially to take it out of the pockets of the actual consumers of gas, these guys are ready to go. Really.

I’ll mention this once more, about the OEB decision that happened where the OEB ruled that Enbridge should not put a billion dollars on the backs of purchasers of gas, the people who have gas furnaces in their homes. This government ran to their aid. They’re not really interested at all, I think, in improving energy in many of those ways. What they’re really interested in is making the big companies really happy. It doesn’t matter what it is they are selling or what kind of energy; it’s all about helping them above all, and certainly over the purchasers.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Next question?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you to my colleague for his always-entertaining remarks in this place this afternoon. But, colleagues, I know he talked about insiders; what I’ve seen from consecutive budgets from our government before I was in this place and even as I’ve had the pleasure of serving as a member as part of this government—the only tax breaks I’ve been seeing are to the people of Ontario. It was the permanent gas tax in this budget, it was the One Fare—\$1,600; people in his own riding will be saving that every single year. Whether it’s getting rid of that horrible, horrible licence plate sticker fee and getting rid of that—it was a tax. Plain and simple, it was a tax. But, colleagues, unfortunately, the member opposite voted for those taxes. They wanted to tax those Ontarians more.

Will the member opposite share with this place, does he think the people of Ontario are insiders? We don’t on this side, but, Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Response?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** All right, so—I really appreciate the question. If there’s anything that this government will never be called, it’s going to be “good at consultation.” The people who they will listen to—they will pick up phone calls, but it will always be of that 0.01%.

If you ask any of the members from Brampton about the auto insurance rates of their residents, because it has been seven years—why is this government picking and choosing what they say they’re going to help? Inflation has been through the roof. The cost of everything that you can think of has been through the roof.

1620

They’re not listening to the people of Ontario. They’re not listening to the purchasers. They’re not listening to the

consumers. They don't care. Those people are ripping their hair out.

If you live in a building and you're a renter, rents have gone higher than they ever had. So these budgets—unless they change and improve the lives of everyday Ontarians, how on earth would you expect any member of the opposition to vote for them?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Next question?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I listened with amusement to your speech about the numerous examples of waste that this government has participated in.

When I think of the budget, I think about the 401 fantasy tunnel. I think about the \$50 billion that is going to be used to build a tunnel underneath the 401. Could you share opinions on the 401 fantasy tunnel?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I think they realize that at some point their time is going to be up and that Teflon coating will start to flake. You see that in pans. I think they want to build that tunnel because at some point, they're going to want to hide in it. I think, really, what it's about is they realize that this scandal and the waste is just going to continue to pile and pile and pile, and that layer of Teflon is going to begin to flake. So that epic tunnel that they're discussing, even if they start—they don't even need about a kilometre, maybe a couple of hundred feet—they could all hide in it at the time when everything comes crashing down.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Next question?

**Mr. Rob Cerjanec:** I want to thank my friend from Humber River–Black Creek for his entertaining remarks—and he is my friend. We used to work together, sitting side by side and office next to office at Toronto city hall, probably upset about things that every party has been talking about here in a lot of our conversations. We're going to have coffee soon, eventually.

I did take note a little bit around housing, though, because I think at the time when we were both there, we were both—I can speak for myself—advocating for more housing, to build more social housing, to build more affordable housing, to leverage public land. Folks on Toronto city council on both the NDP side and the Conservative side were against that. Even some people who are generally centrists as well were against it, but finally, we got there.

But talking about, I guess, Homes Ontario, because I think there might be some hurt feelings around it, my question is, should a big government bureaucracy be the one to be delivering housing across the province? A big government bureaucracy: That would be the question for my friend from Humber River–Black Creek.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I think about a month or so ago, Liberals, even provincial Liberals, were celebrating the victory of the Prime Minister. One of the things that the Prime Minister said was that the government should get back into the business of building homes.

So it's just interesting for me to understand and unpack. There are certainly no hard feelings, and yes, I consider

the member a good friend. I just don't understand why it was good for Mark and not good for you anymore. That's it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Next question?

**Hon. Mike Harris:** I know this might sound a little silly coming from me, but let's be serious for a second here. The opposition lately has been very interested in putting these funny little catchy tag lines in front of things, like "fantasy tunnel." But what I can tell you is when I leave here today and I try to get home to my family in Kitchener, it's going to take me three hours to go 116 kilometres. That's on top of the investments that we've already made, and we are only at the point now where we've been able to reduce some of this gridlock.

The 401 is the busiest highway in North America, and it's not always convenient for everyone to take the train. The train is a great option if it works for you, and I encourage everybody that is able to take the GO train to do it. We've got expanded service into Kitchener. Unfortunately, for me, the timing doesn't always work. We've got very busy schedules here. We all know this. We sat in this place until almost midnight last night in committee.

So my question is—we see the NDP seats eroding and eroding every election. We've now had three majority governments. When are they going to wake up and actually realize what the people of Ontario really want?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Response?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Since it was a government minister that I respect greatly—he's a good man; he's a good father; he speaks lovingly of his children. If they ever get this plan off the ground, I'm sure his great-great-grandchildren will be able to enjoy that tunnel. But because it's a minister, let's pretend it's question period. I'm just going to answer something else. What I'm going to answer is this: I didn't get to finish it, but you can call an election in four years, because—for those who love astronomy—you're waiting for a crisis that's going to come, and a crisis has been given to you. In the year 2029, in the spring, around the same time as the election, the asteroid Apophis is going to be passing within 32,000 kilometres of earth. That's about 10% of the distance from the moon. So I want you guys to get your comms, your PR people together. You can get a "Protect Earth" cap. You can suit the Premier up in an astronaut suit. You have that crisis coming in four years to build your entire re-election around, because nothing else is going to save you.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Unfortunately, there isn't time for any more questions. Further debate?

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** It's a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to this budget for the next 20 minutes.

I've really taken the time to read the budget, and I'm sure many people in this House today have a copy with them. And it's a big budget. I'd like to paraphrase my colleague the honourable member from Don Valley West, and I think it's a refrain now that's being used over and

over and over—from all of us in this caucus, at least—because it's so accurate. When we talk about this budget, we talk about the fact that never has so much been spent to help so few. When I talk about the fact that helping so few—I think that's the key word.

We're at a time here when the government stands in the House and talks about how we're at economic war. The people are hurting; the businesses are hurting; everyone is hurting. Yet when you look at this budget—when you look at this budget here, when you look at this budget there—you have to wonder, who's being helped? Look at the numbers. When you look at inflation, compare the numbers. These numbers are flatlining. Health care, education—why were we sent to this place, Speaker? Why were each and every one of us sent to this place? We were sent here to help our constituents, to give a voice to the voiceless, to help those who cannot help themselves. I don't think this budget is helping those who cannot help themselves. This budget is helping those who can help themselves already. We're letting down the people of Ontario who need our support, the people who need it the most, yet we're failing to invest in them presently. There's a \$1,500 funding shortfall in education. The minister likes to stand in the House and talk about record funding to education.

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Record.

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** Yes, he does say it, all the time. Do you understand the concept of inflation? Do you understand the concept of population growth? These are real things. When there are more children in the classroom, your dollar doesn't go as far. When inflation rises, your dollar doesn't go as far. Speak to one of your constituents. Ask them: If inflation goes up by 5%, 6%, 7% but their pay only goes up by 1%, how many more groceries are they going to be able to buy? No more—they're going to be able to buy less. And we're talking about fundamental things here. We're talking about health care. We're talking about education. These aren't trivial matters, Speaker; these are issues that will affect this province for generations to come. So this government can tout all its record investment it wants, but it's not investing in the people who need it the most.

Health care: This government loves to talk about its capital investments, and we see a lot of them in the budget, which I will not hold up as a prop, because it's not a prop. It's a failure, is what it is—a complete failure.

1630

The government loves to talk about its capital investments, and I like them too, don't get me wrong. I love to see hospitals built. I think it's fantastic. But what is a hospital without nurses and doctors? It's an empty shell. Who's going to be providing the health care when your child is sick and you rush them to the hospital? You've built this big, beautiful building, but no one's inside to provide the care. Who is going to help them? Nobody. That's the answer.

Our schools: How many visits do you go to your public schools?

**Interjection:** A lot.

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** A lot. Well, I'll tell you about my public school. I went to Brian elementary. That's in Don Valley North. In the middle of winter, I had to be in a portable because the school wasn't big enough. What does that mean? That means when you need to go to the washroom in the dead of winter, you've got to put boots on and get through the snow to use a washroom. These are schools that were built in the 1960s, in the 1970s. This is 2025 and we have kids who are being forced to go out in the middle of winter to use the washroom. That's not okay, guys. It's not okay.

I remember as a child—and this school is exactly as it is now, because I just went there the other day—no AC. I'm not saying that because this school is alone. Unfortunately, this is extremely common. If you're a kid in June—scorching hot weather, the sun beating down on the roof that's falling apart—the temperature in the classroom gets up to, what, 30 degrees, 35 degrees? How is a child supposed to study? How is a child supposed to focus? How is a teacher supposed to teach? But does this budget address that issue? Spoiler alert: The answer is no, it doesn't.

So, you can boast, puff your chest out, pat yourself on the back all day long about the record investments that you're making, how much money you're spending. But think about, at the end of the day, the people who voted for you, the people who needed the help the most. Who is this serving? Is their life being made any better on a daily basis? Yes or no?

Now that I got that rant out of the way, Speaker—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** I'm new here.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I understand.

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** But I understand that rants are normal, especially on Thursdays. So here comes the next one. This House won't be surprised; I've only stood up during question period a few times, but my questions have been relatively consistent. I look across the aisle to an honourable colleague right there, and I ask him about the Sheppard subway.

Now, it might feel like I'm somehow obsessed with the Sheppard subway, because I am. Why am I obsessed with the Sheppard subway? Now, again, this goes back to my childhood.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** You like trains.

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** You know what, I do like trains, but I'm not that guy. I'm not like the train guy. That was never me—I'm just imagining wearing a little conductor hat or something.

No, the Sheppard subway is of critical importance because, again, as someone who grew up in Don Valley North and who was political, who enjoyed politics, one of the very first buttons in my button collection—not a train collection—was, “I want the Sheppard subway now” as a child—yes, a nerdy child perhaps, but as a child. Now, 38 years old, a member of provincial Parliament here, what am I saying to you? I want the Sheppard subway now.

How many years have to go by where we make these empty promises to our constituents, where we're going to

make these empty promises to the people of Ontario? We talk about how we care about them. We talk about how much we worry about them. We talk about that we care; we care so much that we're building a tunnel. Nobody asked for a tunnel.

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** Or a spa.

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** Or a spa, for that matter. No, not a spa either. But we've been asking for the subway literally for decades.

The inability for this government to simply listen to the people, to provide the transportation that they're looking for, to provide them for their daily needs to go about their life, because isn't that why we're here? Look, Conservatives are known for not believing in big government, right? You want small government, you want government to get out of the way. But fundamentally there's a reason for government that we all agree: that we have to provide some sort of basic, minimal level of service to the people. That's why they put us here: Keep the trains running, make sure they can live, make sure they have the basic services.

I'll tell you what, if I have to sit in my car for 20 minutes, to get from Consumers Road to Fairview Mall—that might not mean something to all of you, but when I have to sit in my car for 20 minutes to get that distance, it's unacceptable. Because I'll tell you what, I can walk there in a short amount of time, and I'm not a walker, as you can tell.

This is a failure—a failure of government policy. It's a failure of government to actually care about the people and provide the basic services that we're supposed to be providing as a government. They want to get home. They want to get to their job. They want to get to school. They want to get home to see their families. These aren't extravagant asks; these are basic asks. Yet we're failing them.

The Sheppard subway was started over 30 years ago. Now, for those of you not familiar with the Sheppard subway—and I hope you are now a bit familiar with it after how long I've spoken about it in this House—the Sheppard subway begins at Yonge, and its terminus is at Don Mills station. Those in Toronto who use the subway system often mockingly refer to it as the Sheppard “stubway.” Come on, that's funny: Sheppard “stubway.” It's a handful of stops connecting my community and a community beside us.

To you, this is not important. To you, you may not care. To my residents, to the people who live in my riding, who need to go about their daily life, this is critical. This is critical, not just because of a need for a subway, but for all the reasons around it. Think about it. Why do people want to use a subway? They want to use a subway because of congestion. Why is there congestion? Because of failure of this government to provide proper infrastructure. When you get more people, you need more roads, you need more services, you need to invest, just like the schools.

What's the common theme here? It's a failure to invest. It's a failure to provide the services that people need. This subway would serve an entire community in a residential part of the city that's traditionally underserved. So this subway not just represents a means of transportation; it's

also an issue of equity. Now, when I talk about equity, what do I mean? Downtown Toronto is fortunate to have a subway, going up University, going up Yonge, across Bloor. There was a time in this city, on council, when they wanted to put an LRT on Sheppard instead. They said to that part of the city, “Little guys, you don't need a subway. We'll just give you a train on the road. That's enough.”

**1640**

But there was a man at city council, a guy who was doing things a little differently; a guy who ruffled feathers here and there, because of his comments at city hall; a guy who wasn't right all the time and, frankly, wasn't right most of the time. You know who that guy was? Rob Ford. He said to the people of my community, “You deserve a subway. You deserve a subway just as much as someone downtown does.” He used a phrase that I love and I've used it in this House before: “Subways, subways, subways.” But what do we get from you folks? Delays, delays, delays.

Members of the NDP may groan, perhaps, at the thought of expanding subways and LRTs—

**Mr. Chris Glover:** What? What? There was no groaning over here.

**Mr. Jonathan Tsao:** Sorry, my honourable colleague was groaning about something else.

But, again, it's an issue of equity. You constantly tell someone that they deserve a subway, that they're just as good as the rest of the city and deserve a subway and indeed, they need a subway, by matter of fact. But then you go on your budget, you go on the budget, and you go to page 90, and what is it called there? It's called a “proposed extension.” No timeline; no funding. What exactly are you proposing? All I see is dots on a map that mean nothing. This isn't a proposal; it's an insult. It's an insult to the people of my community who have been told by leaders on that side that they should have a subway, that they deserve a subway. But still, no subway.

The subway isn't only good just because of its ability to get people from A to B. There are a number of benefits that we can also talk about—the environment. If you believe that the environment is an important thing that we need to be protecting—which is questionable whether or not you believe that when you look at Bill 5, so maybe this isn't the greatest argument to be using with this government. But I'll look at my colleagues over here, if you believe the environment is something worth defending and fighting for, then the Sheppard subway is something that we need to be investing in. If you want to get people out of their cars, if you want to get people using transit, you actually have to give them transit. Putting more buses on an already congested road is not the answer. Why? It's called logic. If the road is already busy and you put more buses on that road, how much faster are you going to go? You're not. That's the answer.

If you want to build a giant tunnel, if you want to build a billion-dollar tunnel, I got a cheaper tunnel for you: the Sheppard subway extension. Take that machinery, whatever it is—the boring machine that you're going to put under the 401—it's very close by: Sheppard is just

above the 401. Move the machines just a little bit north, start digging, make the tunnel, put a subway in there, make the Sheppard subway extension. When you do that, you'll connect my community right across. And it won't just benefit my community. If you actually follow through with this plan, it will go all the way across to Scarborough and eventually terminus at Scarborough Town Centre.

Who will benefit? Members on this side of the aisle as well. But of course, I'm not going to hear about them. I'm not going to hear about how much they value the Sheppard subway. It seems like a lonely island I stand on when I talk about the Sheppard subway—the only voice here ready to stand up, ready to say what they need to in order to defend the subway, make it relevant and keep it alive. And Speaker, no matter how long, no matter how long it takes, no matter how many times I have to stand here and—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I'm sorry to interrupt the member, but pursuant to standing order 61(d), I am now required to put the question.

On May 15, 2025, Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved, seconded by Mr. Ford, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*Vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Speaker, if you seek it, you shall find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to see the clock at 6. Is it agreed? Okay.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### DIGITAL PRIVACY PROTECTION

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should call on the federal government to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to include artificial intelligence deepfakes, allowing Ontario to extend its Victims' Bill of Rights, 1995, to include those who are harmed by the non-consensual distribution of this content.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Today I rise to ask for the support of this House on a matter that is increasingly urgent, disturbingly unregulated and affects the safety, dignity and mental health of countless Ontarians, especially women and children. The motion that I just read says, "In the

opinion of the House, the government of Ontario should call on the federal government to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to include artificial intelligence deepfakes, allowing Ontario to extend its Victims' Bill of Rights to include those who are harmed by the non-consensual distribution of this content."

AI-generated and altered images are known as deepfakes and deepnudes, which are nude photographs or explicit pornographic content created by artificial intelligence. This is created by taking existing photos of people and essentially Photoshopping their faces onto nude bodies to create hyperrealistic pornographic content from innocent photos.

By including AI-generated deepfakes into the definition of intimate images, this would enable Ontario to extend full support under the Victims' Bill of Rights to those who are harmed by this abuse.

Additionally, the motion supports future amendments to Bill 157, the Enhancing Access to Justice Act, 2024, specifically schedule 18, to ensure victims of deepfakes are included among those presumed to have suffered emotional distress and related harm. This would allow victims to seek justice without being retraumatized in civil court.

To quote the Honourable Doug Downey, our Attorney General, "A responsive and agile system is also one that keeps people safe, especially the most vulnerable people in our communities. Increasing access to justice for victims of crime is a vital priority for this government." I want to thank the AG for his dedication and unending support of protecting victims.

Let me begin by describing a recent case that took place right here in Ontario. In 2023, a group of high school girls in Toronto discovered that a boy they knew had used AI apps to create deepnudes of them. These were realistic, manipulated photographs where artificial intelligence was used with innocent photos from their social media accounts, digitally stripping their clothing and superimposing their faces onto nude bodies. According to the authorities, the images looked disturbingly real. In total, 11 victims across three schools were affected. Some had never even spoken to the boy.

Understandably horrified, the girls reported the incident to the Toronto police, and the Internet child exploitation unit launched an investigation. But the result? No charges were laid.

The girls were called back weeks later and given a presentation explaining that current law does not clearly cover deepfake content, especially when there is no evidence of distribution. To the law, these girls hadn't been assaulted, but to everyone involved—the girls, their families and their communities—they had been deeply violated.

One girl said, "I didn't want to be surrounded by mirrors after seeing 'myself' like that." Another asked, "Are these everywhere?" Another girl shared, "It felt like my body wasn't mine anymore—even though I knew the image was fake, it changed how people looked at me, how I looked at

myself. I stopped going out. I deleted my accounts. I just wanted to disappear.”

**1650**

This situation left some students feeling isolated, anxious and unable to attend school. Others struggled academically or dropped extracurricular activities. A few sought therapy to cope with the trauma. One mother described the heartbreaking shift in her daughter: “She used to be confident, outgoing, involved in sports and student council. Now, she barely talks to anyone. She walks through school halls like she’s invisible. It’s like someone took her spirit and digitized her trauma.”

Speaker, how can we tell these young women that what happened to them doesn’t qualify as a crime?

This motion is a response to their voices, a call to recognize their pain and ensure our justice system protects them through civil or criminal court.

Unfortunately, their experience is not unique. Research from Western University shows that 96% of deepfake content online is pornographic and 100% of it targets women. This is not accidental. It is gendered, targeted and violent.

AI-generated deepfake abuse is a modern form of sexual exploitation. It is a digital assault on privacy, autonomy and dignity, and it is growing at an alarming rate.

Advances in AI mean that anyone with a phone and a grudge can generate realistic nude content in minutes. The apps are easily accessible and increasingly common in social spaces where youth interact.

Yet Canada’s Criminal Code has not kept pace. It narrowly defines “intimate images” as real, visual recordings taken under circumstances of privacy. It does not clearly include synthetic content, no matter how believable or damaging it may be. That’s the gap this motion seeks to close.

This motion aligns with Ontario’s ongoing efforts to modernize our approach to digital safety. Ontario has taken steps to modernize its cyber security framework. We previously passed Bill 194, the Strengthening Cyber Security and Building Trust in the Public Sector Act, 2024, by Minister McCarthy. That law made it clear that the digital-era government must lead—not lag—when it comes to protecting people online, where we need to update regulations for further oversight in the public sector, strengthening the regulations needed to protect the children in our schools. We need to act to protect individuals, especially the most vulnerable, from AI exploitation, and that requires updating our legal definitions, not just institutional safeguards.

The motion also supports Ontario’s efforts to modernize victim support through Bill 157, schedule 18. Again, it specifically seeks to expand the Victims’ Bill of Rights. Currently, victims of certain crimes, like sexual assault and spousal assault, can sue for emotional distress and bodily harm without needing to prove the trauma in court. Bill 157 expands that list to include victims of human trafficking, minors affected by sexual crimes and those whose intimate images were shared without consent.

This motion builds on that principle, extending protections to victims of AI-generated deepfake abuse. We’ve heard from college students who found out their faces had been used in deepfake pornography circulating on Reddit forums. One student said, “Even though I knew I didn’t do anything wrong, I felt dirty. Like I had to prove I was innocent of something I never even did.”

In cases where harm is presumed, it spares survivors from being forced to relive their trauma in order to access justice. Victims have told us how re-traumatizing it is to explain the harm they’ve suffered when the image isn’t “real.” One survivor put it this way: “It was like screaming into a void. I knew what it did to me, but all they could see was some pixels and a loophole.” If the federal government changes this definition, then Ontario would be able to introduce further changes to protect victims from being re-traumatized by re-testifying and sharing their trauma again in civil court.

By urging the federal government to expand the Criminal Code definition of “intimate images” to include AI-generated and AI-altered content, we achieve three critical goals: We close a dangerous loophole that currently allows predators to digitally assault others without consequence. We enable Ontario to extend full Victims’ Bill of Rights protections to deepfake survivors, just as we do for those whose real images have been exploited. We make it clear that as technology evolves, so too must the law. AI cannot be used as a shield for abuse.

Speaker, let’s not forget those brave girls in Toronto. They did everything right. They collected evidence, reported to the police, gave statements and asked for help. The police did their due diligence and they consulted with the crown. But together, they were told by the system, “We’re sorry. There’s nothing we can do.” This failure isn’t just about a lack of evidence; it’s about a lack of legislative clarity. Law enforcement and victim support services need a clear legal framework to pursue justice in cases like this. Women in public life are also frequent targets. The fear of exposure can silence victims and drive them off public platforms.

The motion proposes a long-overdue update to the Criminal Code that acknowledges how AI can be weaponized against people, especially women and children. We have done this before, when the tragic deaths of Amanda Todd and Rehtaeh Parsons prompted action on revenge porn, with amendments to the Criminal Code to include the publication of an intimate image without consent through the Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act. Federal Parliament responded then, and it’s time to do so again.

Other provincial governments are striving to pass legislation to protect victims against AI-generated deepnudes and deepfake pornography, but so much depends on the federal government changing the Criminal Code for real consequences to be introduced. We need to advocate for necessary federal changes and prepare our own framework to support victims in the meantime. Let us recognize AI-facilitated abuse for the threat it truly is and ensure victims of deepfake exploitation receive the same respect, dignity

and legal protection as any other survivor. Madam Speaker, this is about updating definitions, expanding protections and taking a stand against the misuse of technology.

I have a quote from Carly Kalish, who's executive director of Victim Services Toronto, who specializes in gender-based violence and human trafficking, as well as many other things. She says: "The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence technology, while innovative, has created new vectors of harm through deepfake content. Protecting Canadians from the malicious use of deepfakes is not just a technological issue, but a fundamental matter of victims' dignity and personal security. Extending the Victims' Bill of Rights to include those harmed by AI-generated deepfakes represents a crucial step in modernizing our legal framework to address contemporary digital threats and strengthen protections for victims of technological-facilitated abuse."

I urge all members of this House to support this motion. If we wait, if we do nothing, then every day more victims will be created by technology that is accelerating faster than our laws. As one girl said in a recent support session, "We are the test cases. I just hope no one else has to go through this before something changes." Let us demonstrate leadership and ensure that Ontario remains a place where the dignity and safety of every person, especially every child, is protected offline and online.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this time.

*Applause.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** It's nice to see a standing ovation from all sides of the House for this motion, because this is a motion that we need to get passed today. We can assure you that the NDP will be supporting this motion.

I want to thank the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for bringing forward this motion. It reads, "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should call on the federal government to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to include artificial intelligence deepfakes, allowing Ontario to extend its Victims' Bill of Rights, 1995, to include those who are harmed by the non-consensual distribution of this content."

The main target of this motion is deepfake pornography, which particularly targets, as the member said, women and children. She gave a number of examples of the impacts that this has had on their lives, and I will also be talking about this because this is something that we need to do. We need to start regulating AI. A lot of people don't understand the exact power of artificial intelligence, but let me give you this one example about artificial intelligence because it is an incredibly powerful tool. One example was this guy in California created an AI bot to solve CAPTCHA. CAPTCHA are those letters that are scrambled, and in order to get into a site, you have to unscramble them or figure out—put the letters down. Artificial intelligence cannot solve CAPTCHA.

**1700**

This guy created a bot and asked the AI bot to solve the CAPTCHA. So the AI bot wrote to Taskrabbit, which is a

site where you can hire tech people to do work for you. The AI bot wrote to Taskrabbit and said, "I need help solving the CAPTCHA." The person at the Taskrabbit, he was suspicious, and he wrote back, "Are you a robot?" The AI bot wrote back, "No. My vision is going, and I'm having trouble solving the CAPTCHA." So the AI bot lied.

The moral that I take from this story is that artificial intelligence is an unprecedentedly powerful tool, but it has no moral compass. It's just like in the example I gave in this House before: It's like an axe. An axe is an incredibly useful tool if you're chopping wood, but if it's used against a human being, it's a really, really dangerous weapon. This is the same with artificial intelligence. This is why we need to regulate the uses of artificial intelligence. And one of those uses is the deepfakes, in particular for deepfake pornography.

The motion asks the federal government to criminalize non-consensual distribution of deepfake images. The reason that we're asking the federal government to do this is because the provincial government cannot amend the Criminal Code; it's a federal piece of legislation. But what provinces can do, and other provinces have done, is they can facilitate lawsuits that penalize perpetrators who use deepfakes and the platforms that host them. This is something that we should be working on in this Legislature now. Almost every other province in the country has already passed legislation to protect victims from deepfake intimate images. It began with Nova Scotia in 2017. They've got the Intimate Images and Cyber-protection Act. And most recently, in 2024, British Columbia passed their own version of that act.

I'm going to talk about the need for this legislation. The definition of "deepfake" from the European Union is that a deepfake is an "AI-generated or manipulated image, audio or video content that resembles existing persons, objects, places, entities or events and would falsely appear to a person to be authentic or truthful...."

We know how powerful technology is now. I'm the shadow minister for tech and innovation. We know how powerful technology is. Trump won the 2016 election in part because of the Cambridge Analytica scandal. Cambridge Analytica used 50 million Facebook users' personal data in their quest of giving the conservatives big data tools to compete with the Democrats in that election. They created psychological profiles of every American voter, and they did this by breaking Facebook rules, stealing voters' information regarding their friends, education, location, the groups and the pages they liked, their relationship status and where they worked. All this stolen data went into the company's much-hyped psychological profiles, which have been credited for Trump's 2016 election. That was just social media.

We are now nine years on, and technologies move so much faster. Artificial intelligence is ubiquitous, and artificial intelligence is a much more powerful tool than social media. So we really need to watch out for deepfakes.

Today, this motion is generally geared towards deepfake pornography, but we also need to regulate deepfakes



because of the potential impact that it can have on our elections. For example, Canada's chief electoral office has testified to the Foreign Interference Commission in Ottawa on the need to amend the Canada Elections Act to address the use of deepfakes and other artificially created content to fool voters. The CBC decided to test the generative AI software and was able to generate fake images of Carney and Poilievre appearing in friendly scenarios with criminal and controversial political figures, including Vladimir Putin and Jeffrey Epstein. So the CBC just tested this and they were able to generate those images. OpenAI had previously prevented ChatGPT from generating images of public figures, but as of March 25, most versions of ChatGPT come bundled with ChatGPT 4.0 image generation, which includes images of public figures. It seems that ChatGPT is now facilitating the use or the creation of deepfake images.

I'll talk a little bit about some of the impacts that these have. A 2019 study by DeepTrace Labs, an Amsterdam-based cyber security company, found that 96% of deepfake video content online was non-consenting pornographic material, usually targeting women and children. Taylor Swift in 2024 was the victim of a deepfake that racked up 47 million views on Twitter, or X, before it was taken down. Even when these images are removed, they become immortalized elsewhere on the Internet. Once it's on the Internet, you can never really fully erase it.

The CBC had some of the horror stories about deepfake pornography. A 16-year-old Toronto teen was targeted by a deepfake in 2024. This is a CBC report. She received a series of messages from someone saying there were images of her online and she asked to see them and was sent a topless picture of herself based on an original photo in which she was fully clothed. The original photo was taken when she was 13.

You know, there are some times we talk in this House about criminals and people where you just need to throw them in jail and lock them up and throw away the key. This is one of those persons. Can you imagine what kind of twisted mind would actually do this? We need to amend the Criminal Code so that it's very clear what criminal action this person has taken and they can be persecuted. The 13-year-old, she writes, "I didn't do anything wrong," she said. "It just happened... I was filled with a lot of anger." That's just not fair to a teenage girl to have to go through something like that. We need to make sure that there are penalties that prevent people, or at least punish people once they've done it, and also intimidate people so that they don't do these kinds of deepfakes.

Another instance of deepfake nudes targeting minors occurred in 2024 when fake nudes were posted by London Catholic school students. Officials at the school say student pictures have been copied from social media sites, altered using AI to make the person appear nude, and shared through group chats. Griffin Gardner, a 15-year-old student, stated, "We need to learn more about AI to stop it because it's just going to get worse. People are doing it for attention" and it could ruin someone's life. And it's already ruining people's lives.

There was a deepfake incident in Manitoba where doctored photos of female students at Collège Bêliveau, a grade-7-to-12 French immersion school in the Windsor Park area, were discovered by school officials when students came forward. The discovery didn't result in criminal charges, but it resulted in Manitoba introducing legislation to protect against AI-generated nudes, and this legislation was passed in March 2024 as a result.

There are things that we can do, as well as passing this motion today asking the federal government to amend the Criminal Code. There are things that we can do in this Legislature to look at this legislation that's in other provinces to see what they have done to protect victims of these AID plagues. Premier Wab Kinew talked about the legislation in Manitoba, and he said that "people can be victimized without their knowledge in a new kind of way.... This is a real threat to young people. This is not something that we can turn away from. This is something that we need to act on."

To everybody who's listening, and I know it's Thursday afternoon and we may not have a big audience, but if you do come across a deepfake, there is a site where you can report it. Cybertip.ca is a national Canadian hotline for people to report non-consensual sexually explicit images of minors. It was established in 2024 and, in its first year, processed 4,000 sexually explicit deepfakes.

The need for the legislative change that this motion addresses is talked about by a lawyer, Molly Reynolds, who works at Torys LLP in Toronto. She's represented adult victims of deepfake cases. She says, "If a stranger just takes your image anywhere in the world and turns it into a deepfake, it can be very challenging to find a legal path in Canada to stop that." So we do need to change the legislation. We need to pass this motion today, and we also need to look at what we can do within the jurisdiction of this Legislature to protect victims of deepfakes.

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So the NDP fully supports this motion today. I want to thank the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for bringing it forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I'm very proud to rise today in strong support of the private member's motion brought forward by the MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, which urges the federal government to amend the Criminal Code to address the serious harms caused by artificial intelligence deepfakes, specifically non-consensual and damaging content. I don't think that's controversial. We're feeling the support already.

*Interjection.*

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** No, I'm not sharing time because it's a rotation. That's okay.

Speaker, I do appreciate the intent of this motion, which makes a critical beginning. It names and confronts a growing threat, one that is already affecting Ontarians in deeply personal, often devastating ways. Deepfake technology is not a future concern. It is here, and we've heard some really compelling examples just a moment

ago. It is already being weaponized, and it has outpaced the laws that are supposed to protect us.

Let's be clear about what we are dealing with. Deepfakes generate hyperrealistic videos, images and audio of individuals showing them doing or saying things they never did. In the wrong hands, this technology becomes a tool for deception, manipulation and, in many cases, exploitation.

While deepfake abuse can affect anyone, the overwhelming evidence shows it disproportionately targets women and girls. Back in 2018, 90% of deepfake content online was pornographic, non-consensual and aimed at women. That number has only grown, and the consequences are serious: emotional trauma, ruined reputations, destroyed careers and shattered lives.

This is the new frontier of exploitation, and our current legal tools are not enough to meet it. Other provinces are moving. Manitoba, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan: They're taking real steps. Internationally, countries like the UK, France and Australia are showing leadership. But here in Ontario, we are falling behind.

That's why this motion is important, and it rightly calls on the federal government to update the Criminal Code. But it should also serve as a wake-up call for this Legislature. What are we doing to support victims when they report deepfake abuse? How are we equipping police to investigate it? What protections are in place for youth, particularly girls, in our schools? Right now, we are not doing enough, and the cost of inaction is being paid by those who are most vulnerable, especially women.

This is not just a tech or cyber security issue; it's a public safety issue. It's a human rights issue. It's a democratic integrity issue. From sextortion cases involving minors to political disinformation and financial scams, this technology is already being used to harm and exploit. We need action, and we need it now.

That's why I'm supporting this motion. Because this motion also aligns with two private members' bills that I've worked on, namely Bill 41, which was co-sponsored with the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, the member for Spadina-Fort York, as well as the leader of the Green Party, which is now law and supports survivors of human trafficking, which is another form of exploitation that often overlaps with digital abuse.

Same with Bill 15, which I recently reintroduced after it died on the order paper due to a premature election. That bill focuses on online safety and privacy for children. Protecting vulnerable people, particularly women and children, is a priority I have long championed. Because survivors of violence, whether physical, digital or both, deserve more than sympathy; they deserve justice and real support.

Today's motion is a necessary first step. By pressing the federal government to modernize the Criminal Code and recognize deepfake abuse for what it is—harm, manipulation and, in many cases, gender-based violence—we also open the door to modernizing Ontario's own legal frameworks. We must update the Victims' Bill of Rights

and provide survivors with the recognition, protections and remedies that they need and deserve.

But we must go further still. We need comprehensive public education. We need digital literacy embedded in our schools. We need survivor supports and legal reforms that keep pace with technology and that centre human dignity, consent and safety.

I urge all members to support this motion, not because it will solve the problem completely but because it brings us one step closer to confronting a deeply urgent issue—one that threatens not only individuals but the very foundation of truth in our society.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** To the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, thank you for bringing this motion forward. It is so needed. There are so many families in Canada, in Ontario, that I personally know that was impacted by this deepfake. And a lot of people still don't know there's a word for it—"deepfake"—and I'm very happy that you're bringing this forward.

I'm here to speak about the grave threat that is impacting our society and eroding the trust that we place in our institutions. This challenge is not just a technology concern. It is the fundamental crisis that jeopardizes our democracy, our economy, and the safety of our citizens and everyone who calls Ontario and Canada their home.

Last year, I had the opportunity to travel to the Quebec National Assembly, where parliamentarians and researchers all gathered and we were talking about the use of AI, the productivity of it, the efficiency of it. But when I heard, and I heard that for the first time, of the deepfake and what it can do to someone's reputation, someone's safety—for example, there are grandparents and parents, their daughters or their kids are at their jobs. They will get a call and it's in the voice of their kids—the kid's voice. And they believe that person on the other end that is holding them for ransom, and they will go to the financial institutions and send the monies to those fraudsters. A lot of that is happening across Canada. It's just not in the forefront. A lot of these crimes don't even make the news, but this is a reality with the deepfake that we are experiencing.

I want to be very clear that right now Ontario's laws do not fully recognize the harm caused by AI-generated deepfake. We need the Criminal Code updated to reflect this reality. Madam Speaker, every Canadian is at risk. No one is safe. The fraudsters, as I said, are using the deepfake technology. They can do so many harms, especially to our young people for trusting the platforms that all of us use: TikTok, Twitter, Facebook—you name it. All those social engines that we use today, that we have our children use today, can become a defect in their reputation. Some of these deepfakes that are happening with our young people has caused our young people to become suicidal.

So the deepfake in technology and the lack of education for us here in this chamber, and for us outside of this chamber—Madam Speaker, we do need to do something about it, and not yesterday or next week, but we need to up the ante of the importance right now. It's very import-

ant and it's very urgent. We need legislation to protect Ontario families from these AI-driven threats. Ontario should be leading the way in confronting this misuse of technology. We should not be lagging behind, Madam Speaker. Other provinces are already acting. Manitoba has introduced legislation on fake intimate images. BC, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan are following suit. Ontario must catch up. We must catch up. We must be the leader in this space.

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The lines between fact and fiction blur. The very trust that underpins our society erodes when citizens cannot distinguish between reality and deception. The foundation of our democracy is at risk. This is a call to action for all of us: governments, corporations and citizens alike.

Let's be honest: This motion is the first step in the right direction and should not be the final step. We cannot allow our legislation to fall behind the deepfake technology that is harming our people that live in Ontario. Deepfakes don't just twist the truth; they weaponize it. Let's act now. Let's protect our people while we welcome artificial intelligence for its enhanced efficiency and productivity, because there's a good side of it. The time has come for our government to prioritize the development of a robust legislation to combat deepfakes and misinformation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**MPP Stephanie Smyth:** I will say, as someone who, for a living, worked to verify video every day for a number of years, what's happening now with deepfakes is deeply, deeply worrying. That is why I rise today also in support of this motion. The harms of the deepfake technology we've all been talking about are no longer just theoretical; they are real.

In my own family, my daughter's voice was deepfaked in an attempt to scam her grandmother. Luckily, it didn't work, but we know of a case in Ontario where a woman was scammed over \$750,000 because of a deepfake voice scam. It's happening over and over again.

I think it's without question we have to support any kind of legislation to protect young women, especially victims of deepfakes. We've heard about the pornographic uses of it. I just want to say, to quote the MPP from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and thank her, "A phone and a grudge is all it takes."

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I want to start off by thanking my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for bringing this motion. I want to say that she is a fine example of professionalism and dedication to her constituents. She is a model for many of us to follow. I, especially, should be following her example more.

We are talking tonight about encouraging the federal government to change a certain definition of "intimate image" in order to protect people from deepfakes. I thought that as part of this discussion, I might share with the assembly that part of the Criminal Code that deals with this. Here is the offence, and I'll read it out to you so that

everybody understands what we're talking about: "Everyone who knowingly publishes, distributes, transmits, sells, makes available or advertises an intimate image of a person knowing that the person depicted in the image did not give their consent to that conduct, or being reckless as to whether or not that person gave their consent ... is guilty

"(a) of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years; or

"(b) of an offence punishable on summary conviction."

You'd read that section, and you'd think to yourself, "It's covered already. It's covered." Well, it's not. That just describes the punishment. It doesn't tell you what an intimate image is. Lawyers will say, "Well, what do you mean when you say 'intimate image'? What does that mean?" So the Criminal Code goes on, and it will give you a definition of intimate image. Here's the definition: "Intimate image means a visual recording of a person made by any means including a photographic, film or video recording." You would think, "Okay, that definition covers it, right?" But no, there's a grey area in that definition.

For example, we're all public figures here, and there's this thing called political commentary. We've seen all this before. A political satirist might take a picture of a politician and put it on a dinosaur—you know, take your face and put it on a dinosaur and say, "Well, this politician is outdated like a dinosaur." We've all seen that kind of political commentary before.

So the question arises: Is that an image of you, or is it an image of the dinosaur? Is it one or the other? And it's easy to make the argument that, no, it's not an image of you. It's just not you because you're not a dinosaur.

The same problem arises if somebody takes a picture of your face and superimposes it on another body. It is clearly a fake. It is not a photographic recording of you. It is a fake. It is not a film or video recording of you. It is a fake, so it's not you. But the damage is done. And so, I want to congratulate my colleague for diving into this issue because here is a grey area, a problematic grey area, that needs to be fixed.

It is good for us to encourage our fellow lawmakers to head in a certain direction at the federal level and try to fix this problem because the damage is bad, it is counter to public good, it is counter to social cohesion—it is all of the bad things we can all say about it. So I want to congratulate my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock once again on bringing this motion and I congratulate the various parties in this House for supporting this on what sounds like a unanimous basis. And without further ado, let's proceed.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

I return to the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, who has two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I want to thank the whole House that's here tonight, and those that aren't I'm sure are very supportive of this motion. I know that we owe it to the victims to move the laws and to advance them.

The members from Spadina–Fort York, Ottawa–Vanier, Scarborough–Guildwood, Toronto–St. Paul’s and Essex have all spoken and given, unfortunately, not great images of what’s happening to mostly women and young girls out there. And we are respectfully asking the federal government to implement changes in the legal definition of the Criminal Code of Canada to include AI-generated deep-fakes. The member from Essex—it’s good to have lawyers around to interpret and point out zones. But I think collectively, other provinces were mentioned that—we need to do the updating, and we are falling further and further behind.

Carly Kalish brought this topic to me—a Toronto Star article—but she also helped treat the young victims and their families. And I know that the Durham Rape Crisis Centre’s Isabella Giuga also sent supportive information because, Madam Speaker, they are seeing the victims.

We have worked together across party lines on many bills to support victims in the Legislature. Bill 41 was just mentioned, about coerced debts for victims of human trafficking. We have educated a lot of people, so I want to thank all members of the Legislature. We have educated a lot of people in the public, either through committee meetings or in our communities, to be on the lookout and to watch. We live in a very unsettling, changing environment, and communities and all of us have to be involved. That gives me great hope going forward for laws that are being made.

I want to give a shout-out to the Attorney General. I mentioned before Minister Doug Downey, who, before he was elected, was assisting us in policy advisory committees on changing laws. And I want to commend the government that has brought in a lot of legislation. I will not

name it all, but the Associate Minister of Women’s Social and Economic Opportunity brought in some supports. I know the member from Ottawa–Vanier had mentioned the supports for victims.

Again, things change, society changes; we are trying to keep up to change with them—certainly, victims of human trafficking and supporting community groups that support them. And now we have education in the schools on human trafficking. Now, we need more education in the schools and more oversight for AI, digital changes that are affecting our children.

I know it’s Thursday afternoon, and everyone has been incredibly patient. I thank those members that have stayed. I just want to thank you all for supporting this motion. I know that the young women that came forward last December to tell their story are seeing some action, hopefully, from the federal government and thus the provincial governments, and the ripple-out effect will continue. So thank you very much to everyone for all their support. We’re moving forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** The time provided for private members’ public business has expired.

Ms. Scott, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, has moved private member’s notice of motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** All matters relating to private members’ public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until Monday, June 2, 2025, at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1731.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Allsopp, Tyler (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
<b>Bresee, Ric (PC)</b>	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
<b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Cerjanec, Rob (LIB)	Ajax	
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Jeux
Ciriello, Monica (PC)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Cooper, Michelle (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
<b>Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Darouze, George (PC)	Carleton	
Denault, Billy (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence
Fairclough, Lee (LIB)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Firin, Mohamed (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
<b>Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Leader, Third Party / Chef du troisième parti
<b>French, Jennifer K. (NDP)</b>	Oshawa	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gilmour, Alexa (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Gualtieri, Silvia (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
<b>Hamid, Hon. / L'hon. Zee (PC)</b>	Milton	Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform / Solliciteur général associé responsable de la Lutte contre le vol d'automobiles et de la Réforme relative aux mises en liberté sous caution
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
<b>Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)</b>	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Hazell, Andrea (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Guildwood	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)</b>	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
<b>Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)</b>	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
<b>Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)</b>	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
<b>McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)</b>	Durham	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)</b>	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
McKenney, Catherine (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)</b>	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	Deputy House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement et de la croissance économique du Nord
<b>Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)</b>	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security / Ministre des Collèges et Universités, de l'Excellence en recherche et de la Sécurité
Racinsky, Joseph (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships / Ministre responsable des Partenariats économiques et communautaires pour le développement du Cercle de feu
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Rosenberg, Bill (PC)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Chris (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
<b>Skelly, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)</b>	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smyth, Stephanie (LIB)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)</b>	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé
<b>Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)</b>	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tsao, Jonathan (LIB)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Vickers, Paul (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Watt, Tyler (LIB)	Nepean	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	