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**Official Report  
of Debates  
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**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 17 February 2016**

**Mercredi 17 février 2016**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 17 février 2016

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order: Minister.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to all the good folks in Peterborough riding this morning. I know they're digging out from a little bit of snow yesterday.

I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice for the arrangement of proceedings for debate on concurrence in supply.

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

Minister.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I move that, notwithstanding any standing order, the order for concurrence in supply for the various ministries and offices, as represented by government orders 34 through 40, inclusive, shall be called concurrently; and that when such orders are called they shall be considered concurrently in a single debate; and two hours shall be allotted to the debate, divided equally among the recognized parties, at the end of which time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the order for concurrence in supply for each of the ministries and offices referred to above; and that any required divisions in the orders for concurrence in supply shall be deferred to deferred votes, such votes to be taken in succession, with one five-minute bell.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Leal moves that, notwithstanding any standing order, the order of concurrence in supply for the various ministries and offices, as represented by government orders 34 through 40, inclusive, shall be called concurrently; and that when such orders are called they shall be considered concurrently in a single debate; and two hours shall be allotted to the debate, divided equally among the recognized parties, at the end of which time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Dispense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Dispense? Dispensed.

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I move concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Energy, including supplementaries; the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure/Ministry of Research and Innovation; the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs; the Ministry of Finance, including supplementaries; the Ministry of Education; and the Office of Francophone Affairs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Leal has moved concurrence in government orders 34 through 40. Mr. Leal.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank all sides of the House this morning for being in a very co-operative mood and for allowing us to move forward with concurrence.

We do know that concurrence represents the Legislature's approval of estimates for the fiscal year. Concurrence is required for all ministries and offices that have been selected for review; the Standing Committee on Estimates is very important. Estimates of ministries and offices not selected by the committee were deemed passed by the estimates committee and reported to the House last fall, concurred on September 24, 2015, and November 4, 2015.

We're moving forward with estimates to co-operate, of course, with the committee. It's a very important part of our parliamentary democracy established years ago by Westminster, when various government departments would come forward to be reviewed by a standing committee on estimates to peruse the money that's being spent—of course, by the government of Ontario and various ministries that will impact north, south, east and west.

We'll have the opportunity to look at a number of things through estimates, a very important committee. At that time, suffice to say, with those introductory remarks it will allow us to move forward.

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

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** It's a pleasure to speak to this important issue today, to talk about the concurrence in the estimates. When I think about why we're here, I think we're all here to make a difference for our communities and improve the quality of life of the people that we represent. Fundamental to doing that is making sure that we're allocating funding to those priorities. That's really what this is all about.

What I'd like to do today are a few things: I want to go over a few points just for the sake of the viewers at home and to refresh our own memory about what concurrence in the estimates actually is, to revisit that estimates process and recap what has happened so far this fiscal year. I will also discuss the Supply Act and how it relates to concurrence in the estimates and why it is important. Also, I will take a bit of time to outline some of the achievements of the past year, time permitting, to help provide some context for the discussion, and ultimately to refer back to what I said at the beginning, which is how the estimates help us achieve our goals of making a difference in the lives of the people that we represent.

Let me just give some background again on what concurrence in the estimates is, for the folks at home. Concurrence basically represents the Legislature's approval of the estimates for a fiscal year. In this case, we are discussing concurrence for the 2015-16 fiscal year, so the fiscal year that ends March 31, 2016—in a month and a half or so.

Concurrence is required for all ministries and offices that have been selected for review by the Standing Committee on Estimates. Estimates of ministries and offices not selected by the committee were deemed passed by the estimates committee, reported to the House, and received and concurred in, in this case, on September 24, 2015, and November 4, 2015, respectively.

For the 2015-16 fiscal, the committee selected seven ministries and offices for review. On November 26, the committee on estimates filed its report with the Legislative Assembly on its review of the estimates of the following ministries: the Ministry of Energy; the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure; and the Ministry of Research and Innovation. On November 30, the committee selected for consideration the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education and the Office of Francophone Affairs. The assembly's concurrence in the estimates, which we are speaking about today, represents the approval of these selected ministries' and offices' estimates.

The Supply Act would be introduced following orders in concurrence in estimates and, if passed, would represent the final statutory authority for spending by the government in this assembly. So today's discussion and vote are important steps in approving government spending for this past fiscal year, which will end on March 31, 2016.

I also just want to take a moment to remind members where we are in the fiscal cycle. The estimates for government ministries and offices, volume 1, was tabled in the Legislature on May 14, 2015; volume 2, for legislative offices, was tabled November 3, 2015, and supplementary estimates were also tabled in the fall. The estimates set out a comprehensive account of the government's intended expenditures for the fiscal year and include details of the spending plans that were presented in our 2015 budget.

**0910**

As we near the end of fiscal year 2015-16, we will soon be introducing the Supply Act, should concurrence

in the estimates be reached here. So today's concurrence in the estimates discussion is really important because it allows us to move forward with finalizing the review of the estimates that has taken place.

The Supply Act is required every fiscal year to provide the final approval and legal authority for all spending for the year. Let me be clear for those of us here who need a reminder—I'm sure most of you don't, but certainly for those folks back home who are watching: This does not seek any new spending; it authorizes expenditures as reflected in the estimates for the fiscal year that ends this March 31. Today's concurrence in the estimates must be obtained before the Supply Act can be introduced. The Supply Act would constitute the final authorization by the Legislature of the government's program spending for the fiscal year. It would give the government the authority to finance its programs and honour its commitments, and enhance the quality of life for the people we represent.

Let me recall just briefly what some of the estimates we're talking about today have delivered. When you think about where we were in 2009, in the global economic downturn, Ontario has taken great strides since the fallout from the downturn, which had a devastating impact, of course, on the people of Ontario and many parts of the world. Mr. Speaker, we're committed to balancing the budget in a fair and responsible way by 2017-18. Achieving a balanced budget is important because it allows us to support the programs, make the investments and deliver the estimates that allow us to deliver those services that the people of Ontario rely on. Balancing the budget will require a relentless focus on finding smarter and better ways to deliver the best possible value for every dollar we spend as we review and transform government programs and manage public sector compensation.

The 2014-15 deficit was \$10.3 billion, down about \$2.2 billion from the 2014 projection of \$12.5 billion. This marked the sixth year in a row that Ontario beat its deficit target. In the 2015 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review, the government projected deficits of \$7.5 billion in 2015-16 and \$4.5 billion in 2016-17, and a return to balance in 2017-18. This reflected an improvement of \$1 billion in 2015-16 and \$300 million in 2016-17, compared with deficit targets laid out in the 2015 budget.

The way we're going about this, through PRRT, is a process that involves going through every program in government and finding the best bang for the taxpayer dollar to basically ensure that we're spending money as wisely as possible and getting the best results and outcomes for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to say in summary is that this debate today is really important. The importance of concurrence in the estimates today cannot be understated. Receiving concurrence in the estimates would allow the Supply Act to be introduced, providing final spending authority for the fiscal year that is coming to a close. Again, this is not about approving new spending; it's

about providing authority for the government to finance its programs and honour its commitments. This is about approving spending on important priorities, the things that people care about: health care, education, transportation, infrastructure—the things we debate in this Legislature every single day.

I urge all members to support concurrence in the estimates so that the important work on the public services that the people of Ontario care about can be delivered and can be approved.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you on another snowy morning in the greater Toronto area, and likely across most of Ontario as well. I will be speaking a little bit about my occasions in the chair during estimates committee, but I would like to just back up and talk about what has occurred over the last couple of months or so in Prince Edward–Hastings, and more specifically in Whitby–Oshawa.

I spent a lot of the break, when we were back in our constituencies, meeting with my constituents. I can tell you that a lot of the people I met with were doctors—a lot of doctors. Family physicians, emergency room doctors, obstetricians—you name it—I met with all kinds of doctors. And the doctors are furious with this government right now because of unilateral cuts that have been made. So when the member opposite stands up and says, “We’re worried about our health care and making sure that we have proper health care going forward,” they’re not doing what needs to be done to ensure that we have proper health care going forward.

The doctors I spoke with, family physicians who had just left university, have all kinds of student debt, and now they’ve been hit with a unilateral cut by this government that’s making it more and more difficult for them to stay in Ontario. There are a lot of young doctors who want to stay and work in Ontario, but because of the cuts that have been forced upon them by this government, by Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government, they are now second-guessing whether Ontario is the right place for them to be. These doctors are telling me they would be far better off working in Saskatchewan, in British Columbia, in Alberta. The compensation is better for them there.

They’re fed up with the fact that the Minister of Health here in Ontario goes out to the stand and says that the average doctor in Ontario is making \$368,000. I can tell you that the family physicians in the Quinte region aren’t making \$360,000, and on top of that, they’re having to pay for their overhead in their offices from what they are making, which is far less than \$360,000.

The government would lead you to believe that our doctors are rich, that they’re getting rich out there. Our doctors are leaving Ontario for other jurisdictions.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** No, they’re not. Balderdash.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Over the last couple of months, I had two doctors leave Belleville to head to British Col-

umbia. The member from Newmarket–Aurora can say “balderdash” all he wants. That’s a fact: Young doctors are leaving Ontario for other jurisdictions because of the cuts that this government is imposing on them. I don’t know if they have no idea what’s going on in their ridings, but their doctors are getting up and leaving for other jurisdictions.

We have a real, serious health care problem on our hands as a result of the cuts that have been made to the doctors’ salaries. Health cuts are happening to our doctors. They’re happening in our hospitals. Quinte Health Care has had to cut almost 200 employees in the latest round of cuts there. It’s happening. For them to try and pull the wool over the eyes of the public is incredulous to me, because it’s happening in our communities. Our health care is being cut.

So they can stand here and they can say whatever they want about investing in health care. It’s not happening. They need to manage our health care system better, not continue to throw money at it and not cut in the places where cuts shouldn’t be occurring, and that’s on the front lines.

That was the resounding message I heard over and over again when I met with doctors over the holiday period: The cuts that they are making aren’t being made in the right places. They’re happening on the front lines in our health care system. Our system is loaded—bloated—with bureaucracy, but are they nibbling away in there? No, no, no. They’re cutting front-line nurses and they’re cutting the salaries of our doctors in Ontario, the people who actually provide health care, yet they’re continuing to build the bureaucracies in our health care system.

I also had the opportunity to spend a lot of time on the ground in Whitby–Oshawa during the recent by-election. I probably went door to door five different days. Some of them were colder than others. Some of them were really, really, really cold; others were not bad. But what I did hear over and over again—and I congratulate our newest MPP, Lorne Coe, who will be arriving in the next couple of days. What I heard over and over again was the disgust that people had for the current Liberal government, specifically the Premier of Ontario. There was an outrage against the things that have gone on in Ontario and in Whitby–Oshawa: the cuts that have been made to health care, as I’ve documented already, and the rising cost of electricity, and the decision that was made to sell off Hydro One without any mandate to sell it off. People are furious.

You know what? Maybe, finally, the Premier got the message on February 11 that people expect more from this government. They cannot continue to believe this government. If you heard any of the advertisements that the Liberal government put out during the recent by-election—my goodness. It’s unbelievable, what these guys were saying.

The Premier of Ontario—now that coal has been completely phased out in Ontario, an initiative that was actually started by the previous Conservative government and was completed by this government, a decision that

was supported by all parties in the Legislature—to phase out coal.

**0920**

What does this government, what does this Liberal Party decide to do in their advertisements in Whitby–Oshawa? The Premier was saying that if you don't support the Liberal candidate in Whitby–Oshawa, then the other parties are going to go back to burning coal. That is an out-and-out lie, Mr. Speaker. It's a lie, and for some reason she was able to get away with it.

Well, no. Hold on. She wasn't able to get away with it. She wasn't able to get away with it because—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order: Minister?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I have much respect for my good friend from Prince Edward–Hastings, but I think maybe he's bordering on language that's not parliamentary. I want to listen to him finish his speech, so maybe we could just get some guidance from you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I appreciate your input, and I do believe that the member was questioning some of the legality and truth of statements that were made in Whitby–Oshawa, and certainly it's up for debate. At this point, I will not cut him off, but if he goes any further, we'll talk about it.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And you know what? There was debate on this issue in the Legislature when it comes to phasing out coal in Ontario. It was started by the Ontario PC Party and finished by the Ontario Liberal government, and now coal is no longer burned to produce power in Ontario.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'd appreciate less talk from the peanut gallery, and the member might want to get back in his seat if he wants to yell.

Continue.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm sorry for the interruption as well, but he can't help himself sometimes.

In Whitby–Oshawa, I was going door to door and I would see, stuck in the crack of the door—when a Liberal canvasser had maybe come ahead of me or had gone to a door ahead of me—a flyer there, and it showed large stacks with smoke coming out of them, saying that the only party that was committed to phasing out coal in Ontario was the Liberal Party of Ontario.

I was here in this Legislature when we voted against that, I was here when the NDP voted against burning coal and I was here when the government did, too. You know what? All three parties in this Legislature agree that coal should no longer be burned in Ontario to create power. But what were they saying in their ads? You know what I think? People of Ontario are finally sick and tired of the lies from this party and this government.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** All right. I gave the member some leeway, and now he's accusing the whole party of lying. You will withdraw that.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'll withdraw that, Mr. Speaker.

You know what? People just want to hear the truth. They want to hear an honest debate. But they haven't been getting one. They certainly haven't been getting it through the airwaves, on the radio stations in Whitby and Oshawa, and they certainly weren't getting it in the ads that were coming to their door. People want the truth. They want an honest debate about what's going on in the province of Ontario.

They don't want these games. They told the Liberal Party loud and clear in Whitby–Oshawa that they've had enough of this foolishness, and they sent a PC member to Queen's Park in resounding fashion. I can't wait for Lorne Coe to get here next week. He's going to do a fabulous job representing Whitby–Oshawa.

Going back to electricity rates: Electricity rates have increased 77% over the last five years as a result of the decisions that were made by this government. When we had the Minister of Energy in estimates to question him on what the decisions were, he tried to distance himself from the decisions that were made, in spite of the fact that the Minister of Energy has been a cabinet minister in this government since I've been here and before I arrived here. Yet he's trying to distance himself from the decisions that were made by his own government. It was unbelievable to hear those kinds of things coming from a minister of the crown. It is the Green Energy Act, which Minister Chiarelli was akin to or a part of, that has created the biggest reason for the increase in our electricity rates in Ontario.

The sell-off of Hydro One: We had an opportunity to question the minister for a long period of time on the sell-off of Hydro One, something that this government has no mandate to do. They've already sold off the first 15% of Hydro One in spite of the fact that there has been enormous opposition from the opposition parties, the Tories and the NDP, and there has been huge opposition from the public. Every survey that you have seen, every poll that's come out, indicates that over 75% or 80% or 85% of those polled are against the sell-off of Hydro One. Yet the Premier and this government bury their heads in the sand and continue.

And you know what they're saying, Mr. Speaker? They were telling us for the longest time that the money from the sale of Hydro One was going to pay for infrastructure. They were actually telling people out there that the money that was coming from the sale of Hydro One was going to pay for transit; it was going to pay for health care. I know that the candidate in Whitby–Oshawa was going door-to-door telling people that the proceeds of the sale of Hydro One were going to go to infrastructure and to health care. That is a lie. That is another lie. That money is not going to health care or to infrastructure. That money is going to pay down the deficit. Their own financial statement in the fall indicated as much. That money is not going to pay for one ounce of health care or infrastructure.

Again, they're not telling the people the truth. That's the only way that they can get elected because their record is so horrible. This government's record is terrible.

There's no way that they could actually run on their record, so they have to make things up to make it seem as if they're doing something productive, or that they're the progressive party in the Legislature.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The minister is holding court over there. Maybe she'd like to take the group outside. It's a little loud.

Continue.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now, where was I? We were talking about infrastructure projects. I can tell you that in my riding over the last couple of months I've had the opportunity to meet with most of the mayors, councillors and CAOs of my municipalities, and I represent 16 municipalities in Prince Edward-Hastings. They all have infrastructure needs; they all have critical infrastructure needs.

I'm thinking of Highway 62 just north of Maynooth on the way to Barry's Bay in the Ottawa Valley. Highway 62 is in desperate need of a total remake, a total redo. They've applied for money under the Small Communities Fund and the OCIF, and like almost every municipality in my riding, they received a form letter telling them that they had been denied to move on to the next phase to get the funding that they need for the projects that are required in their municipalities. The government will say that they're putting all of this money into infrastructure. They re-announce the same pool of money budget after budget, but not much ever really gets done.

I know there are concerns in rural Ontario that the infrastructure money that the government has to spend isn't actually going to be spent in rural Ontario. These are real concerns that the municipal politicians in rural Ontario have and that they're experiencing. There are, I believe, 78 projects that have been approved by the ministry in the Small Communities Fund. Only 10 of those are actually for infrastructure projects, for roads, and there are a lot of highways out there that need to be replaced. They don't have the trust—and you can understand why, given what I've said over the last 15 minutes—that this government is actually going to do what it said it's going to do and spend the money to fix the projects that need to be fixed.

**0930**

They're putting load restrictions on Highway 62 right now for the big loads of timber that are making their way in from the Ottawa Valley to be processed. It's causing a real problem for the movement of goods. We don't even need to bring up the Nipigon bridge and the disaster that's happened in northern Ontario there.

They have no faith that this government is going to deliver the funding for the infrastructure projects they need, and they don't have a lot of faith, if they do deliver the infrastructure money, that it's going to be built properly. The faith from the public is lacking when it comes to the promises of this government.

As I wrap up, let's talk about the ORPP. I heard an awful lot about it from businesses in my riding over the

last two months. The ORPP is causing more fear and worry out there for small businesses in my community.

Small businesses really are the backbone of rural eastern Ontario. It's those small businesses that actually create the jobs with the best wages. You think of the McDonald's jobs or the fast food jobs, or you think of the Walmart jobs, but there are actually business people in our communities—construction, trades—those small businesses where their employees are making good money. There are a lot of those jobs out there. The owners of those businesses are concerned. The employees who work at those businesses are concerned because the last thing they can afford right now is more money being taken off their monthly or biweekly paycheque.

Everything else is getting more expensive. The cost of electricity to heat their homes keeps going up. The people who are contacting my office about the price of electricity are at wits' end. They just simply can't continue to pay the increases.

We were talking about Hydro One and the fact that Hydro One is sold. The first thing that the new board at Hydro One did was apply for a rate increase, and they got it. On February 1, the price of electricity went up another 1.9%. Backtrack to the 1st of January, when the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit was taken off: The 10% savings was taken off your residential hydro bill. That was a 10% increase on the hydro bills of every person who gets their electricity, their energy, their heat from Hydro One. Tack on another 1.9% in February. It's getting to the point where people can no longer afford to pay for their heat and their hydro.

So what does the government want to do? They come in with this plan to take more money off the paycheques of people in their ORPP, when they simply can't afford it. Businesses want to continue to hire. They can't do it. A lot of them tell us that they're going to be eliminating staff as a result of this.

These things are well intentioned, I think, Mr. Speaker; I really do. I believe they're well intentioned, but they just don't know how to implement them without causing more damage to our economy and to the people who live and work in Ontario.

Everybody believes that we should have more when we retire. Everybody believes in that concept. It all comes down to the implementation, and the people of Ontario have lost faith in this government to ever get it right.

So let me recap. We had the opportunity to speak to a couple of different ministers—as was outlined by the Minister of Agriculture when he spoke—during the estimates committee. They talked about being open and transparent. There's another word that we need, and that's "honest." We need honesty. We need honesty now from this government. The people of Whitby-Oshawa have clearly indicated that they have had enough of the games of this government. It's time to get honest with the people of Ontario.

Thank you for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House. This is my first opportunity to speak in this House since we came back.

With your indulgence, I'd just like to take a moment. There was a very serious accident in my riding on February 14, a little bit after 6 o'clock in the morning. Two young men in my riding, Maxime Beaulac and Daniel Germain, died tragically in a highway accident close to the town of Earlton. I'd like to express our condolences to their families, on behalf of all the people in this House. I don't think there's any greater pain than having your child taken away in their prime of life. I think the only people who understand a pain like that are those people who have experienced that.

I'd also like to express our thoughts to the driver of the tractor-trailer, a 59-year-old person from Cobalt, whose life will forever be changed by the events of that morning.

Thank you for the time, Speaker.

Now I'd like to talk about what the issue is today. It's the concurrence in supply. Basically, we are here to discuss a motion that needs to be passed so that the government can pay its bills. That's basically what we're doing here—for the folks at home, and for the folks in my neck of the woods, some of whom do listen at home. You have to try really hard, because you can't get it on TV in my part of the world. You really have to be dedicated to look at this at home.

Part of this process is called the estimates. The government did a good job of explaining how it's supposed to function. It comes from the Westminster process. What it really is supposed to do is—the legislators get to pick a few ministries, and we get to grill the ministers on questions of the day, questions that should be important to their constituents, questions that are important to their constituents. The ministers do their best to answer the questions or to evade the questions. I think that's a fair statement.

The problem with that process, and the problem we have come to recognize with this whole process, is that this government seems much more interested in the public relations aspect of government than actually the governance aspect of government. There's a big difference, Speaker. There's a huge difference.

One of the ministries that came up before us was energy. Energy is a huge issue in this province. In my riding, it's number one or number two, mainly because of the cost of electricity. It's an essential service. There are lots of people in my riding who have no access to natural gas. They have access to heating oil, and heating oil has gone down a little bit, but for the last couple of years, it has been very expensive. They have to heat with hydro.

I felt sorry for the people last week in Toronto when it was minus 26 because it's humid down here at 26. But when it was 26 below in Toronto last week, it was 44 below in front of my house. You know what? I burn with wood. My house is pretty warm. But when I'm 75 or 80, I won't be able to burn with wood anymore. The only thing I'll be able to use, and the only thing that many of

my constituents can use, is electricity, and the cost keeps going up and up and up and up.

This government's biggest move on electricity has been to announce the sale of Hydro One. Now, there are two big problems with the sale of Hydro One. You lose control of your transmission system, which is a huge, huge problem, but you're also selling something that actually brings money, brings funds, to the government. Anybody who has ever been in business knows that when you start selling the things that actually bring money into your coffers, that's the beginning of the end. That's the beginning of the end. When the dairy farmer starts selling the cows to pay the feed bill, that's the beginning of his end, or her end. That is also the beginning of this government's end. It's a political pivot point.

**0940**

What's really, really frustrating is how the game pieces change in this political game. When the Conservatives tried to sell our hydro system and were kind of successful and the people stopped them mid-job, the NDP fought them and the Liberals fought them. Now the Liberals are trying to finish what the Conservatives started, and the NDP is fighting them and, for some reason beyond my comprehension, the Conservatives are fighting them.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, do you know why?

**Interjection:** No, why?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** They want to sell the whole thing.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes, but why is the government going ahead with something so foolish? They're selling income.

What's most galling is that we hear from this government that they're selling Hydro One to pay for this massive infrastructure investment that we are going to do. In my part of the world, we see that the massive infrastructure investment is the closure of the New Liskeard train station—the New Liskeard bus station. It was a train station, but they closed the train; now it's a bus station and they just closed the bus station.

Again, we go back to the PR part. A few of us in northern Ontario read the Toronto Star and the Toronto Sun, and there's the UP Express, which cost a lot of money to build and there are no riders. They need to make a few changes to get more ridership.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It's a nice train, though.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's a nice train.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** And it's diesel.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** And it's diesel. I'm not that upset about the diesel part, personally.

No one is saying we have to close the UP Express because it doesn't pay for itself, but that's what they're saying about buses in northern Ontario. They closed the train, the Northlander, to save \$12 million a year. How many millions of dollars a year could we save by closing the UP Express? Do I want to do that? No. Do I believe that the people in the GTA need a good public transit system? Absolutely. But the people in northern Ontario also deserve an equitable transportation system.

Did I say “equal”? No. Do I expect a subway between Haileybury and New Liskeard? No. Do I expect that seniors in my riding can actually make it to a doctor’s appointment in Toronto without having to spend two days in a hotel? Yes, because we used to have that under this government.

Every time this government talks about an improvement to infrastructure, we seem get a cut in public service in northeastern Ontario. That is what is so frustrating. If they just came out and said, “Look, we’re going to do this and this and this, but it sucks to be you”—but that’s not what they say. What we see and what they say is so much different than what actually happens. That’s what’s frustrating. That destroys faith in all government, because what they’re saying is not what’s happening.

Another one: winter road maintenance. Again, we’ve been doing winter road maintenance for as long as—MTO is 100 years old; we had a ministerial statement about it yesterday. We’ve been cleaning roads maybe not for 100 years, but close to it. I’ve been standing here for four years, and we’ve been saying for at least four years that winter road maintenance in many parts of northern Ontario is not what it was 10 years ago. The Auditor General came out and said, “You know what? That’s true,” and now the government has made some changes. We don’t know if those changes are working yet.

I do distinctly remember saying that with these private contracts—and I’m not against the contractors. It’s the contracts, designed by this government, that force the contractors to bid so low that they can’t maintain the standards.

But there’s a caveat to this. The reason this is going to work is because if the contractor doesn’t make the standard, we can fine them. We’re going to fine them. Yesterday we read in some of our esteemed newspapers that emanate from the GTA that the government would like the contractors to go to arbitration, because they’re not paying their fines. So, again, why does this government continue to say things that they know aren’t going to happen?

Health care: I listened to the Premier and I listened to the Minister of Health saying that there are no cuts in health care, that everything is fine: “We’re making adjustments. We’ve got a new focus. We’ve got all these things.” Hospital budgets are frozen in my riding, as they are in other ridings. When you freeze something, when you freeze the top line and everything else is rising, you leave these people no choice: They have to make cuts. I get people coming into my office who have cuts in home care. They have to wait months and months for basic surgical procedures. Yet this government stands there and says, “No, no, no, you guys are all wrong. You don’t understand. You don’t know what’s going on.” That is not the truth. The people of Ontario do know what’s going on, and what’s going on isn’t the same as what the government says is going on.

I’m going to give you another prime example, and we’re not going to agree with the PCs on this one. We believe that people should have a good pension. We

believe that. No one thinks about a pension when they’re 30 or 40. But when we have people coming to my office when they’re 60 or 65—and especially now, when there are more precarious part-time jobs than ever before, and you’re never going to get a pension on a part-time job. So the government comes out: “We are going to have the ORPP, and it’s going to be fantastic. Vote for us, folks.” Again, you know what? It sounds perfect.

Do you remember the ads? Do you remember the ad where the guy is running over the stream? There’s the bridge, and then he’s jumping. You remember that? He’s just jumping—

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** The bridge was actually still up.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes, and the bridge is building as he’s going. Well, guess what? They have now delayed it for a year. Is the next ad going to be the bridge coming back? No, that ad is not coming down the pipe, folks.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Some \$600,000 for that.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Some \$600,000 for that, during the election campaign.

But that’s the problem. They say they do things for PR purposes and, a lot of the time, with very little intention of actually proceeding. They’re more interested in playing political games, and that is hurting the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario know that things are not getting better.

I think I speak for parents across the province: It’s every parent’s dream to have their children do equal or better than they’ve done—financially, physically, mentally. Waves of immigrants have come to this province with that goal in mind, and they’ve succeeded—many, including my parents and including my wife. But it’s becoming increasingly obvious that that may no longer be possible in the future.

**0950**

This government is putting up a facade of all the great things that they’re going to do, and it’s becoming more and more and more obvious that it’s a facade. People, Ontarians across the province, I believe—certainly Ontarians in my part of Ontario are very proud Ontarians, but we don’t believe that this government really knows what’s going on in our part of the world.

When I have people come into my office who are 70, own their own home and are being driven out of their own home because they can’t afford to heat it, that’s not my Ontario. When I hear ads on the radio—I can’t even remember what the program is called anymore. The Ontario electrical—help me out, folks.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** OESP, the Ontario Electricity Support Program.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** The Ontario Electricity Support Program, and all the ads about how this is going to help. If you have two people in the home and you make under \$28,000, I think it’s 30 bucks a month. That is not going to keep people in their homes.

That’s something that has to be addressed. It has to be, Speaker, because those are the people I represent and they are the tip of the iceberg. There are a lot of people who are going to face that in the future, and we need to

stand up for those people. Government actually has to be accountable and not just say nice things to keep getting re-elected.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you, Speaker; just in the nick of time, I suppose.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to concurrence in supply following our extensive deliberations on the estimates committee. You know, Speaker, the estimates committee provides an opportunity for us as legislators to perform one of the most fundamental of our responsibilities: Government seeks consent on its annual expenditure program.

Of course, the committee is responsible for reviewing the estimates of at least six, but not more than 12, ministries or government offices each year. This year, the committee selected to hear from the Ministries of Energy, Health, Economic Development, Aboriginal Affairs, Francophone Affairs and Finance. Today, of course, I'll be focusing most of my comments on the deliberations within the Ministry of Health.

I've had a great opportunity, as a member over the last four years, to be an active member on the estimates committee. Before I get moving on to this year's estimates committee, I will say that I recall my former colleague Rob Leone, the member for Cambridge, and I in estimates committee when we were doing the Ministry of Energy. Actually, my seatmate here, Rick Nicholls, the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, was also with us. That's really where the gas plants started to come out. We all remember that.

Minister Bentley, the member from London West, was there throughout the committee. I remember that the finance minister then was Dwight Duncan; the member from Vaughan was also in committee. That's really where things started when it came to the gas plants and filing the contempt motion and all those things, and we're still seeing that flow through the courts. We talk about it daily: the billion dollars that was wasted on those gas plants.

Speaker, I know you just wanted to hear a little snippet there on my previous involvement in estimates, and I'll carry on with this year's estimates committee. I would like to note that I find it interesting that one day before we have the privilege to speak to the concurrence in supply debate and discussions stemming from many days of committee meetings, and a full couple of months after those committee deliberations concluded—it was just yesterday that we actually received answers to some of the committee members' outstanding questions, questions that were left unanswered until the day before we're going to discuss the committee's work.

As usual, we see this government waiting until the last minute to provide the answers we deserve as elected members and that the people of Ontario deserve as tax-paying members of this province. The answers that we did receive, both in committee and sent across in emails, continue to raise the concerns that brought our questions forward in the first place.

I think back to the hours we devoted to considering the Ministry of Health estimates and to the questions from my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound with regard to this government's cut to physiotherapy. He noted the first-hand stories from seniors telling him they're not getting the services. The fact is, Speaker, as my colleague will say, the number of appointments was cut back to 12. They used to maybe get around 40, and of course they're getting 12 now. I had an opportunity to host a round table in my riding some time ago on this, and we heard about some of the significant concerns from folks who were recovering from—whether it be a fall—who were getting individualized care and were now forced into a group. They were actually falling back in terms of their progress. He added that it's not an increase in service; it's actually a decrease. Despite the contentions of ministry staff at committee, I would have to say that my basic math would also indicate that going from 40 appointments down to 12 is actually a decrease.

Further concerning during our meetings with the Ministry of Health were issues my colleague aired with regard to Alzheimer's and other dementias. Specifically, he was wondering about the target set in 2013 to implement a prevention program to help seniors living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. A series of four more questions were asked about this prevention program, and we are still waiting for answers—again, yes, waiting.

He asked how many of the targeted 629 long-term-care homes in Ontario have implemented this program to date. How much was targeted to allow them to implement these programs to date? How much was actually spent of what they had actually budgeted to do? And if you didn't spend all of the money, then where did the money go? Speaker, I regret to report that those questions are still unanswered. In fact, in the set of answers to outstanding questions we received yesterday, we were told that “the ministry is not clear on the specific initiative being referred to.”

Here we are, months after my colleague asked the questions, with no answers and with continued concerns on where our money is going at the Ministry of Health and why that money seems to be failing to address our health care priorities—in this case, the long-term-health-care needs of our senior citizens impacted by dementias and Alzheimer's.

It was a similar set of concerns that I attempted to address in questioning the minister and his staff with regard to rare-disease access to treatment here in the province of Ontario. I asked the minister about patients suffering from EDS and the working group he formed after we first wrote him letters on behalf of Ontario residents suffering from EDS. While the minister did indicate that a working group would be reporting back to him, I would note that I also asked if he or his staff could provide upcoming meeting dates and timelines. After going through yesterday's package of outstanding questions, I would have to say that one is still outstanding and I'm waiting for that information.

I ask the question because, again, we have concerns on this side of the House on the spending of our health care

dollars and ensuring that they go to provide Ontario residents with the access to public health care treatment that they expect and that, in fact, they deserve. For far too long, rare-disease sufferers, those who suffer from EDS or PKU—those patients I mentioned to the minister among them—have faced endless hurdles to diagnosis, to referrals or out-of-country treatment by approved medications due to their smaller numbers and higher relative treatment costs. The fact is, these are people of Ontario just like you or me, and the higher cost shouldn't mean that rare-disease sufferers are abandoned by a government that leaves them to fund their own medical expenses.

I'm hopeful that will change, hopefully in time for our next series of estimates meetings, where the minister can detail the new provincial strategy for rare-disease treatment across Ontario. That's next year, though. In the meantime, we'll spend what time we have left this morning to continue discussing this year's health ministry estimates.

While there was a lot of discussion regarding government investment into nurses and doctors in our province, there continues to be a sense that, despite the response we received at committee, some things are just not adding up.

**1000**

Our health critic from Elgin–Middlesex–London asked about cuts to doctor services, indicating a total of “over \$815 million alone to doctor services being cut from this government.” Again, concern remains in that area, as the minister contended, “I would argue against any characterization of what took place as ‘cuts.’” Yet, despite the denials, we continue to see evidence to the contrary.

Of course, we see the same thing when it comes to cuts to our nurses: deny, while nursing positions continue to be slashed at hospitals right around the province. In fact, the Ontario Nurses' Association claimed just last month that 770 registered nursing jobs were cut in 2015 as hospitals struggled to balance their budgets.

Those layoffs show no sign of stopping this year either. I know there was news out of Windsor of nurse layoffs right around the time that we were dealing with our own concerns in the Kitchener area after a layoff announcement at Grand River Hospital: 68 positions eliminated at Grand River Hospital, 68 fewer people to continue the good work at Grand River Hospital to look after the health of the people in our community. That's too bad, because Ontario can do better to ensure health care is a government priority.

Sadly, we continue to see, both at estimates and every day in this House, the continued toll from ongoing wasted spending that has taken funding from where it's most needed and led to cuts throughout the province. The Premier was elected on a promise of no cuts to front-line health care workers, and yet again and again we see the complete opposite, with Grand River being the latest to announce cuts: 30 vacant positions being slashed and layoff notices given to 38 others, including nurses.

Make no mistake: These cuts fall at the feet of the Liberal government and its fiscal mismanagement. Unfortunately, when billions are wasted on gas plants and non-existent eHealth registries, it means less for the priorities we all share.

You know, Speaker, I recall, and I was reading this morning, how soon after the election of Dalton McGuinty they brought in a health premium that needed to go to health care to make our system better, and yet it fell to general revenues, buying gas plants that we don't need and other things that I'm sure we all can remember. Quite frankly, there is an ongoing concern with the way this government handles its money, and the spending choices made for our health sector continue to highlight that concern.

While our questions of the ministry at estimates provided little further information on cuts or nursing job loss, the denials couldn't hide the fact that this provincial government received \$652 million through the Canada Health Transfer in 2015, but only a portion of those funds was put into Ontario's health care system, with \$54 million being funnelled from that transfer to another ministry. So we see what's going on. We may not have gotten the answers at estimates, but we see it in the real-life layoffs and cuts in our communities.

And we're not the only ones to see what's going on here. In fact, as he was announcing the 68 positions being eliminated, Grand River Hospital CEO Malcolm Maxwell noted in a memo to staff that “given the province's financial situation, I do not foresee the situation becoming any easier.”

The local hospital cuts follow a series of government decisions that have seen five consecutive years of frozen hospital budgets despite a growing population; physician services slashed three times last year, for a total of \$815 million; a \$50-million cut from physiotherapy for seniors; and 50 residency positions cut, when 800,000 Ontarians are still without a family doctor.

As I said, we may not have received many details from the ministry, but the situation in our health care sector is as clear as the weekly headlines announcing the latest cost concerns.

We've had other ministries into committee, of course. We had an opportunity to spend some time with the Ministry of Economic Development and Employment. We'll not need to look any further than the recent Auditor General's report highlighting how many of the programs that were brought forward by the Ministry of Economic Development, in fact, invited people to apply for a lot of those grants.

Of course, in Ottawa, they typically give a loan. Here in Ontario, we give a grant. It was a select few that were in fact invited to apply to these things. Many small business people throughout the province always ask, “We don't have the resources to apply, or to hire high-priced lobbyists to apply, for a lot of these things. How come it just can't be fair for everyone?”

We saw how millions, if not tens of millions, of dollars were given to companies—large companies, in

fact, like Cisco—that recently then laid off people in the province of Ontario. In our own community, we appreciate and value the work that those at OpenText do. But I know there were also questions surrounding the government's program of financial aid to OpenText, and whether those jobs have in fact been created or not.

We never get a really substantial answer from the ministry in those cases. I know the minister did his ultimate best to explain the programs they did. We also got into the situation over at MaRS and the fact that tens of millions, if not more, have been spent or invested over at the MaRS building, with little to no return. In fact, if you walk over to the building today, you'll still see vacant space.

I know my colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington had an opportunity to speak to the minister and question him in this last session of estimates, which leads me also to the fact that a lot of the agencies, boards, and commissions that these ministries represent haven't been filing their annual reports on time. There hasn't been full disclosure to Ontarians in terms of how their hard-earned tax money is spent.

With that, Speaker, that's my few minutes on estimates and the issue of concurrence, so I'll wrap it up with that, I guess.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to have a little bit of time on the clock to address the concurrence in supply motion.

Before I begin, Speaker, I want to give a shout-out to our colleague, my partner in good work, in Windsor–Tecumseh. Percy Hatfield is recovering from knee surgery. He's at home, watching us all on TV intently, so everybody give him a big wave. Hi, Percy. We can't wait until you're back in here, and I'm sure—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Is he really watching?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** He is; he was texting us. I'm sure that if he had the ability today to stand and speak to the supply motion, he would have something prophetic or even poetic to say. I will be maybe a lot more crass in my remarks here.

Frankly, the government, to this point, has continued on a pattern of failing this province in every measurable way, and people are seeing it more than they ever have. Perhaps it's because we have an old, tired government—14 years. You get stale. You get into a pattern. We're seeing it time and time again, where backbench members can yell total nonsense from their seats, not making one solid, valid point, and not standing up and adding to this debate. People outside of this place are seeing it. They're seeing a government with no vision, with a reluctance to consult with the people that are affected by their policies.

I'll give you one fact here. This is a fact that's disputable: Today it's reported that the government and the finance minister will release the budget next week. We had pre-budget consultations. They went into various communities across this province. They came down to Windsor, and I'll talk about that a little bit. But the

budget will be released and presented in this House without having the finance committee submit a report to this House—

**Interjection:** Not tabling it.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:**—without tabling a report that encompasses the thoughts, the visions, the concerns of all Ontarians. You are ignoring completely the time that went into that. Frankly, you don't care about what the people in this province are concerned about. You're ignoring it completely. You're signalling that through introducing this budget. To argue that fact, Speaker, is indisputable.

**1010**

So what does that say to people in our communities? It says, frankly, that they know best. They know what the priorities of this province should be. They don't care about consultation; they don't care about the issues that our communities face. One of the issues we heard through the budget deliberations in the finance committee was that access to health care, one of the fundamental pillars of our society and our province, is becoming less and less accessible. People are concerned about primary care. The ability to find a doctor in their community still looms heavily, especially in remote and rural areas of this province, where doctors are reluctant to set up.

The access to long-term care: Seniors can't find a bed, a place to go. Despite all of the rhetoric we hear from the government on making any progress or effort on that, there still is a crisis. Long-term care, where we know there has to be an emphasis on investment, continues to drag along and to not play the vital role in the system that we know it could, because the government continues to play games with our overall system, given and juxtaposed under a Ministry of Finance that has frozen health care spending for the last five years. In real-term, real-day dollars, that's an absolute cut.

Small and medium-sized hospitals are faced with stagnant budgets and increased costs. What are they to do? They've cut everywhere they can. I can tell you, I'm working with our health care leaders and administrators in Windsor and Essex county, and they'll show you the books. They'll show you where they've made the most efficiencies. In fact, any metrics will show you that they are very efficient in the overall delivery of health care. Given that they can't run a deficit—they're mandated, legislated, not to run a deficit—they have to cut front-line care, and that is directly on your conscience, or it should be, because it affects the health outcomes of our constituents in our communities.

We're seeing it every day. We're hearing the calls, but it's a government that doesn't care, and that's again reflected in the fact that they won't even table the report from the finance committee before they release the budget. We don't know what's going to be in there, we don't know what their priorities are, but we can ensure and we can be assured that they certainly won't reflect the needs and desires of Ontarians.

Speaker, I think you're giving me a little bit of a head nod because time is running—one or two minutes; it's tough to judge.

I'll give you one example of where we've seen the fiscal prudence of this government. This highlights, again, how inept they've been. The Pan Am Games, by all accounts from the government and the minister of the Pan Am Games, were wildly successful. We learned, after the Pan Am Games ended, that the government saw fit to commission a hair salon for athletes at the Pan Am Games to the tune of \$140,000 for two months. Is that how much it actually cost? In your mind, is that what haircuts cost these days? Folks in my area certainly aren't paying their salons \$140,000 or \$70,000 a month for access to beauty supplies. Maybe some members of the backbench actually think that's reasonable.

On an annualized basis, that's \$840,000. I asked the CEO of Windsor Regional Hospital, David Musyj, "What would you do with an extra \$840,000?" He said, "I would apply it directly to front-line care." That's where the priority is on the ground in communities, but by the Liberals' standards, they think it's important to ensure that there's access to manicures, pedicures and hair-cutting services, not front-line nurses. How do you live with yourselves when your government is making decisions like that, and how do you go back to your communities and actually make a case for a hair salon to the tune of \$140,000? It's reprehensible and it's an indication of a total collapse of confidence in this government and their fiduciary responsibilities.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Just before we begin, I'd like to mention to all members that we've got a very long list of introductions to do, so I would ask that you make your introductions and only your introductions, and we'll get through this all together. We also have to introduce our pages, and we're doing a special tribute today. The more we all co-operate and get this done, the better and the quicker.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I would like to introduce Mrs. Pat Bhola, the mother of one of our pages today, Tristan Bhola, from Sarnia-Lambton.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** We have representatives from Ontario credit unions here with us today who held a breakfast this morning and are meeting with MPPs during the course of the day.

I would like to welcome Antero Elo from the Finnish Credit Union; Brent Zоргdrager from the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union; Kerry Hadad from Your Neighbourhood Credit Union; from Libro Credit Union, Steve Bolton, Fred Blaak and Ralph Luimes; and from Momentum Credit Union, Malcolm Stoffman.

Also, I would like to welcome Megan McIver. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'd like to welcome a proud mother from the riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, Rima

Mastronardi, who's here today to watch her daughter Delaney, who is our page captain. The Mastronardis are a proud page family, as I recall having the honour of introducing them a few years ago when their daughter Dominique was a captain. Rima is joined today by her friends Deeanne and McKenzie Cervini. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I too had the pleasure to meet with representatives of the credit unions. I want to welcome Taras Pidzamecky as well as Antero Elo—one is from the Ukrainian Credit Union and the other from the Finnish Credit Union. Very interesting talk. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** It's a great pleasure to introduce page captain Laura de Souza's family: her mother, Connie de Souza; her father, Jan de Souza; and her brother, Nicholas de Souza. They are in the public gallery. Please join me in welcoming them to the House.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'd like to welcome a few special guests today. We have Eben James, Sr.—his lovely wife Gwen is here—and Eben James, Jr. in the gallery as well, with a lot of other guests from Quinte West.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'd like to welcome my hard-working staff to Queen's Park today: Shannon Mitchell, Josh Upper and Ryan Donnelly. Welcome.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I'm very pleased to welcome, in the gallery, the mother of our page from the wonderful riding of Ottawa-Orléans, Mrs. Robin Boulé.

I would like to welcome our page, Jordan Boulé, who will be with us for two weeks.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm very excited today because it rarely ever happens. We have a page from Nepean-Carleton: Julia Robertson. Today, we are joined by her father, Glenn Robertson, one of my constituents.

We would like to welcome you to Queen's Park. Thank you for getting out of all the snow in Ottawa today to join us here in Toronto.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Today, I'd like to welcome Marty Gillis and Susan Stockwell Andrews of the Windsor Family Credit Union, who are joining us today here at Queen's Park. I hope you didn't have too much of a snowy ride up.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** In the members' west gallery today is Bob Lake, who's a director of Kawartha Credit Union and the former president and chief executive officer of Peterborough utility services.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I would like to welcome Liliana Mateus-Jimenez, the mother of page Sarah Mateus-Jimenez, who is in the public gallery today.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** It's a great pleasure to welcome the Council of Ontario Universities sitting in the members' gallery, who are here today at Queen's Park for their Research Matters event. I hope to see all members at the event this evening.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I'd like to welcome the Quinte region here today—and thanks for being here—specifically Mrs. O'Neil and her family; Mayor Jim Harrison and his wife, Janie; former mayor Williams and his wonderful wife; a number of councillors; and, of course, former member George Smitherman. And I'd be remiss if I did

not introduce my wife, Diane, in the members' gallery. Welcome.

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'd like to introduce students from Halton to Queen's Park today. There are students joining us from Holy Trinity Catholic Secondary School in Oakville, grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am delighted to welcome Libro financial services. Steve Bolton is here from Libro. Welcome to you all. I have to say that all credit unions are wonderful; Libro is especially wonderful. Welcome.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yes, all credit unions are wonderful. I welcome them all to the Legislature, particularly a representative from my riding, Ralph Luimes.

#### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As I indicated to you, we have a couple of things to do today. I'm going to ask that our new pages assemble to be introduced: from Essex, Andrew Garro; from Perth-Wellington, Andrew Johnson; from Ajax-Pickering, Bianca Nicole Padilla; from Niagara West-Glanbrook, Charlotte Fritz; from Chatham-Kent-Essex, Delaney Mastronardi; from Whitby-Oshawa, Dhruv Upadhyay; from York West, Erin Doan; from York-Simcoe, Jessie Popowich; from Ottawa-Orléans, Jordan Boulé; from Nepean-Carleton, Julia Robertson; from Richmond Hill, Laura de Souza; from Barrie, Luke Bentley; from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Micah Tamminga; from London West, Owen Davies; from Thornhill, Richard Fan; from Guelph, Ryan Eggens; from St. Catharines, Sarah Mateus-Jimenez; from Scarborough-Rouge River, Sayeem Mahfuz; from Mississauga East-Cooksville, Suzanne Uraiqat; from Sarnia-Lambton, Tristan Bhola; and from Trinity-Spadina, Xavier Hollott-Lo. These are our pages for this year.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As is our new custom, we will be introducing a few of our guests: David Warner, the Speaker for the 35th Parliament, is here with us today to pay tribute; and Mr. George Smitherman, from Toronto Centre. George, welcome.

1040

Would members now please join me in welcoming the family of the late Mr. Hugh Patrick O'Neil, MPP for Quinte during the 30th, 31st, 32nd, 34th and 35th Parliaments, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery? I will introduce a few: his wife, Donna; son, David; his wife, Teresa; daughter, Cathy; her husband, Mitchell; Liam, and family and friends all. Welcome, and thank you for being here.

*Applause.*

#### HUGH O'NEIL

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

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to Hugh O'Neil, former member for Quinte, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

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

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'd like to welcome all of our guests from the Quinte region who braved the winter weather to get here this morning. It's a long drive as it is through the Toronto commute on a nice day, but to be here in the wintry weather—it's great to have you with us today. I think it speaks volumes to Hugh O'Neil that the Speaker's gallery is packed with his friends and family.

We rise today to pay tribute and say goodbye to "Mr. Quinte." The best politicians, the best people in this Legislature rise above the petty partisanship that sometimes accompanies this profession, and so it was for Hugh Patrick O'Neil. The respect he commanded from his constituents transcended politics. He was their constant champion and a pillar for his community in Quinte, Trenton and Belleville.

The list of honours is long. He was an honorary patron of the Quinte Symphony, an honorary chair of the Loyalist College Foundation board of directors, an honorary colonel at 8 Wing CFB Trenton, an honorary chair for the Quinte Ballet School and a co-chair for the Afghanistan Repatriation Memorial committee. And he was a former cabinet minister, and that's why we're paying tribute here today. He was Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology; then Tourism and Recreation; then Mines; then Culture and Communications from 1985 to 1990. He spent 20 years in this Legislature.

But, first and foremost, he was Donna's husband, David and Cathy's dad and grandpa to four beautiful grandkids.

Even after leaving politics, Hugh was still doing his best for the community in both Trenton and Belleville. It was his efforts and those of Quinte West's then-Mayor John Williams, who joins us today with his beautiful wife, Heather, that brought the Afghanistan Repatriation Memorial to town.

He was also still active here at Queen's Park as well. He was on the board of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ontario Arts Council. He was quiet about that.

Hugh was active in causes in Trenton that were at the core of the community that he loved so much. While respect for Hugh knew no party lines, Hugh remained a Liberal to the last. Any time the two of us were at an event where I had the opportunity to speak as the MPP for Prince Edward-Hastings—and there were a lot of times where we would rub shoulders at events at 8 Wing Trenton or other charitable events throughout the community—when I was done speaking, Hugh, putting to use his good heckling skills that he probably learned here, sitting next to Jim Bradley for a number of years, would always say in his Irish baritone, "Pretty good, MPP Smith. Not bad for a Tory."

I also had the opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with Hugh at many commemorative events in and

around the Quinte region. I always made sure, though, Mr. Speaker, that if I could, I wouldn't stand next to Hugh if the national anthem was to be sung. I would always try and stand next to Donna. She is the real talent when it comes to singing in the family, part of the St. Peter's Catholic Church choir in Trenton and a beautiful, angelic voice—Hugh not so much, but definitely Donna.

Hugh O'Neil was a man and also, at times, a monument. He was a touchstone for every politician in the area. Being a new politician sitting on a dais next to Hugh O'Neil was kind of like sitting down the bench from Gordie Howe. I know my colleague from Northumberland–Quinte West would agree. His presence was enough to instruct you on how it was supposed to be done. Regardless of your political stripe, Hugh O'Neil could teach you how to be a pro.

Now I'd like to do something that probably doesn't happen all that often here, but I'd like to pay some homage to the legacy that my departed friend left on the history of the party opposite. Anyone who stares at the structure that is the first two terms of Dalton McGuinty's terms of office should be encouraged to dig a little bit below the surface, and if they take a second look at the foundations, they'll find that one of them is Hugh O'Neil.

In the gallery today we have two of Mr. O'Neil's former staffers. They are men who are no strangers to this House. One is the former Premier's chief of staff, Peter Wilkinson, and the other is the former Deputy Premier, George Smitherman, who is with us today. I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that a quick conversation with either of these men will reveal the lessons of public service—character under fire and love of your community—that were so central to the Hugh O'Neil that we all knew. Hugh O'Neil's legacy extends well beyond Quinte to the profound impact he left on those who worked with him and the lessons they took from their time with him and applied to how they serve the people of Ontario.

As I tried to think of some way to close this out, I wanted to highlight an example of Hugh getting to his feet in this place and representing the people and the place that he loved so much: Trenton. So I decided to read the last question that he delivered in this House. It was the last opportunity as a member of the official opposition, probably right down here somewhere, that he had to question the government of the day. It was November 30, 1994.

Just to set this up, the day that Hugh O'Neil left this earth, he was protecting Trenton Memorial Hospital in his community as part of a rally that was going on there. Keep this in mind as you listen to his last question to a minister, on November 30, 1994.

Mr. Hugh O'Neil from Quinte in Hansard: “My question today is for the Minister of Health. Minister, back in June of this year, approximately 500 people travelled to Queen's Park from the Trenton area to voice their concerns about the future of the Trenton Memorial Hospital and to ask for your help. At that time we came away feeling hopeful that you would make things happen. It is now the end of November, and we still have not heard from you....

“Based on reports from the fire department, the city's building department, architects and unions, Trenton Memorial Hospital is in critical condition and the health and safety of staff and patients are at risk as a result. Minister, I ask you to address these matters immediately. What do you intend to do?”

Until his final day, Hugh O'Neil was standing up for his community, and that's why he will forever be known as Mr. Quinte. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member for Prince Edward–Hastings.

Further tribute?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** It is my privilege to rise in this Legislature to pay tribute to Hugh O'Neil. I would like to echo the welcome of my colleague to Hugh's family and friends who are filling the galleries here today. Welcome, of course, to his wife, Donna; his daughter, Cathy; his son, David, and wife, Teresa. I am sure that Michelle, Marleigh, Makenna and Liam would be very impressed to see where their grandfather worked for 20 years, representing Quinte communities from 1975 to 1995.

It is my honour, as a newer member in this Legislature, to both pay tribute and to share with my colleagues and the people of Ontario a bit more about a man who truly knew what political service meant. The word “political” is often used to describe behaviour that is seen as perhaps less than favourable. But in many cases—and, I would like to think, the majority—the pursuit of political life is not about personal gain. It comes from the noble desire to serve our communities and is driven by an effort to do our small part to leave our respective corners of the world better than we found them. For the best of us, politics isn't driven by selfishness, but by selflessness and a sense of responsibility to our neighbours.

Taking a look at the life of Hugh O'Neil, it is clear that his kind of politics was the best kind: one that seeks to give back to a community that he was proud to call home, one he was committed to doing all that he could for to make it the best that it could be. To Hugh, community service wasn't a job or a hobby; it was a calling. It was a way of life. Whether it was in an official capacity, such as his 20-year tenure here as MPP, or through one of his many volunteer and community service roles over the years, he dedicated himself to the betterment of Trenton, Belleville and the surrounding Quinte region, which, I might add, is a beautiful region. And it would seem richer for his involvement.

**1050**

Hugh was active in local clubs, boards and organizations, ranging, as we've heard, from the Quinte Ballet School to the Ontario Trillium Foundation to the Royal Canadian Legion. He had been awarded the Canadian Forces Medallion for Distinguished Service, which is the Canadian military's highest level of recognition for a civilian. Hugh clearly was a man who saw opportunities everywhere around him to be engaged with people and to be a part of strengthening the community around him.

In preparation for today's tribute, it became clear that his dedication to his community and his genuine and

caring approach bridged all kinds of gaps, be they partisan—forging lasting friendships with political adversaries—or generational, as witnessed by his work as a teacher, as an educator, as a principal, and the way he embraced his role as a father and a grandfather.

Today, we see that the galleries are full of people from across communities who have come to pay their respects to a great politician and, as history will attest, an even better man. To his family and friends who have made the trip to Queen's Park for this occasion, we thank you for sharing Hugh with this Legislature and for sharing him with the community.

As legislators, we sit in seats that have been filled by leaders and trailblazers. Hugh was someone who widened those trails for us. His caring, commitment and belief in education, service and community broadened the roads for us in this Legislature and, across his riding, for the people of Quinte region.

When it comes to legacies, it is clear that Hugh O'Neil has left the best kind. His is a legacy of true service and commitment. Thank you, Hugh, for your lifetime of service to the people of Quinte and Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member from Oshawa. The member from Northumberland—Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Speaker, Donna, David, Cathy, family and friends of Hugh O'Neil—by the sheer numbers here today, I'm not sure who's left at home minding the place, but thank you for being here.

It is truly a bittersweet occasion for me that I have the opportunity to stand in this place, in this chamber, where our friend and former colleague the honourable Hugh O'Neil served the people of Quinte, and indeed Ontario, with distinction and honour, and to be able to speak of his legacy with a tribute to almost 20 years in public life.

I would speak to Hugh on a regular basis. Sometimes it wasn't by my own choice. Normally, I used to call him for some advice on issues facing not just the Quinte region but eastern Ontario and Ontario. He called me just as often, usually with a phrase when I picked up the phone: "What the heck are you doing, Rinaldi?" He set me straight pretty quick; he didn't hold back. He was a huge advocate for his community, something I strive to live up to each and every day.

I remember it vividly: It was on a Monday evening that Hugh had called me. Somehow, I didn't get his call, and I returned his call around 9 o'clock or 10 o'clock that night. Yes, he wanted to talk to me about Trenton Memorial Hospital. I believe I was the last person to speak to Hugh besides Donna on that evening. I went to sleep that evening after spending, I would say, about an hour with Hugh—Donna, if I remember correctly—and I was just heading to the office the next morning when I got a phone call from the local media asking me for a comment on the death of Hugh O'Neil. I was shocked. It was about 7 o'clock that morning. I really thought it was some sort of a prank and I didn't take very lightly to that reporter—definitely not a funny one. I asked the reporter if he had his facts correct because I had just talked to Hugh just a few hours prior.

Hugh began his career as an educator, as you heard. He spent time working in real estate and was an active member of the Kiwanis Club of Trenton, an honourable member of the Royal Canadian Legion, an honourable member of the Lions Club, an honourable member of the Kinsmen Club and member of the Knights of Columbus.

His political career began in 1975, winning the Quinte seat as a Liberal MPP—and frankly, his friends or supporters kept on telling him that he was crazy, that it would never happen. But it happened, Speaker. Hugh spent the next 20 years—six terms, from the 30th to the 35th Parliament—representing his constituents of Quinte and really all of Ontario while sitting on many standing committees, serving on cabinet as Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology; Minister of Tourism and Recreation; Minister of Culture and Communications, and as Minister of Mines.

In 1979, he held the government of the day accountable for the needs for pension reform—you hear that? Pension reform—and gender equality for pay in the workforce. He understood that people should be able to afford to retire after working their whole life, and guess what? After 37 years, we're having the same debate today.

I remember Hugh sharing with me one of his greatest memories, of which there are many, from his time in office as Minister of Tourism and Recreation. We had the opportunity to travel to Seoul, South Korea to cheer on 169 Ontario athletes who were part of the Canadian team. He beamed with pride as he spoke of getting to watch Lennox Lewis be the first Canadian boxer to win gold in the super-heavyweight category, and many other moments as well. When he returned home, he addressed the Legislature and recounted that experience of being in Seoul with the athletes to celebrate while they were playing O Canada.

During his time in office he had the distinct pleasure, as we do today, to serve alongside long-time actively serving members, like the members from St. Catharines, York Centre, Ottawa West—Nepean, Wellington—Halton Hills, Timmins—James Bay and Simcoe—Grey. I'm sure that you will have lots of memories of Hugh. Hugh's most admirable asset was that, like every successful politician, he was able to work collaboratively with members of all political stripes for the betterment of his community, including when he worked with the opposition government to rehabilitate Highway 33 just north of Trenton.

Since his retirement in 1995, Hugh continued his hard work for the community. Supporting his passion for the arts, he served on the Ontario Arts Council and the Ontario Arts Foundation. Now each year, the Quinte Arts Council awards two Hugh P. O'Neil Student Arts Bursaries, one each for the public and Catholic school boards serving the Quinte region. He also proudly served as vice-chairman of the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

In 2013, Hugh and the former mayor of Quinte West, John Williams, who is here with us today, were recognized by the Canadian Forces and awarded the Can-

adian Forces Medallion for Distinguished Service. The medallion is the military's highest level of recognition for civil service and was awarded for their involvement in spearheading the Afghanistan Repatriation Memorial.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, life is short. We need to remember to embrace the good times and special people in our lives. Hugh was one of those special persons. He was my friend, my mentor, someone whom I admired immensely and held in the highest esteem. Hugh loved his community, but he loved his family even more. Donna was the love of his life and sometimes I think she was the MPP, Speaker. He was extremely proud of David and Catherine, and valued above all else the time he spent with his grandkids—and he talked about that.

So Speaker, on behalf of all of us here today, I would like to thank Donna and his family for sharing Hugh with us, not only for the Quinte region but for all of Ontario. The province and the Quinte region are better places to be today because of Hugh.

Speaker, I'm going to take the indulgence, and I know I'm probably going to break some rules, but I hope that you give me some leeway—same with the Sergeant-at-Arms. I want to propose a toast to Hugh O'Neil. His most favourite drink: a glass of ice, Speaker. I know you're not looking. Hugh, this is for you. Cheers.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their heartfelt and genuine comments.

As is now our tradition, a DVD and a copy of Hansard will be provided to the family as a sign of our affection and our respect for Hugh and his commitment to the province of Ontario. Thank you for being with us. If you want to stay for question period, be my guests.

The member from Northumberland–Quinte West, you and I will have a talk outside.

It is now time for question period.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Premier. The people of Whitby–Oshawa sent this government a very clear message: They are tired of the cost of keeping their lights on. The people of Whitby–Oshawa don't support this Hydro One fire sale. I heard those messages at almost every door I knocked on.

It continues to be a disgrace that this Premier ignores families across the province. Whitby–Oshawa told the Premier that life is harder under the Liberals because of their hydro policies, but she won't listen.

Why is the Premier continuing with the Hydro One fire sale despite a very clear signal from across the province and in Whitby–Oshawa that you're offside with the residents of this province?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Leader of the Opposition is very aware that the building of infra-

structure in this part of the province—in fact, across the province—is of critical concern to every community. If the Leader of the Opposition had the opportunity to speak with mayors across the province, including in the GTHA, he would know that infrastructure is number one on the list. In terms of roads and bridges, transit and transit expansion, those are critical investments that must be made now.

I think that the Leader of the Opposition is also aware that in order to do that there must be funding. So the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One, which is a proposal that in the past the Conservatives might have supported, is part of the plan to build that very, very necessary infrastructure.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Premier: Quit the spin. You're talking to mayors? Over 200 municipalities have passed resolutions saying they're against the Hydro One fire sale.

In terms of infrastructure, the infrastructure budget prior to the fire sale was \$130 billion; it's \$130 billion after. Not a single cent has been added to infrastructure.

So let's talk about the facts: The Auditor General has said that this government will overcharge the equivalent of \$450 each year for every person in Ontario. That is reflected on every bill. That's about \$40 a month per person. Mr. Speaker—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I've tried to simply ask for order. If I'm not going to get it, I'm going to the individuals and I may go to warnings. We're not starting that way.

Please finish.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** The government may trivialize this cost, but to the average family it means a lot. It could mean an extra night at a restaurant; it could mean new shoes for a child at the start of the school year.

Why has the Liberal government made it so much harder for Ontario families to pay their hydro bills? No more spin; no more excuses. Why?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think that the Leader of the Opposition knows that it is critical that we make the investments in infrastructure that municipalities across the province are crying for. They know that if they're going to be able to grow their economies, if they're going to be able to attract the jobs that they know they need, those infrastructure investments must be made.

We also know that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** My comment was meant for all members, not one side.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I understand that in order to make these investments, there are decisions that have to be made that are difficult. We understand that on this side of the House. We also understand that if we're going to grow the economy, if Ontario is going to stay a leader in economic growth and job creation in this country, we

must make those investments. That's why we've made this decision.

In terms of electricity prices, there are programs that we have put in place specifically to address the challenges of people who are on a low income. I hope the member of the—

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

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Premier: No matter how many times you say it's about infrastructure, your infrastructure budget has not changed.

Let's talk about the facts again. This is because of billions and billions of dollars' worth of your energy scandals. It's the fact that Ontario will be paying neighbouring states and provinces to take our extra energy. In just the first six months of 2015, Ontario paid \$1.1 billion to give away our energy.

Liberal waste and mismanagement are having real consequences for Ontario families and seniors. The consequences are seen every month on Ontario's hydro bills. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier finally take responsibility? Will she admit that Liberal waste and mismanagement are the only reasons we are seeing higher hydro bills?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, we will take responsibility for the investments that we are making around this province. We'll take responsibility for the LRT that's being built in Ottawa. We'll take responsibility for the four-laning of Highway 17. We'll take responsibility for the lines that are being built in municipalities across the GTHA. We will take responsibility for the support that we are giving municipalities across the province to invest in infrastructure.

That is the kind of investment that is necessary at this moment. It's necessary for long-term economic growth, but it's also necessary for job creation right now: 110,000 jobs a year, \$134 billion over 10 years to make sure that we are set, in terms of our infrastructure, to compete globally. We are not competing with other jurisdictions in Canada; we are competing with the world. In order for us to be able to do that, we need to make those investments. We're making them, and the Leader of the Opposition has no plan to make those investments.

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Start the clock.

New question.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: Since I can't get an answer on energy, I will try something else.

It has been 10 months since the Premier held her first cap-and-trade photo op. The Liberals told us that details would be coming, but no details. Since then, the Premier and her ministers have made multiple announcements that have reminded me of the movie *Groundhog Day*: the same non-announcement time and time again.

Families and businesses want to know the true cost of the cap-and-trade plan. George Smitherman, when he introduced the Green Energy Act, said that it would cost about a dollar a day. The Auditor General has since told us that it's costing people thousands of dollars every single year.

Ontarians deserves to know exactly how much this cap-and-trade proposal will cost them every year. Will the Premier finally provide details and costs?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that we have introduced a strategy. He knows that we are linking our carbon market with Quebec, with California and with Manitoba.

But I cannot imagine, in 2016, a more irresponsible position than a position taken by a politician that says, "We're not going to have a plan to address climate change. We're going to bury our head in the sand and we're going to pretend that we can continue to emit greenhouse gases and that we can do that with impunity"—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Finish, please.

1110

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that sometimes it's hard to hear the heckles.

This is about taking decisive action. We've shut down all the coal-fired plants. We're taking the next steps. The fact that the Leader of the Opposition has no plan to address climate change—

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

Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Premier: That's exactly what we're talking about: There is no plan. Everyone in Ontario is asking: Will the Premier finally introduce details to show Ontario that you have a plan? That's precisely our worry.

The government has talked about cap-and-trade since 2008—not a single detail. You've made countless announcements since last April, but no details. We have asked to see an economic analysis of cap-and-trade—nothing. We've asked for details on carbon credits—nothing. We've even asked the most basic question of what it will cost Ontario families in increased costs for food and heating. Alberta's Premier released details on the very first day they announced it, but in Ontario, nothing. Why do we get nothing from the Liberals? If you have a plan, you won't hide it.

Families need time to plan. Businesses need time to budget. Will you provide details at some point, or is this another Liberal secret that you're going to hide from the people of Ontario?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I trust that the Leader of the Opposition will read our climate change strategy that sets specific targets and demonstrates how we are going to reach that 80% below 1990 levels by 2020. The fact is that the plan is being designed, and as we come up with the design features, we put those into the public realm.

What is really important, and I think people need to understand that, is that underlying this question is an assumption that we don't need to do anything; that as a society, we can just sit back and we can continue to emit greenhouse gases; that we don't have to take responsibility for the future of our children and our grandchildren; that we don't have to do anything more than just sit back and do exactly what we've been doing for the last 40 years. Well, that's unacceptable. It's an irresponsible position.

We are tackling this head-on. We have made huge advances. We have taken the biggest strides in North America by shutting down all the coal-fired plants. We're taking the next steps. I expect them to support—

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

*Interjections.*

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

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Premier, and I will give the Premier a third opportunity: The details of the \$2-billion cap-and-trade scheme should not be hidden from the public. If this system is to be successful, there needs to be proper monitoring of emissions, credit allowances and trading procedures. The only information we have from this Premier is that they've already committed \$312 million of money that she hasn't even collected. Well, that's a good gesture. It's well short of the \$2 billion in revenue the government has predicted it will collect from this scheme.

When will the Premier tell us what she plans to do with the other \$1.7 billion from Ontario families and businesses? Why won't you just be transparent?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We are developing the plan in a responsible way. Of course there will be allowances. Of course all of those structures will be in place. We've released our climate strategy. We've made it clear what the targets are. We've made it clear how we're going to be working with Quebec, California and Manitoba. We will be putting those design features out as we develop them.

But the fact is that people in this country, in this province and around the globe are already seeing the impacts of climate change. To be in a debate with a party that has no plan, that has no idea of how they would deal with climate change—and all they can do is present a critique that is hollow at its very, very best.

The fact is, we know that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Finish, please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We know that higher food costs, extreme weather events, droughts and floods—all of those are related to climate change, and all of those increase costs for families. We're going to tackle those as a responsible member of the global community.

*Interjections.*

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

New question.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. The people of Ontario have clear priorities, like creating good jobs and protecting the health care that we rely on. People expect their Premier to share those priorities too.

But instead, the Liberals are making deep cuts to health care that we rely on—cuts that mean longer wait times for patients, fewer registered nurses in our hospitals, and less care when people need it the most.

Why does the Premier think patients should pay the price for the cuts to health care?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First, let me just say that I absolutely share the concerns of the people of Ontario in terms of the need to make sure that services like health care and education are strong. We rely on those every single day. I understand that.

Right now, we are having a real challenge as a country and, quite frankly, as a global economy, to make sure that we have good work for all of the people who live in our constituencies, for all of our residents, and to make sure that our economies grow.

The fact is that we have a plan in place that is tackling those things. That plan does not include cutting health care. That plan includes increasing our health care budget year after year, and—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Finish, please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What increased funding does not mean, Mr. Speaker, is never changing anything. It doesn't mean that. There have to be changes. We're dealing with increasing mental health challenges. We're putting more money there and more money into community care. All of those challenges are things that we are tackling head-on.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Liberals are cutting hospital budgets four years running, heading into the fifth. Mental health services are being cut in community after community. The education budget has been cut by \$250 million, and another \$250 million is on the way. Those are real cuts. I don't know what the Premier's talking about, but she's not in reality.

It is a priority for Ontarians to have a good health care system, and it is a priority for New Democrats as well, but it is not obviously a priority for this Premier. Ontarians are already waiting hundreds of days for home care.

Thousands of seniors are stuck on wait-lists for long-term care for years. And now, nearly 1,200 registered nurses have been cut from our hospitals in just over a year.

How can this Premier look Ontarians in the eye and say she's not cutting our health care system?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The fact is that the health care budget has increased year over year. It will continue to increase. The member opposite will see in the budget that there is an increase to health care.

Let's just go through the hospitals and health care centres around the province that are hiring, Mr. Speaker, that have jobs posted as we speak: the Ottawa Hospital, Hamilton Health Sciences, Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital, Royal Ottawa Health Care Group, Cambridge Memorial Hospital, Bluewater Health in Sarnia, London Health Sciences Centre, Grand River Hospital and Health Sciences North in Sudbury. Mr. Speaker, there are institutions all over this province who are hiring. They are posting jobs.

The health care budget will increase, but we are making changes. We are changing the health care system to deliver health care where people need it and when they need it. That causes some disruption in the system, but it has to—

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

Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Premier of this province should at least know what she's talking about when she talks about health care. The jobs she's talking about are casual jobs. They are unscheduled part-time jobs. Those are not real health care jobs. Nurses are not widgets in this province, Speaker.

The Liberals' freeze on hospital budgets is forcing hospitals to cut hundreds of nurses and front-line health care workers. That is the truth. You talk to any CEO in a hospital and they will tell you that that's what is happening. Next week's budget could bring even more cuts. That's what I expect to see in next week's budget.

Here's what that means to people: When a patient in Windsor or Waterloo or North Bay needs help, the nurse that they need to rely on will not be there for them. That patient will have to wait longer for care.

Why won't this Premier think about patients for a change and stop her cuts to health care?

1120

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Let me just make some comparisons, because the leader of the third party wants to talk about our record. Let's talk about their record, where the number of RNs in Ontario fell by 3,000 under the NDP government—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

They fired 3,000 RNs. We have hired more than 10,000 RNs, more than 25,000 nurses since 2003, full-time positions. The percentage of nurses working full-time under the NDP fell by 3%. The percentage of nurses

working full-time has increased under our government by 14%.

Our commitment is clear. They fired nurses. They introduced more part-time nurses. We've hired more full-time nurses to the tune of 25,000, including last year, where the complement of nurses working in our hospitals increased by more than 1,000.

## EMPLOYMENT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The patients in Ontario, I'm sure, are not impressed with that minister's response.

My next question is for the Premier. For most Ontarians, life is actually getting harder. I keep meeting families across this province who are struggling. They can't find a decent job, and more and more people are trying to survive on part-time and low-paying work, if they can find a job at all. But rather than working to make life better for families, the Liberals are too busy helping private investors turn a profit on the sell-off of Hydro One.

Why is this Premier more interested in helping her friends when she should be working for all Ontarians?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It's very interesting to me that, in one breath, the leader of the third party talks about the need for jobs, and the next thing out of her is about actually taking actions that would decrease jobs.

The fact is, the investments in infrastructure that we are making are creating 110,000 jobs a year. Those are jobs that are happening right now, never mind the jobs down the road because of the economic growth that that infrastructure will foster.

The fact is that I would expect the leader of the third party would actually be supportive of investments in infrastructure, that the leader of the third party would understand that putting people to work and providing those opportunities builds prosperity now and into the future. I would think the leader of the third party would be very supportive of the opportunities that are created by those investments, the investments that we're making in people's talent and skills, that she'd be supportive of that because that leads to economic growth now and into the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Regardless of the way the Premier decides to weave her tale, we all know that the way you build infrastructure is not by selling off Hydro One. In fact, that is the worst way to pay for infrastructure. So says the Financial Accountability Officer for this province.

The Premier should actually look at what is happening in Ontario today. Windsor has the highest unemployment rate in the entire country. Young people are struggling to find work and get a good start in their lives, and families are starting to feel like there are two different worlds here in the province of Ontario: There's a world where this Premier helps her friends get rich off the sale of our public hydro system, and there's another world where families are falling further and further behind.

People want to know: Why isn't this Premier working for them?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The world that I live in is a world where we have to make difficult decisions and we have to work on a whole number of fronts. I understand the challenges of people in Windsor, which is why we're doing everything in our power to make sure that the auto sector and the manufacturing sector have our support.

I was at a plant this morning where there's green technology that's being developed; solar panels are being developed and sold internationally. We're working to support a company like that that's going to expand. Those are the kinds of companies all across the province—whether it's in southwestern Ontario or in eastern Ontario or in northern Ontario—that we are looking to support.

The world I live in is the world where we have to make those decisions that are in the best interests of the people of this province. They're not always popular. It's difficult to make some of those decisions, Mr. Speaker, but that's actually the role of government: to make those decisions so we make the investments that are needed today and into the future. That's the work we're doing.

*Interjections.*

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

Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This Premier needs to stop kidding herself. The sell-off of Hydro One is not a difficult decision; it is the wrong decision for the people of Ontario. That's what it is, Speaker. The people of Ontario have told her that.

In fact, the people of Ontario have clear priorities. They expect their government to protect their health care system and to help create good jobs, but the Liberals just are not working for Ontarians. Rather than helping people, we see a Premier who is focused on helping private investors profit off of the sale of Hydro One. We see Liberal insiders facing criminal charges for their conduct in the Premier's office, and next week, we will see even deeper cuts to our public services, Speaker. How can this Premier be so far out of touch with the people of Ontario and their priorities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let's just look at the facts. Let's look at what is actually happening in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. Despite what the leader of the third party is saying, 2015 third-quarter results showed Ontario's real GDP has grown by 0.9%, which has outpaced both the Canadian and US economies. We've ranked first for foreign direct investment in North America for the second year in a row. Ontario was the only province in Canada to gain jobs in January. And since the recession, Ontario has created more than 600,000 jobs—608,300, to be exact. Almost 99% of those are full time. The unemployment rate of 6.7% is beating the national unemployment rate of 7.2%, and we've invested more than \$565 million in youth employment.

Mr. Speaker, we are working on every front to make sure that we create the conditions for economic growth and prosperity in this province.

## WASTE DIVERSION

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** My question is to the environment minister. Ontarians are rightly outraged with the waste and abuse of their money by the Liberals' tire tax agency, Ontario Tire Stewardship. When drivers pay an eco tax on each tire, they expect the money will go toward protecting our environment and increasing recycling. But the Toronto Star has revealed that OTS has been blowing that money on the Liberal government—Liberal golf tournaments, to be exact, lavish stays at luxury hotels, and fancy dinners of elk tenderloin and wild boar chops. There's only one way to stop this abuse of Ontarians' money, and that is to scrap the Liberals' tire tax agency.

Speaker, will the minister commit today to establish a clear legislated timeline to eliminate OTS?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, I'm so glad the Toronto Star is doing its job, because the opposition isn't. I don't know where the party opposite has been while this government has been working hard. It presented a bill last year that eliminates the tire stewardship organization over the next year. We didn't even have a question from the opposition for an entire year on this, and then they had to read the newspaper to realize the government already solved the problem.

Mr. Speaker, maybe the member opposite, who's so frustrated by the issues of donations from that, could explain why the Conservative Party not once, not twice, but three times took money from the Ontario stewardship organization.

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**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Start the clock.

Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** That has nothing to do with the question at hand. The minister has admitted—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will come to order.

Please put the question.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It is interesting that when you can't defend something, you try to deflect. So we'll go back to this question.

The minister has admitted that his eco tax programs and agencies are holding the province back from achieving a higher rate of waste diversion. Last November, the minister's office actually told the Toronto Star that to move forward with reform, Bill 151 would scrap eco tax agencies like OTS. Unfortunately, when reading Bill 151, it's clear there are no guarantees that this will actually

happen. This oversight proves, yet again, that this government just can't get anything right.

Will the minister commit to closing this loophole and establish a clear, legislated timeline to eliminate all eco tax programs?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** There are no eco tax programs. They are all being eliminated. We've already done that. It's clear that the opposition party doesn't read the climate strategy. It clearly—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Finish, please.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** It's very clear that the opposition doesn't read the climate strategy. It doesn't read Bill 151, which very clearly outlines a schedule over the next five years for an orderly transition. Thank God they read the Toronto Star, because that seems to be the only journal of record.

They complain about donations from Ontario stewardship, but their bagmen are running over there to collect the money. It's a little bit of a moral conundrum they've gotten themselves into, Mr. Speaker. That's not deflection; that's painting yourself into a corner. But that sort of is the problem—

*Interjection.*

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

New question.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question to the Premier: When the government set up a website to ask Ontarians for budget ideas, the second most popular idea was to stop the sale of Hydro One. People of Ontario know that the Hydro One fire sale will drive up their electricity costs while costing the public hundreds of millions of dollars a year in stable, long-term revenue. The Premier desperately wants to distract the people of Ontario from the sale of Hydro One, but beer and wine announcements don't seem to be doing the job anymore.

Is the government ignoring the people who spoke at budget hearings, disrespecting this Legislature and rushing ahead with early budgets just so it can change the channel on Hydro One?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I know the member from Toronto–Danforth has been in this place for quite a long time, but he keeps promulgating myth after myth after myth. Speaker, he's the most myth-taken man in the Legislature—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's too close. I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

He should get his facts straight; okay? First of all, in terms of Hydro One, \$5 billion will go to paying down debt; \$4 billion will be invested in infrastructure. That will not come from taxes. It will not come from increasing our debt, and it will not come from cuts. It is responsible fiscal management. It's repurposing our assets in order that we can provide more services and

more economic development for the people in the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Ontarians know that the sale of Hydro One is not about them or their interests. They know it's about the interests of the Liberal Party and their Bay Street friends. The sale of Hydro One shows a government that can't think beyond the next election while it ignores the long-term interests of Ontario families.

Will the government finally put the interests of Ontario families ahead of the interests of the Liberal Party and stop the sale of Hydro One?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** The premise of the question is that electricity rates are going to be going up in Ontario. They've been saying that across the province over and over again. They know that the Ontario Energy Board is the independent regulator that controls prices. They've done it before the broadening of ownership from Hydro One; they're doing it afterwards.

As a matter of fact, legislation that we've passed in this Legislature is strengthening the role of the Ontario Energy Board so that if any utility, including Hydro One, is not abiding by the rules, they're subject to a fine of \$1 million a day on the order of the Ontario Energy Board.

There's stronger regulation, the people of Ontario are better protected and Hydro One will not be able to raise its own rates.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. John Fraser:** Ma question est pour le ministre des Finances. Minister, I know that recently you provided an update to the people of Ontario through the 2015 fall economic statement. In the update, you talked about our government's work and plans to continue creating jobs and growing our economy. Most recently, we heard that since 2009 Ontario has created over 608,300 jobs.

Minister, like many Ontarians, residents of Ottawa South would like to hear more about our government's plan. Could you please tell us when the next update on our progress will be?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I thank the member from Ottawa South for the question. Over the last few months, our government has collected over 2,700 ideas and pre-budget submissions. We've heard from Ontarians through in-person meetings, online with Budget Talks, in writing and via telephone town halls. In total, there were 20 in-person consultations in 13 cities where we heard from over 700 people.

What we heard consistently is that people want to get to and from work more quickly and spend more time with their families. They want to know that they have secure retirement, and they want a government that will invest in the people of this province while remaining fiscally responsible. That is what we will do in the 2016 budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Fraser:** I thank the minister for that update. I had the opportunity as well to participate in a tele-town

hall with a number of my caucus colleagues from Ottawa where we spoke with thousands of residents in Ottawa. We, too, heard the same thing: that people want a government that they can count on to make their lives easier, one that focuses on the things that are important to them and their families.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can the minister please let us know what our government's plans are to do just that, and when?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** It's a good question, Mr. Speaker. I again thank the member from Ottawa South for the question.

Next week, we will be providing an update to Ontarians on how we will continue to create jobs, grow the economy, invest in our young people, combat climate change and build key infrastructure.

As a government, we are focused on working together for the people of Ontario. With the upcoming budget, we will provide a positive plan to do just that.

I look forward to presenting Ontario's 2016 budget in this very House on February 25.

#### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Connect for Mental Health, an inexpensive program proven to help psychiatric patients leave hospitals and successfully reintegrate into communities, has been dropped in London. The \$106,000 program saved London hospitals roughly \$2.9 million a year and provided an overlap of hospital and community care during discharge.

Unfortunately, due to this government's health care cuts, scandals and the freezing of the hospital budgets for the last four years, this program that saves health care dollars cannot be funded. Due to the financial mismanagement of the scandals of this government, health care services are being crowded out.

Mr. Speaker, how long will Ontarians suffer due to this government's incompetence?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the question. Certainly the provision of strong, high-quality mental health services in the London area is extremely important to this government. In fact, not very long ago, I was proud to announce, with the president of the Treasury Board, a new commitment of \$1.2 million in London toward a brand new mental health and addictions crisis centre in that city that will provide crisis intervention for adults aged 16 and up.

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This is such an important addition being run by the Canadian Mental Health Association Middlesex, as well as the Addiction Services of Thames Valley. They will work collaboratively, of course, with all of the health care providers within the community providing that crisis assessment, stabilization beds and longer-term community supports.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Back to the Minister of Health: Minister, that program that you could operate could fund two crisis centres with that money saved. Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that this program is now getting lost in their own government's bureaucracy. Results from this program were released last year and found improvement in the quality of life for mental health patients and a savings of \$2.9 million.

The South West LHIN has decided to work on developing a strategy for regional mental health, but that's expected to take up to 18 months to complete. The mental health and addictions advisory council that you mentioned has struck a working group to review this with no timeline. In the meantime, this program is going to be lost in London.

The minister knows that this program has already been studied. The evidence shows that it works, saves money and provides a better life for mental health patients. Will the minister show some compassion and save the program from the bureaucracy that this government has created?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I know that the member opposite, because he has alluded to the review that the LHIN is undertaking now for those important community supports, supports that review. It's important that we continue to develop strong, coordinated collaborative programs.

I'm happy to announce that this morning I instructed my ministry to ensure that interim funding is made available to this organization while this important review is ongoing. It's good news for London. It's important that in this review period, as we develop a comprehensive approach to mental health services in the London area, this program is allowed to continue.

#### ONTARIO ANTI-RACISM DIRECTORATE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the government announced the creation of an Anti-Racism Directorate. It only took 10 years, but here it is now.

Community groups worked hard to make this happen, and our leader and our members have. We'll continue to champion an Ontario where no one is left behind and everyone can share in the opportunities that we create. But to make a change a reality, there must be a real commitment. There needs to be proper funding and staffing, and a clear mandate for this directorate. Premier, when will the government commit to attaching real numbers to the Anti-Racism Directorate in next week's budget?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I just want to start by saying what an honour it is to take on this new responsibility. You can talk to any member in our caucus and you'll know that, when it comes to racism, it's an issue that we all take very seriously.

Over the last four years as an MPP, I have met with groups like Colour of Poverty, CASSA and the African

Canadian Legal Clinic—many different groups—to talk about these issues. I know many members on this side of the Legislature have as well. We're looking for ways to build the right type of mandate that's reflective of what community members see as important, but also what the people of Ontario and people in our Legislature think is important.

We made the announcement yesterday. Give me a couple of weeks, at least, to come back. We'll come back with a plan, and I think people will be quite happy with it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Racism continues to be a persistent reality for many Ontarians. Thousands have joined the NDP's call to take action against racism and build a more inclusive Ontario. Yesterday's announcement was an important step forward in addressing systemic racism in the province. Now the government must take one step further and make a firm commitment to the directorate. Premier, what can Ontarians expect to see in next week's budget?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I want to thank the member opposite and the members in the Legislature for supporting this Anti-Racism Directorate. We know it's the right direction for Ontario.

I've been elected, as a trustee and as an MPP, for almost 13 years now. At the Toronto District School Board, we worked on issues. I know the Premier was at the school board and worked on equity. As the former Minister of Education, she brought forward the first equity policy for the Ministry of Education.

This is something that's embedded deep in the heart of our party. It's embedded deep in the heart of the Liberal mantra. It is something we want to continue to build upon.

I want to thank the NDP for supporting this proposal and this idea that we brought forward as a government. Thank you very much.

#### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. In Friday's *Globe and Mail* newspaper, the public read that our government will be bringing forward a provincial strategy on human trafficking, and that's going to happen in June of this year.

As we've seen in media reports in recent months, human trafficking is a devastating issue that has long-lasting sociological and psychological impacts on survivors. It overwhelmingly targets young women and girls, and in particular those in indigenous communities. Our minister responsible for women's issues and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services are both showing very strong leadership on this issue.

Could the minister please update this House on the steps that she is taking to address this very serious issue of human trafficking in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for this very important question

and for her work on the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment.

She's absolutely right: Human trafficking is a very serious issue that we're working very hard on. I'm very pleased to be co-chairing our government's work on this with the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

In fact, this morning, I was privileged to attend one of our government's consultations on this issue. The chair of our permanent Roundtable on Violence Against Women helped us convene this meeting this morning with experts who provide supports to survivors of human trafficking. They're helping us to design a strategy. They'll be responsive to the needs of survivors.

This meeting this morning is just a first step in a broader process to develop our strategy and to ensure we hear from all the relevant voices. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is holding a meeting this afternoon with enforcement experts. Working together, we can ensure that the strategy is survivor-focused.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for her answer. As you heard, I chaired the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. We heard many first-hand stories on human trafficking. You come to understand how important it is that our government does take action—strong action—to end human trafficking in Ontario.

It's very encouraging to hear that the strategy is going to focus on being responsive to the needs of survivors. The insight that they share, including the information that we heard at this morning's consultation, is going to play a very important part in forming our provincial strategy. However, it's also vital that Ontario's police services play a central role in coordinating our efforts to end human trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please tell this Legislature what steps are being taken to involve law enforcement in ending this terrible practice?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Our Premier and we all have made it very clear that human trafficking is absolutely deplorable, and our government will do whatever it takes to combat and eliminate this heinous act.

A key part of moving forward is further improving coordination of information and resources between local authorities, like our police services, government and community organizations.

That is why we have brought together experts from the front lines, including from the enforcement community, to advise us on how we can move forward. Their advice will help build on the important work already happening, from an enforcement perspective.

The Ontario Provincial Police already play a provincial coordination role for investigative and intelligence operations against human trafficking. Through Operation Northern Spotlight, which involved 29 police services

from across the country, 18 survivors were rescued, nine traffickers were arrested and 33 charges were laid.

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### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is to the Premier. More bad news on the energy file: Earlier this week it was revealed in the Globe and Mail that Windstream Energy is asking for damages of up to \$568 million because your government abruptly put a moratorium on offshore wind developments. We told the government it was wrong to approve turbines in the Great Lakes. They went ahead and signed agreements anyway. Then they abruptly reneged on those deals because it was politically convenient, and now taxpayers are on the hook. Sadly, we've seen this sort of behaviour before. When this government cancelled the gas plants for political convenience, it cost the taxpayers over \$1 billion.

Can the Premier explain why we're going down this road once again and why her government just can't get anything right?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know the Minister of Energy is going to want to comment on this, but I can't resist saying to the member opposite that their position was that we put a moratorium on all wind turbines, that we put a moratorium on all renewable power. You actually can't have it both ways. There are contracts in place. We made a decision based on environmental concerns—

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Take the ones out of the Collingwood airport, if you like.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Simcoe-Grey.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We made a decision on environmental concerns. Offshore wind in fresh water is in the early stages of development. We thought that it was responsible to get more information about the impacts of the offshore wind. The Minister of the Environment is researching to ensure that a decision is made in the best interests of Ontarians.

As I say, you can't have it both ways. You can't say, "Do a moratorium on everything," and then complain that there was a moratorium put on this particular aspect.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Wow. Talk about wanting to have it both ways. First, you sign deals with companies to build turbines in the Great Lakes, and when it's politically bad for you, then you cancel them. That's why we're on the hook for this kind of money. It's clear that this government can't get anything right. When the truth finally comes out in the end, it always turns out to be wrong for the taxpayers in this province and they're the ones holding the bag.

Remember when cancelling the gas plants was going to cost \$40 million? Remember when smart meters were going to save people money? Windstream is not the only company suing your government. T. Boone Pickens's

case is still before NAFTA. Will ratepayers have to pay \$700 million in that settlement as well? Then there's the Trillium Power Wind Corp. lawsuit that is ongoing because this government once again deleted emails and destroyed evidence.

We know the cancelled gas plants cost over \$1 billion. Will the Premier admit that the taxpayers may be on the hook for another \$1 billion in another one of her energy fiascos?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** As the member knows, this matter is effectively before the courts and we can't make a particular decision. Canada, representing Ontario, has presented a detailed counter-position, which is a public document, and the process will take its usual route.

The member opposite is assuming that the case has been lost. When the case has been determined, I'd be happy to answer the premise of his question.

### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. All Ontarians deserve to retire with dignity. Unfortunately, this government doesn't seem to understand what constitutes "all Ontarians."

Since the day the ORPP was introduced, this government has looked for ways to exclude people. First, they have slowly but surely decreased the number of eligible people, and now they're just delaying the plan entirely. We want the strongest plan for the most people and this government wants the most watered-down plan for the fewest. Pension plans are made stronger with more people participating, but the government is scaling back this plan by the minute.

Will the minister please explain why every announcement they have made about the ORPP includes new exclusions, new delays and less retirement security for Ontarians?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The Associate Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** I want to thank the member opposite for this question. Indeed, it is very timely.

We are very committed to ensuring that when Ontarians retire, they can do so with dignity. In fact, it's our government's leadership that has moved forward to raise the issue of retirement security in this province. We have committed that by 2020, every working Ontarian will be part of a pension plan, either the ORPP or a comparable pension plan.

Just yesterday, in fact, we announced a commitment from the federal government to work with Ontario on the administration to ensure that we're working on efficiently implementing this plan in the best possible way. We are taking action on ensuring that Ontarians can retire with dignity.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Less than a month ago, the finance minister said Ontarians “can’t wait any longer” for increased retirement security. But now he seems to think that people can wait an extra year while they focus on a dynamic business environment.

The Premier and her government have grown out of touch with the priorities of Ontarians. These aren’t small businesses or mom-and-pop shops that they’re delaying this for; they are the largest corporations in our province.

Why has the minister put the interests of big corporations ahead of the interests of the people of this province?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** I just believe that the member opposite has it wrong. We are listening to businesses because it’s important that we implement this plan in a responsible way. We are ensuring that in 2017 we enrol members of the plan, and contributions will begin in 2018.

I’m a little surprised at the member opposite’s question. It was actually her party that said that we should wait and do nothing and wait for a federal government to respond to the issues of retirement security in this province.

We cannot afford to wait because we know that two thirds of Ontarians have no pension plan and they need to ensure that when they retire they can do so with dignity and with adequate income.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Last Friday, the President of the Treasury Board, along with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, announced that our government has committed to another—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Who to, please?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** My apologies—the minister of the treasury.

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

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** —has committed to another new initiative as part of Ontario’s Green Investment Fund. Introduced in the fall economic statement, the fund is a \$325-million down payment on the province’s cap-and-trade program that will strengthen the economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Building on previous investments through the fund, which include retrofits for homeowners and electric vehicle charging stations, this new project continues with the fund’s objective to direct money to efforts dedicated to fighting climate change, while also creating jobs in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the President of the Treasury Board explain what this new initiative is and how it addresses both climate change and job creation priorities?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member from Kingston and the Islands.

I was very happy last week, with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, to make an announcement that I think every member of this House will be

very happy to hear about. We are continuing to put our climate change strategy into action, and last week we announced \$92 million from the Green Investment Fund into social housing retrofits that improve energy efficiency.

This is a triple win: It creates jobs for people installing energy-efficient boilers, windows, lighting and insulation; it also reduces the costs of heating and lighting and operating social housing; and, of course, it reduces our GHG emissions. This is part of our plan for securing a healthy, clean, prosperous, low-carbon future, while ensuring strong and sustainable communities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** This question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I’m pleased to hear about our government’s continued commitment to invest in climate-change-fighting projects like the recently announced retrofit program for homeowners, another Green Investment Fund initiative.

This program also recognizes the important role buildings can play in reducing energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions. Retrofitting older buildings is an important way of ensuring Ontario has housing units ready to face the climate challenges of today and tomorrow. Both programs also create jobs, and yet targeting this investment in retrofits of social housing is a different focus.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister tell this House why our government is supporting energy efficiency in social housing buildings in particular?

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**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Thank you very much for the question. Many of the high-rise social housing towers that were built in the 1960s and 1970s had very different requirements under the building code. These buildings have now reached an age when major systems need replacing, and this, of course—the announcement—provides an excellent opportunity to provide energy efficiency. Retrofits create significant energy savings which will be felt by social housing providers and will reduce their energy bills. This will allow them to direct funds to other priorities such as further upgrades.

Individuals who live in single-unit housing quite often have to pay their own utility bills, and this is going to help those who most need assistance with social housing. I’m proud to be part of a government that recognizes that.

#### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. Yesterday, the Minister of Finance announced that the Ontario pension plan would be delayed a year because the delay will allow us to “look at ways to meet the goals” of the Ontario pension within an enhanced Canada pension framework. Yet in November, you said, “Our Premier has been very, very clear that we are moving forward with the implementation of the ORPP” in January 2017.

Minister, why can you get the Prime Minister to join you in Whitby–Oshawa for a partisan campaign rally, but you can't get him to enhance the Canada pension so you can drop this plan and protect Ontario jobs?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Associate Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** I really want to thank the member opposite for this question. We are absolutely committed to our goal of implementing the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. The announcement that was made yesterday simply outlines the fact that we are working co-operatively with the federal government to ensure that we implement the best plan possible for the people of this province. At the same time, we remain committed to a national solution, should that emerge.

The member opposite should know that the Prime Minister alone cannot enhance CPP; he has to work with the provinces. In fact, he needs the co-operation of seven out of 10 provinces and two thirds of the population here in Canada.

We want to ensure that when people retire in this province, they have retirement security. That's why we're moving ahead with the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and taking that leadership forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Again to the associate minister: We all want Ontarians to have a secure and stable retirement. Yesterday, the Minister of Finance tried to assure us that the Ontario pension will be run at arm's length and can invest in whatever project is best. But then he changed his mind and said that pensions are "pools of capital," and gave two examples of the type of investments he would like to see. But, Mr. Speaker, pension plans should be for pensioners.

Minister, is this delay to the ORPP just another example of your government's failure to get things right?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** Mr. Speaker, our announcement yesterday is a clear indication that we're listening. We're listening to the needs of Ontarians, including business, who have asked us for the additional time so that they can ensure that their systems are ready and that they can comply with the expectations of the ORPP.

The assertion that the member opposite is making with regard to the purpose of a pension plan: A plan is there for the benefit of the members. That's enshrined in our legislation. It is arm's length from the government of Ontario. The funds collected will be for the benefit of the members of the plan and will not form part of government's consolidated revenue. That is part of the legislation. We're ensuring that there is a professional arm's-length body that will administer this plan and ensure that the benefits will be for the members of the plan. That's what we're doing. So we are taking leadership on this side of the House to ensure that when people retire, they can do so with dignity.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Finance on a point of order.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, I beg your indulgence. I'd like to introduce the newest member to the Ministry of Finance, the new director of communications for the Ministry of Finance, Monsieur Fabrice de Dongo. Welcome to the Legislature and welcome to your new job.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

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

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'd like to correct my record. Earlier, I said that the number of nurses working full-time under the NDP fell by 3%, or approximately 4,000 fewer full-time nurses, while the number of nurses working full-time under the Liberal government rose by 14%. Mr. Speaker, I was wrong. Under our government—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** This is unbelievable. For somebody to stand on a point of order and be heckled—please, that's not acceptable.

Please finish your correction.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I had said that, under our government, the number of nurses working full-time rose by 14%. I was wrong. In fact, under our government the number of nurses working full-time increased not by 14% but by nearly 30%.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of the Environment and Climate Change on a point of order.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I would just like to welcome the people from the ports authorities here today. They do great work in many of our communities. They have a reception later. I hope we'll all join them later this afternoon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from York–Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Mr. Speaker, I ask for your indulgence. I was unable to announce the page for York–Simcoe earlier today. I would like us to recognize Jessie Popowich.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1206 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I believe the members from the Association of Canadian Port Authorities are on their way in, so I just wanted to introduce them. They were here this morning. From Oshawa port, we have Donna Taylor and Aleks Bolotenko. From Hamilton port, we have Bruce Wood and Ian Hamilton. From Thunder Bay, we've got Tim Heney and Chris Heikkinen. From Windsor, we have Peter Berry, and from Toronto, Angus Armstrong. We also have Wendy Zatylny from the Association of Canadian Port Authorities. They'll be

hosting a reception this evening, starting at 5 o'clock. All are welcome and I hope to see you there. Welcome to our guests when they come in.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I believe members of the Council of Ontario Universities are with us this afternoon as well. I just want to welcome them to the Ontario Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you and welcome.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** At the pre-budget consultations in recent weeks, one thing became painfully clear. This government's policies and decisions are hurting Ontarians. A deliberate choice has been made to cut health care and lay off nurses by the hundreds. As a result, all three parties heard stories about patients collapsing on their front steps after being discharged from care too early. At the hearings, it's worth noting that 30 times violence was referred to, mostly in connection to health care and corrections workers.

At North Bay Regional Health Centre, this government has cut 350 front-line health care workers, including 100 nurses. One nurse was recently fired after the violence issue was addressed publicly. I spoke at a rally in front of my office last week and pledged to bring this issue to Queen's Park. I ask the government today to expedite the review of her grievance.

The Premier, meanwhile, needs to realize that many of these professionals subject to workplace violence are women—yet the cuts continue. This is happening today in Kathleen Wynne's Ontario because the government can't manage our finances and spends on self-interest. These health care cuts must stop.

### POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** When Constable Garda took his own life and made front page news in the Star, this was hardly an isolated incident. Since January 1, 10 first responders with PTSD have committed suicide. This is under the direct watch of this government, which has had a bill before it for seven years, Mr. Speaker—seven years, four tablings and one second reading in 2014. All this government had to do was take that bill to committee. If they had wanted to amend it, they could have. Quite frankly, if this government does not see post-traumatic stress disorder for first responders as a workplace injury, how then can they be expected to be taken seriously by employers, by the public, by anyone else?

The first aspect of prevention is to recognize the disease as such. This is a disorder. It takes the lives of tens—almost a hundred, actually, in the last three years, and it affects thousands. It can be prevented, but sometimes it won't be prevented. We know this from our

military, and now we know it from those who run into trauma when we run out.

Mr. Speaker, I ask—in fact, I plead and implore, on behalf of tens of thousands of first responders in this province, that this government act directly to make post-traumatic stress disorder a workplace injury. It was promised in November. Now it's being promised in February. We say, do it now.

### FAMILY DAY WALKATHON

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** On Family Day, our Mississauga Muslim community held its fifth Family Day Walkathon. Past walkathons have supported our Trillium Health Partners Foundation. This year, proceeds from the donations made to the Islamic Circle of North America, or ICNA, were dedicated to helping settle a group of Syrian families.

Some years ago, a group of leaders from ICNA set out to contribute to the broader Mississauga community. I introduced them to the leaders of our hospital's foundation. Our Muslim community set itself a goal of raising a quarter of a million dollars to assist the hospital within five years. They exceeded that fundraising goal ahead of schedule, not uncommon in Mississauga.

It is not hard to put together a group to walk for charity in the good weather. Our Muslim community picked the winter's coldest weekend for an outdoor event and still attracted hundreds of people.

Thanks to organizer Arif Jahangiri, all the many volunteers and all our neighbours for their work and their donations.

Mississauga is doing for new Canadians of Syrian origin what former generations of Canadians did for newcomers of Scottish, Irish, Chinese, Sikh, German, Italian, Greek, Hungarian and Vietnamese origins, and so many others as well. It's not just the right thing to do. It's the Canadian thing to do.

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Today I rise to recognize February as Black History Month. Black History Month is a special occasion for all of us to show our appreciation for the many achievements of people of African heritage in Ontario. As you know, my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound commemorates black history with Emancipation Day, which we celebrate every August 1 in Owen Sound, and have done so since 1862, making it the longest-running event on this continent.

Owen Sound was the northernmost refuge for the slaves fleeing from the southern states. The village of Sydenham was the last terminal of the railroad and many escaped slaves settled here, finding work and raising families.

Emancipation festival organizer Blaine Courtney and the festival's heritage interpretation coordinator and Grey Roots manager, Petal Furness, are busy working on the 2016 festival in an effort to continue to commemorate the abolition of slavery and to celebrate those individuals and

groups who made the Underground Railroad journey possible.

Yesterday I had the pleasure of joining my colleague and Wellington–Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott to watch the proclamation of the Black History Month Act at Queen's Park. As you know, the Wellington–Halton Hills member was instrumental in helping to pass a bill to recognize January 21 as Lincoln Alexander Day in Ontario, in honour of Alexander, who was first elected to the House of Commons as a Progressive Conservative in 1968, becoming Canada's first black member of Parliament in Ottawa, and Canada's first black federal cabinet minister in 1979.

Just earlier this month, our party leader and my caucus colleagues hosted a very successful reception here at Queen's Park to kick off our Black History Month recognition.

I'd encourage all members and their families to visit Owen Sound on Emancipation Day, to visit our black history cairn built 10 years ago, after councillor Peter Lemon and Bonita Johnson-de Matteis, a local artist, author and descendant of an escaped slave, partnered up with several organizations to help commemorate early black settlers—

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

#### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Ontarians were excited to hear about this government's prioritization of transportation infrastructure. Northerners in particular listened with keen interest, as small northern communities grapple with hundreds of millions of dollars of road, bridge and other infrastructure renewal; gridlock, which in the north means closed or impassable highways without alternate routes; and the lack of public transportation both within and between our communities.

Simply put, getting around in the north is time consuming, difficult and expensive, which is why northerners were looking forward to the badly needed transportation infrastructure promised by this government. But it seems that the north has been left out of the Premier's plans.

Instead, we've seen a set of double standards, delayed funds, inaction and mismanagement when it comes to the very basic infrastructure in the north. The reality in the north is that this government promised to fund programs such as Connecting Link and the Small Communities Fund but has failed to deliver.

Intercommunity transportation is government-funded and tax-exempt in the south but, in the case of the Northlander, is taxed and expected to be self-sustaining in the northeast, and non-existent in the northwest.

Travelling our roads in winter is a crapshoot because of shoddy highway maintenance, and the government knows this because Ontarians, MPPs and the Auditor General have been saying so for years, and yet this government has still not addressed the problem.

In this government's last budget, we saw a plan to defer investment in transportation infrastructure in the

north. Will we see a firm commitment to the north this year?

**1510**

#### COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

**Mr. Han Dong:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge an important organization in Trinity–Spadina and in Ontario: the Council of Ontario Universities and their team of university researchers. The research teams here today are part of a larger initiative entitled Research Matters, which is finding new ways to better the lives of every Ontarian.

University researchers work behind the scenes, steadily progressing towards ambitious new ideas that improve public policy and private practice; advance technology; foster a healthier, happier, more prosperous society; and build communities. I'm privileged to have so many great students and researchers in my riding of Trinity–Spadina. Their work at U of T, OCAD University and Ryerson University has no doubt made a positive impact on the lives of Ontarians.

I would also like to acknowledge the past president of the council, Ms. Bonnie Patterson. Thank you to Bonnie for your dedication to Ontario's post-secondary system.

And thank you to the research teams for joining us today. I invite all members of this House to join them this evening at their reception in room 228 to learn more about their important work.

#### ADVANCED AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** This Saturday, February 20, the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program will be hosting its annual Dream Auction in Guelph, in support of its 16th class.

Established in 1984, the AALP is an executive development program for men and women who are interested in broadening their horizons and expanding their networks to help shape the future of rural communities across this province and the agri-food sectors of Ontario. At its core, the program seeks to expand leadership skills, increase participants' knowledge of the agri-food system and rural Ontario, and enhance perspectives on critical issues in the industry by immersing them in study topics such as marketing and economics, environmental impacts and globalization, as well as the dynamics of change.

This year's participants represent a broad spectrum of agri-food organizations and rural community groups, from Bayer CropScience to Grain Farmers of Ontario to 4-H Ontario.

In particular, I would like to extend special recognition to two participants in this year's class, from the riding of Huron–Bruce: Rebecca Miller of Auburn and Emily Morrison of Lucknow.

Proceeds from events such as the Dream Auction coming up this Saturday are vital in supporting the participants, and they're used to assist with things such as

tuition fees and opportunities to participate in study tours across North America and internationally as well.

As a part participant myself—in class 6, to be exact—I would like to encourage people to track the learning opportunities associated with this program. It's second to none.

### BLOOD DONATION

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Over half of all Canadians say that they or a family member have needed blood or blood products, yet less than 4% of eligible Canadians donate blood.

Blood and blood products are a critical part of everyday medical care, including major surgeries, medical procedures, cancer treatments and managing disease. One donation can save three lives. There is no substitute for blood, and we desperately need more people to donate.

This Valentine's Day, with the support of my amazing community, my staff and the Kingston branch of Canadian Blood Services, I held a What's Your Type? event to help individuals find out their blood type, ask any questions that they might have about donating blood, and sign up donors for our blood drive this week. We were so fortunate to have past donors and recipients join us to share their stories about the difference blood donation made in their lives. Usually, it was the difference between life and death.

I would also like to acknowledge Barbara Bell, who has a rare blood type and hadn't donated in a while but meant to, and Joanne Curran, who came on behalf of her daughter Mackenzie Curran, who has received 27 blood transfusions to treat her leukemia.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone here to consider becoming a blood donor, and to help spread awareness about the importance of blood donation in their communities. You never know; you or a loved one may need it one day. The gift of life is in you to give.

Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

### SERVICES HOSPITALIERS HOSPITAL SERVICES

**M. Shafiq Qadri:** Aujourd'hui, j'ai le plaisir de vous informer des grandes rénovations de l'Hôpital général d'Etobicoke. Avec cette addition de quatre étages, nous allons élargir, par quatre fois, la taille actuelle de l'hôpital. Spécifiquement, les ajouts comprennent notamment ces sept éléments suivants : salle d'urgence ultramoderne, soins intensifs, soins graves ou critiques, département de maternité pour les nouveau-nés, département de chirurgie ambulatoire, département cardiorespiratoire et département neuro-diagnostique.

Speaker, I'm pleased to say that this four-storey addition will actually quadruple the footprint—not necessarily the carbon footprint—of the Etobicoke General Hospital with a number of new services that I've just outlined: cardiorespiratory diagnostic unit, neuro-diagnostic services.

For example, for my constituents in Etobicoke North, should they require evaluation for angina—chest pains that may be of cardiac origin—they will be able to perform these tests on-site at state-of-the-art facilities. Similarly, many folks require assessments for memory loss, for potential dementia, Alzheimer's and so on, and this new addition will also house absolutely state-of-the-art neurodiagnostic services.

Health care is on the move in Etobicoke North, Speaker.

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

I will now entertain the President of the Treasury Board on a point of order.

### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Mr. Speaker, I have a message from the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by her own hand.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2016, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly. Toronto, February 11, 2016. Elizabeth Dowdeswell.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ILLEGAL TRADE AND TRAFFICKING OF PEOPLE, DRUGS, MONEY, TOBACCO AND WEAPONS ACT, 2016

#### LOI DE 2016 CONCERNANT LA COMMISSION D'ENQUÊTE SUR LE COMMERCE ET LE TRAFIC ILLICITES DE PERSONNES, DE DROGUES, D'ARGENT, DE TABAC ET D'ARMES

Mr. Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 162, An Act to establish a commission of inquiry into illegal trade and trafficking of people, drugs, money, tobacco and weapons / Projet de loi 162, Loi visant la création d'une commission d'enquête sur le commerce et le trafic illicites de personnes, de drogues, d'argent, de tabac et d'armes.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The bill requires the Premier to recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that a commission be appointed to inquire into and report on illegal trade, and trafficking of people, drugs, money, tobacco and weapons, and to make recommendations, including recommendations for legislative measures, directed to the avoidance of those phenomena.

I'll mention that on December 1, I put together a package explaining this legislation, and I distributed it to all MPPs of all parties about two and a half months ago. I thought I would just get out in front of it before introducing the legislation.

With respect to the explanatory note: Except for the deadline for submitting reports, the Public Inquiries Act, 2009, applies to the commission and inquiry. The commission must begin its inquiry within 60 days after being appointed and must make an interim report in six months and a final report in 12 months.

## MOTIONS

### CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to private members' public bills.

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

Government House leader.

1520

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I move that the order of the House dated June 4, 2015, referring Bill 111, An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 to eliminate fixed rate electricity contracts between retailers and consumers, to the Standing Committee on General Government, be discharged; and

That the order of the House dated March 26, 2015, referring Bill 76, An Act to encourage the purchase of vehicles that use natural gas as a fuel, to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, be discharged; and

That Bills 76 and 111 be instead referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly; and

That the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet on Wednesday, February 24, 2016, and Wednesday, March 2, 2016, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., in Toronto, for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 42, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 to provide that the head of council of the regional municipality of York must be elected; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 42:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 5 p.m. on Friday, February 19, 2016; and

—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come, first-served basis; and

—That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2, 2016; and

That the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet on Wednesday, March 9, 2016, and Wednesday, March 23, 2016, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., in Toronto, for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 76; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 76:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 2 p.m. on Friday, March 4, 2016; and

—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come, first-served basis; and

—That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 23, 2016; and

That the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet on Wednesday, April 6, 2016, and Wednesday, April 13, 2016, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., in Toronto, for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 111; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 111:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 2 p.m. on Friday, April 1, 2016; and

—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come, first-served basis; and

—That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 13, 2016.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader moves that the order of the House dated June 4—

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Dispense? Dispensed.

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## PETITIONS

### DRIVER LICENCES

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

“Whereas many residents and businesses in Ontario rely on the ability to drive a vehicle in order to work, buy food and otherwise function;

“Whereas licence suspension upon a receipt of a medical notice to that effect is immediate; and

“Whereas constituents are forced to wait 30 business days following a positive medical review by their physician prior to being reinstated; and

“Whereas this wait time is not prescribed in any legislation or regulation, but is solely due to Ministry of Transportation policies that ignore the reality of living and operating a business, especially in rural and northern Ontario; and

“Whereas a needlessly long licence suspension threatens the livelihoods of many families in Ontario;

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

“To direct the Ministry of Transportation to institute a five-business-day service guarantee for drivers’ licence reinstatements following the submission of a positive physician’s review.”

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

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**M<sup>me</sup> France G linas:** I have this petition from Rose Riopel from Val Caron, in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice....

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### LUNG DISEASE

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have a petition addressed here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in

direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

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

“Once debated at committee, to expedite ... and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with this petition, affix my name and hand it to page Julia.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I’ve got a stack of petitions here from people worried about health care in the province of Ontario.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition, attach my name and send it down with Dhruv.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** This petition is entitled “Ontarians Need Access to Medical Specialists.”

“To the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:

“Whereas the Ontario government collects incomplete and misleading data on wait times, accounting only for the time it takes between treatment recommendation and medical procedure, but fails to account for the wait time that occurs prior to the initial specialist intake appointment; and

“Whereas there is currently no mechanism in place to accurately measure and track the time between referral to a specialist and the initial specialist appointment; and

“Whereas Ontario is behind international standards for specialist wait times, particularly in the specialties of neurosurgery, gastroenterology and rheumatology; and

“Whereas many Ontarians are forced to wait several months, or even years, before getting treatment from a specialist in Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to create a mechanism to accurately and effectively track complete wait times to see specialists in Ontario, with the goal of ultimately reducing wait times for patients and families.”

It's my pleasure to affix my signature and give this to page Bianca.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please. I'm going to take a moment to reflect on what I heard, and I'm going to give advice. In reading petitions, you cannot read things in petitions that you would not normally be able to say in the House—I'm going to offer that as advice—which means that if something is said in a petition that you know is unparliamentary language, you must bypass that language. You don't have to read the petition as it is. So I'm going to give counsel that it can no longer be done, and I'll stop it from happening.

1530

#### HOME INSPECTION INDUSTRY

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

“Whereas the home inspector industry remains largely unregulated; and

“Whereas homeowners are increasingly reliant on home inspectors to make an educated home purchase; and

“Whereas the unregulated industry poses a risk to consumers;

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

“To protect consumers by regulating the home inspection industry and licensing home inspectors.”

I agree with this petition. I'll affix my name and send it to the table with page Ryan.

#### DRIVER LICENCES

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I also wish to read in a petition with respect to the delay in reinstating driver's licences.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many residents and businesses in Ontario rely on the ability to drive a vehicle in order to work, buy food and otherwise function;

“Whereas licence suspension upon receipt of a medical notice to that effect is immediate; and

“Whereas constituents are forced to wait 30 business days following a positive medical review by their physician prior to being reinstated; and

“Whereas this wait time is not prescribed in any legislation or regulation, but is solely due to Ministry of Transportation policies that ignore the reality of living

and operating a business, especially in rural and northern Ontario; and

“Whereas a needlessly long licence suspension threatens the livelihoods of many families in Ontario;

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

“To direct the Ministry of Transportation to institute a five-business-day service guarantee for drivers' licence reinstatements following the submission of a positive physician's review.”

I agree with the sentiments in this petition and affix my signature.

#### FIRST RESPONDERS

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

“Whereas emergency response workers (firefighters, police officers and paramedics) confront traumatic events on a near daily basis to provide safety to the public;

“Whereas many emergency response workers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of their work;

“Whereas emergency response workers go through painstaking steps in order to receive WSIB benefits based on post-traumatic stress acquired while serving the public;

“Whereas Bill 2 ‘An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder’ sets out that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder it is presumed that they acquired the illness on the job, unless the contrary is shown;

“Whereas this change would ease the process for receiving benefits for emergency response workers with post-traumatic stress disorder arising out of work;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to unanimously endorse and quickly pass Bill 2 ‘An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder’.”

I add my name to the thousands, and I'm going to give it to Delaney to be delivered to the table.

#### PROTECTION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

**M. Shafiq Qadri:** J'ai une pétition sur l'élimination des microbilles des produits cosmétiques.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que les microbilles sont de petites particules de plastique de moins de 1 mm de diamètre, qui passent à travers nos systèmes de filtration de l'eau et sont présentes dans nos rivières et dans les Grands Lacs;

« Attendu que la présence de ces microbilles dans les Grands Lacs augmente et qu'elles contribuent à la pollution par le plastique de nos lacs et rivières d'eau douce;

« Attendu que la recherche scientifique et les données recueillies jusqu'à présent révèlent que les microbilles

qui sont présentes dans notre système d'alimentation en eau stockent des toxines, que des organismes confondent ces microbilles avec des aliments et que ces microbilles peuvent se retrouver dans notre chaîne alimentaire;

« Nous, les soussignés, présentons une pétition à l'Assemblée législative aux fins suivantes :

« Mandater le gouvernement de l'Ontario pour qu'il interdise la création et l'ajout de microbilles aux produits cosmétiques et à tous les autres produits de santé et de beauté connexes et demander au ministère de l'Environnement d'effectuer une étude annuelle des Grands Lacs pour analyser les eaux et déceler la présence de microbilles. »

Je vous l'envoie avec page Julia.

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants cancellation, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020; and

“Whereas the Liberal government wasted \$2 billion on the flawed smart meter program; and

“Whereas the recent announcement to implement the Ontario Electricity Support Program will see average household hydro bills increase an additional \$137 per year starting in 2016; and

“Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario’s power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

I agree with this petition, sign it and hand it to page Luke.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas government cuts have a direct impact on patient care and front-line workers;

“Whereas hospital base operating budgets have been frozen for four years in a row and hospital global funding increases have been set below the rate of inflation since

2008, meaning that hospital budgets have been cut in real dollar terms ... for eight years in a row;

“Whereas Ontario government funding figures show that home care funding per client is less today than it was in 2002;

“Whereas Ontario hospital funding is the lowest in Canada;

“Whereas Ontario ranks eighth out of 10 provinces in hospital funding as a percentage of provincial GDP; and

“Whereas the government has actually refused to acknowledge that service cuts are happening;

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

“To immediately stop cuts and freezes to hospital budgets;

“To immediately cease the laying off of nurses and other front-line workers; and

“To fund hospitals adequately to ensure highest quality patient care across the province.”

I support this petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Luke.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I have a petition to bring to the floor today on supporting Moving Ontario Forward in Ottawa, LRT phase II.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are critical transportation infrastructure needs for the province;

“Whereas giving people multiple avenues for their transportation needs takes cars off the road;

“Whereas public transit increases the quality of life for Ontarians and helps the environment;

“Whereas the constituents of Orléans and east Ottawa are in need of greater transportation infrastructure;

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

“Support the Moving Ontario Forward plan and the Ottawa LRT phase II construction, which will help address the critical transportation infrastructure needs of Orléans, east Ottawa and the province of Ontario.”

It gives me great pleasure to sign this petition and give it to page Andrew.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that was collected over the winter break.

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

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

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to

come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

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

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

“Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

**1540**

“Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don’t have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

“Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

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

“That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario’s Hydro One.”

I agree with this petition and sign it, and give it to page Andrew to deliver.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** That’s the end of petitions.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members’ public business, such that Mr. Dickson assumes ballot item number 27 and Mr. Thibeault assumes ballot item number 39.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### HEALTH INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2016

#### LOI DE 2016 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LA SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 16, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004 / Projet de loi 119,

Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements personnels sur la santé, à apporter certaines modifications connexes et à abroger et à remplacer la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements sur la qualité des soins.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** When this was last debated, it was with the third party. I don’t see the member, so we’ll move on to the government side. The member from Ottawa–Orléans.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I would like to inform everyone that I will be sharing my time with the member for Cambridge, the member for Burlington and our Attorney General.

Il me fait un plaisir aujourd’hui de me lever et de parler au nom de mes commettants d’Ottawa–Orléans sur ce projet de loi 119. I’m pleased to rise in the House today, on behalf of my constituents in Ottawa–Orléans, in support of Bill 119, the Health Information Protection Act.

Ontario has historically been on the forefront of health privacy, and this bill helps to reinforce the high quality of support and privacy our system offers. The members of Ontario’s workforce who interact with health information have an important role to play in upholding this privacy. These health care custodians are an integral part of how patients interact with the health sector in many ways.

As a former social worker in a hospital setting, I understand extremely well the role that health care workers play in consistently respecting and upholding rights to privacy.

With this legislation, we will reinforce the responsibility of health care custodians in maintaining patients’ rights. In changing the Personal Health Information Protection Act, custodians will now be required to report privacy breaches to the Information and Privacy Commissioner, rather than just having an option to. This is coupled with a stronger process to prosecute offences under PHIPA, along with stronger deterrents against unauthorized collection, use or disclosure of personal health information, by significantly increasing fines for misuse.

These changes will allow the public to have greater confidence in the security of their information in a time where electronic privacy is a pressing issue—across all sectors, I would say, Mr. Speaker, not only our health care system.

Bill 119 will also create a strong foundation to secure sharing of patients’ personal health information through electronic health records. This government is reviving work undertaken by the last Legislature to protect Ontarians’ electronic health information and develop stronger, more comprehensive frameworks through EPHIPA.

The efforts taken here have been done not only by the government, but also with the support of the province’s independent Information and Privacy Commissioner, who is mandated to uphold and protect open government and personal privacy. With this kind of expertise and advice behind this legislation, Ontarians can be sure that they are getting a transparent and accountable government with respect to health records.

Bill 119 will seek to modernize the provincial framework for personal electronic records, but it will also work to clarify the purpose of related laws. It is important that Ontarians understand their rights when it comes to their medical records and the information and support they receive. In addition, it is crucial that existing standards do not interfere with the health facility's duties to disclose information to patients, especially in the case of a critical incident investigation.

Through changes to the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, this bill will clarify and reaffirm the rights of patients to access information about their care. It will clarify the rules for disclosure in cases of accidents or errors on the part of health care professionals and allow our Minister of Health and Long-Term Care the appropriate mechanisms to ensure this is done consistently.

Of all the information that is collected about us, our health information is perhaps the most sensitive aspect of our life. It is exceptional because it is distinctly unique to each of us as individuals. This government believes in upholding the rights we are granted as Ontarians to the security of our personal information, especially when it concerns something as crucial and fundamental as our own health.

People in Ontario deserve to know that they are protected by the health care system, and that it is accountable, transparent and keeps their personal health information private. This bill will allow health care practitioners and patients to have their voices heard when it comes to protecting confidentiality and creates a framework for it to be continuously revised and strengthened, which is why I stand here in full support.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 119, the Health Information Protection Act, 2015. I really do thank our Minister of Health for introducing this bill that would strengthen accountability, transparency and security in Ontario's health care system.

Speaker, I have personal knowledge of this. I've worked as a nurse for decades in the health care system. I understand the importance that patients place not only on accessing their personal health information, but also having that information protected from prying eyes. I've been witness in the past to several incidents where other staff or family members have been known to take charts out of patients' rooms and read them, and certainly it's been more protected from those kinds of things being electronic records, but it certainly does cause the patient and family a lot of discomfort.

Through well-constructed amendments to the Personal Health Information Protection Act, the Quality of Care Information Protection Act and the Public Hospitals Act, Bill 119 would help improve patient care and confidence in the health care system.

The first section of Bill 119 contains key amendments to strengthen the Personal Health Information Protection Act, as well as introducing rules and governance for the shared electronic health record, something that I used

each and every day in my own career as a nurse in recent years. In order to increase accountability and transparency in patient records, custodians would be required to report all incidents where a privacy breach occurred to the Information and Privacy Commissioner, as well as to the relevant regulatory college when such a breach occurs in human resources or in looking at health care records.

Speaker, there were several incidents on the ward I used to be on where these kinds of breaches were found, usually by staff members, often late at night. I'd have to say that I was really proud of being part of a profession where registered nurses would take that breach very seriously and then report it to the authorities, whether it was human resources, whether it was to the privacy officer; if it was at night, we would contact a manager to be able to do this. In that way, we were able to make sure that the patients and the families were protected.

Bill 119 would also strengthen the prosecution process for violations of the Personal Health Information Protection Act. The current requirement that prosecutions must begin within six months of the alleged breach will be removed. In addition, the bill would further discourage snooping into patient records by doubling the maximum fines for offences under the act, from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for individuals, and from \$250,000 to \$500,000 for the organization.

**1550**

Speaker, I believe that these two amendments demonstrate that our government places the need to protect patients' privacy at the highest priority, and as a nurse, I concur.

The second section of Bill 119 addresses the need for greater transparency in critical incident reviews. The bill affirms the right of patients to access information about their health care and makes it clear that the Quality of Care Information Protection Act does not interfere with a health facility's duty to disclose information to patients or interview them as part of a critical incident investigation.

As well, the amendments contained within the bill would provide a regulation-making authority for the minister, if needed, to mandate a uniform approach as to when and how the Quality of Care Information Protection Act can be used, and that the minister review the act every five years. Certainly, in today's fast-paced environment, where a lot of electronic records are being updated all the time, this is very necessary.

Bill 119 would also amend the Public Hospitals Act by mandating the inclusion of patients or their representatives in interviews surrounding critical incident investigations, along with requirements that hospitals disclose the cause of such incidents to patients and share incident data with other hospitals for mutual learning purposes.

Speaker, I want to commend the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for bringing this bill forward, which will strengthen both the protection of patients' medical information and the transparency of Ontario's health care

system in patient care. Again, as a former nurse who has worked with patient records for decades and seen how they went from paper records to electronic records, I really feel this is very important, moving forward in patient care safety.

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

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** It's my pleasure to stand in the House and speak to Bill 119, the Health Information Protection Act and, in so doing, join my colleague from Cambridge and the member from Ottawa–Orléans.

Speaker, as was said by my colleague a few moments ago, our government is committed to ensuring that the personal information of Ontarians is protected at all times, while minimizing the potential risks that could compromise this information. That is why we introduced Bill 119: to protect the personal health information of those who trust us with their care at the most difficult times, often, in their lives.

When the Personal Health Information Protection Act, known as PHIPA, was introduced and passed, it was integral in protecting the very private health information of Ontarians. The amendments to PHIPA introduced by Minister Hoskins today are an important evolution of the world in which we live and a cornerstone of our government and public service.

Like many Ontarians, I value the mobility of our province's health care. I often travel around the province, as members do. My mother lives in Windsor, for example; I go to visit her. On any given day, I could access treatment at my hospital, Joseph Brant, in my community, and—who knows—receive an impromptu service later that day while in Windsor, visiting mum at Windsor Regional Hospital. PHIPA heightens the mobility and access to care that Ontarians enjoy in instances such as these. It will also ensure that a patient who may be visiting a hospital for the first time is not given medication they are allergic to, and that their emergency contact is notified while in their care.

However, with great power comes great responsibility. As technology evolves, our laws and regulations must evolve as well. They must evolve for the betterment of our province and for the people we serve. This is why our government has introduced Bill 119, which reintroduces and updates the electronic health record privacy framework initially introduced in the Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act, and provides key and necessary amendments to that act.

I know that most health information custodians, including those like my colleague here next to me, the member from Cambridge, a nurse, doctors and other professionals across our province take great pride in minimizing the risk of breaching an individual's privacy. They do so with great care and great attention. They know how important it is to maintain the privacy of a patient's personal information, and they've taken great strides to do so. The unfortunate reality, however, is that privacy breaches do occur on occasion and anything that we, as legislators, can do to prevent or minimize the risk is our responsibility; it's also the right thing to do.

By making it mandatory to report privacy breaches, as defined through regulation, to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and to relevant regulatory colleges, we are committing to two key pillars: (1) our government's strong and open relationship with the independent officers who watch diligently over this Legislature by ensuring that the information they need to perform their duties efficiently and accurately is given to them in a timely manner; (2) and wanting to ensure that those receiving accreditation through regulatory colleges are accountable to those colleges in the ways that colleges expect them to be.

You see, Mr. Speaker, regulatory health colleges do not simply teach health care professionals the technical skills they need, such as taking blood pressure, inserting an IV or performing open-heart surgery. Regulatory health colleges teach the ethical pillars that are the cornerstone in performing as a regulated health professional, privacy being of utmost importance. Privacy, as an ethical professional standard, is not just what Ontarians expect, it is what they deserve.

The creation of stronger deterrents utilized to prevent the unauthorized collection, use or disclosure of personal health information by doubling the maximum fine for offences under PHIPA is key in ensuring that those who wish to abuse people's personal information think twice before committing these heinous acts. Ultimately, Bill 119 is about making sure that the private health information of every person in Ontario is safe and secure. By making the system more transparent and accountable, Ontarians can rest assured that their records are kept confidential and can never be used inappropriately.

Here in Ontario, we have one of the best, if not the best, health care systems in the world, and it is important, then, that the public be able to put their trust in it at all times. With this bill, we can reinforce the great trust that already exists between our health care providers and our patients.

I ask all members of this House to support this very important piece of legislation.

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

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** It gives me great pleasure, as a nurse, to speak on this very important piece of legislation, Bill 119, the Health Information Protection Act.

The proposed legislation aims to improve the protection of personal health information generally, in the response to the need for greater transparency and appropriate disclosure of information to a patient during critical incident reviews.

The first section introduces amendments to the Personal Health Information Protection Act, and the second section proposes amendments to current legislation to clarify the use of the Quality of Care Information Protection Act.

Mr. Speaker, if there is something that is very important in the health sector it is the privacy of information that is in the patient's file. Sometimes it is either not understood or there is too much relaxation about these

rules and regulations. Confidentiality is important, but it is also important for health institutions or doctors' offices to have regular training with those who work in these institutions to remind them about the importance and what is a breach.

Sometimes they don't think it's a breach. Their neighbour is hospitalized, so they just go on the floor and take the file, look at the file and read the file. This is a breach, because if the person is not the nurse or doctor responsible for this patient, they have no business looking into the file. So it's very important that institutions have regular training and remind those who work in the health sector what is confidentiality, what is permitted and what is not.

It is also the responsibility of the institution to report if there is a breach. Sometimes they want to have their own evaluation: "It is really a breach? Is it a serious breach? Should we report it, or should we not report it?" They have a responsibility, and the government expects all health information custodians or health care providers who have custody or control of personal health information as part of their job to comply with the privacy and security requirements of the Personal Health Information Protection Act. This means that they must ensure they have the administrative, technical and physical safeguards and information practices in place to adequately protect the privacy and security of the personal health information in their custody and control.

1600

The Personal Health Information Protection Act does not prescribe what these safeguards must be—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Stop the clock.

Continue.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Again, Mr. Speaker, the Personal Health Information Protection Act does not prescribe what these safeguards must be. But the act does require, however, health information custodians to take steps that are reasonable in the circumstances to protect personal health information in their custody or control. "Reasonable in the circumstances" recognizes that health information custodians vary in size, complexity and scope of practice. That's why each of the institutions and doctors' offices have to have their own process to protect the health information of a patient.

There's nothing more private than what is written in your medical file, and it's up to everyone in the institution, in the office, to know their obligation and how to make sure that in no circumstance is there any violation of the privacy and confidentiality rights.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's a privilege to stand here and address this particular bill. First of all, I want to commend the minister. The bill apparently follows up on commitments that the minister made back in June to create stronger, more comprehensive protection of health information privacy.

Those are words. To be truthful, he talks about transparency and I agree, but words need to be followed by action—good, solid, concrete action. Obviously, a few things remain to be seen.

I do like the idea, as well, that it makes it mandatory to report privacy breaches. That's very, very important. Unfortunately, sometimes a particular family member who doesn't want to alarm other family members goes in and has a procedure done or something, and receives a phone call. However, another family member takes that call and then finds out what has been going on with the family member. That could, in fact, very well be a breach of confidentiality, and a breach of privacy as well. So we've got a concern about that.

The other thing that I wanted to mention, Speaker, is the fact that Ontario's people do deserve to know they're protected by a health care system that is accountable, transparent and keeps their permanent information private. But again, I look at the whole state of Ontario at this point in time. We have gone from first to worst. We have gone from have to have-not. So it's not surprising that Ontario is one of the last provinces to update legislation to require mandatory reporting of breaches to a privacy body. Eight provinces have already passed legislation.

Again, I commend the minister for bringing this forward. It's time for Ontario to modernize its health care system and make patient-centred care a priority.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I think this is a very important topic. I think it's something we need to address. Specifically, the security of one's health information is absolutely important. In fact, when it comes to security of personal information, I think we could all agree that health information is probably the most important, if not one of the most important.

It raises a broader question about, if we frame this discussion around security of personal information, in the current age of electronic information, digital information and the digital transmission and sharing of information, the security of your personal data becomes all the more important. It also raises concerns around how we share other information. Given certain legislation that encourages information sharing between different agencies, it becomes more important for us to ensure that certain information that's so private and sensitive remains secure.

But it also raises concerns around how we share other information and how we conduct our day-to-day lives. Given the electronic age we live in, given the fact that information is now shared in a digital manner, all of our communications and personal data are now susceptible to sometimes purposeful or malicious forms of interference or surveillance, and sometimes inadvertently because of the manner in which we communicate.

I think that as a government or as legislators, we need to look at how we can ensure that all of our information is more secure by default. Right now, the default is open and insecure. I think we need to look at forms of com-

munication, whether it's the way we use communication through the Web or whether it's through our digital platforms like our cellphones. We need to broadly look at how we can ensure people have the right to security and privacy of their communications and their information, broadly speaking.

This bill is a step in the right direction when it comes to medical information specifically. I think it's a discussion we need to embark on with more detail and more vigorous debate.

**Mr. John Fraser:** As the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton said, the privacy of our own personal health care information is extremely important to us. I just want to say that I absolutely agree with his point on communications. We treated the mail in a certain way in terms of how we protected that when we started a mail and postal service. Everything we do on the Internet is vulnerable.

I do want to say that my son James works in a records department at a local hospital. There are half paper and half electronic records, and as they convert over, we know that an electronic health record is very important to having integrated care, to give better care to people. It's better for measuring our success in the policies that we have to improve health care in our province.

What comes with that great stuff is a great risk. I think this legislation, by addressing reporting requirements and sanctions for privacy breaches, is the right thing to do. Also, establishing rules and regulations for an electronic health record so there's a consent management framework is a crucial thing to do as well.

I would like to add one piece that maybe hasn't been as mentioned as much in this debate: the transparency of critical incidents. The measures that are in this bill are going to require a person responsible for patient relations to be included on a committee where critical incident reviews are undertaken, that the people affected by that critical incident be interviewed and that information be shared with them. I think that is critical in terms of building trust in our health care system and in our hospitals. This is a very important piece of legislation and I'm very glad to support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on some of the debate from the other side of the House today. They shared it with so many people, it's sometimes hard to get the views straight. But generally speaking, the views over there are pretty consistent: they're whatever they are told to say from the corner office on the second floor.

But anyway, look, how important is protecting the privacy of patients? Of course, it's of paramount importance and that's why, in general terms, we're supporting this piece of legislation.

I had the opportunity to speak yesterday on the legislation itself. We talked about the importance of protecting the health records of individuals. How devastating could that be, if someone was suffering from a particular

ailment or illness and wanting to keep that private, and then, by some failure in the system or chicanery on the part of some person involved in the system, that became public? That can be devastating. That's why we need strong legislation.

I will agree that the increases in the penalties for breaching this act are something that is very, very positive and I appreciate the government has done that. Increasing those penalties, of course, acts as a strong deterrent for anyone who is contemplating breaching the act. That's something that I think is hugely important.

At the same time, one of the things I like about this bill—there are lots of things I don't like about the government and not necessarily this bill, but we're not talking about that right now, because I only have a couple of minutes. But one of the things I also like about this bill is the total access to your own medical records, where you're basically going to have ownership of your medical records. That's something that wasn't the tradition.

**1610**

I give the medical profession a lot of credit in this too. They have understood over the years that people have taken more ownership, and we have to give them that ownership.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** One of the five speakers has two minutes. Member from Cambridge.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I want to thank those that have spoken in the last few minutes about Bill 119: the members from Ottawa–Orléans, Burlington, Ottawa–Vanier, Chatham–Kent–Essex, Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Ottawa South, and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

I have to say that the views on this side of the House are united, and they're united in making sure that patient privacy, health records privacy and transparency are upheld.

As a proud registered nurse over the last three decades, I don't take my orders from the corner office in this place. I go by the policies and procedures of my college, the Ontario College of Nurses, and I know that all health professionals do. I know that physicians and all hospital staff are really united in making sure that personal health information is protected.

I'm very proud of this government. I'm glad that we on this side of the House are united in making sure that patients' health information is protected. In this electronic age, with social media there, the ability to move information that should be protected into social media and into the public can be very dangerous. So I'm very glad we're stepping forward to make sure that our patients and our health care records are protected and private.

I am very pleased to see, in summary, that the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, will be amended to make sure that it requires custodians of health records to report breaches to the Information and Privacy Commissioner; that we're removing the six-month limitation for the prosecution of offences; and that the fines are doubled, not only for individuals but also for organizations.

Again, I thank everybody for the debate in the House and look forward to seeing this passed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member from Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I'd like to let you know that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

I look forward to the next 10 minutes to chat about Bill 119, the Health Information Protection Act. This is an Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004.

As you have heard from colleagues, we're generally in support of this, Speaker. I think we all would agree that the people of Ontario deserve to know that they are protected by a health care system that is accountable and transparent and that keeps their personal health information private.

Sometime throughout my 10 minutes, I will be talking about specific issues of health care as well.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, no. Tell us it's not so.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** It is so. I'm telling you it is so, because in order to have your health care protected, accountable and transparent, first of all, you need health care. When I look at home, as I mentioned in an earlier member's statement, we have had 350 front-line health care workers at my local hospital cut, including 100 nurses.

In order to have a health care system that's accountable and transparent and that keeps your personal health information private, you first need to be able to get that health information. Very sadly, at our hospital, which just had 60 beds cut—I can tell you, Speaker, that when I was mayor of the city of North Bay, I was pleased to support our council spending \$20 million towards the construction of a brand new hospital. The province, of course, was the 90% partner and we were a 10% partner. To see that brand new hospital have 60 beds eliminated is sad.

I visited some friends in the hospital recently. I often wondered what was meant by that expression “the beds are cut.” I honestly did not understand that. The woman that I was visiting said to me—she was in a double room. She said, “Open the curtain and have a look in the room beside.” I did, and it was empty. It was amazing. The bed was actually gone and all of the electronics were gone. There was a little table with a phone sitting on it and that was it. That's all that was in the room. I was quite surprised. I took a photo of it, actually.

My point is, in order to have this personal health information that we want to keep confidential, you actually need to have the services.

So we have 60 beds that are cut, 350 workers that are cut—100 nurses. Only recently, a week or so ago, we also had our lab cut in the hospital. That's why I say it's hard to stand here and talk about having your records secure when many of them won't even have a chance to have a record created.

There were only three places in North Bay to have lab work done: two private clinics—those are at their maximums, by the way, at their cap—and the hospital. People

would line up at the hospital to have blood work done. Now only in-patient work is being done in the hospital. So it's very hard to stand here and talk about those records when there are so many in my hometown now that are going to have a hard time even getting that original record made.

Nonetheless, our fragmented health care system continues to fail Ontario's most vulnerable. In 2014, there were 439 cases reported to the Information and Privacy Commissioner's office. Ontario, as you've heard, is one of the last provinces to update legislation to require mandatory reporting of breaches to a privacy body. Eight provinces have already done so and passed legislation. Obviously, we support this because it's time for Ontario to modernize its health care system and make patient-centred care a priority.

Let me segue off onto a more positive aspect in which I thank all three parties. Recently, I had a bill here, Bill 33—Patch For Patch, the fentanyl bill—and because you now need to bring your used fentanyl patches into a pharmacy, it has a lot to do with this. You now need to be processed, if you will. It's much more than just having a prescription. If you want this narcotic, you need to bring your old patch in to stop people from selling those patches. Only this week, again, in my hometown of North Bay, did this program work. A woman was caught trying to bring fake patches to someone so that she can have the real patches and continue with the drug trafficking. This is related to this because we're now capturing more data about people, and we're able to control the use and the spread of a narcotic that killed 133 people in Ontario last year. So I do say thank you to all three parties for their support of my private member's bill.

Already, we're seeing many communities sign up. Although it's becoming mandatory, many are doing it voluntarily until the bill is fully enacted. In my hometown, it saved some lives again this week by having this woman caught. She's still going through the court system now, the beginning of it, and I'll continue to follow up on that with this Legislature because it's a great example of our work with records.

This bill follows up on the commitments the minister made last June. You've heard this. It was intended to create stronger and more comprehensive protection of health information privacy. The bill introduces greater accountability and transparency in the health system about privacy breaches and critical incidents. It introduces a renewed provincial electronic health record privacy framework.

I'll do everything I can to refrain from talking about eHealth records and billion-dollar wastes, because we know that tends to get me off on many of the other billion-dollar boondoggles.

**1620**

This bill will make it mandatory to report privacy breaches, as defined in regulation, to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and to the relevant regulatory colleges. And it removes the requirement that prosecu-

tions must be commenced within six months of when the alleged offence occurred.

This bill, as you heard my colleague mention, will double the maximum fines for offences under PHIPA—which, of course, is the Personal Health Information Protection Act—from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for individuals and from \$250,000 to \$500,000 for an organization. It will reintroduce and update the electronic health record privacy framework initially introduced in EPHIPA and as endorsed by the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The bill will also allow the ministry to disclose information about a patient's narcotics and monitored drug prescriptions to their health care practitioner. Again, I use that as a segue to the fentanyl bill. Patch for Patch will not only cover fentanyl but was written, thankfully, by the Ministry of Health to expand to include other narcotics as they come on to the market over upcoming years. I believe this bill will go a long way towards helping to improve patient care through protecting patient safety.

The Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, was aimed at protecting the privacy of patients, but no one had ever been convicted. Only logic and common sense—and, of course, the media stories that you hear in the last 12 years—there has been more than one—in all of our communities. Certainly, in my hometown, I've read in our local newspaper several stories, but nobody has been convicted. Obviously, there are issues, and this will address many of them. Reporting is currently not mandatory, so there could be many more than the 439 known breaches.

I can go on, but I do want to share my time, as I mentioned.

The lack of consistency in hospital reporting is the last thing I'll discuss. In a survey of 27 hospitals in Hamilton and the GTA, some said that it's not their job. One said that it's the job of the privacy commissioner. Another argued that a police complaint would be a privacy violation in itself.

Obviously, something needs to be done, and I believe this bill goes a long way towards that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 119. I want to share my perspective on Bill 119 and the perspective that I hear from the people who live in Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. Just for context, in over eight years as an elected MPP, I have yet to have a constituent contact my office with a concern over a breach of privacy on their health records. It hasn't happened with me. I'm sure it has happened elsewhere, but I've not had that direct experience.

Although protection of privacy of health care information is indeed important, there are many other things in health care that are also important and, I would say, far more important than just the information. I want to give a contrast between this bill and what I hear in my constituency office. Then, maybe people in this House—

members of the government—can weigh the merits of this bill as compared to something else that they could have done.

Let me start with a medical record example. Brenda moved to Smiths Falls last year. She needed to have her medical records transferred to Smiths Falls, to her new doctor. It took over four months to have those medical records transferred. Brenda was waiting to have desperately needed knee surgery, but she couldn't have the knee surgery done because the doctor needed to have her medical records. It was not a problem about privacy; it was a problem of getting the bloody records. Brenda suffered longer and longer because she couldn't get the medical records. When she finally did, she had to pay 50 bucks to have those medical records transferred. That's a failing.

Elizabeth from Denbigh had to go to hospital for stitches. She went to the emergency room. She has private health insurance. She went back to the emergency room the following week with the proper forms from the insurance company and the doctor at the ER advised her that it would cost \$100 for the doctor to fill out those forms—\$100 to fill out those forms.

Speaker, those are some of the things that I hear in my office, and I'm sure others hear these ones.

Talking about information, Norma Ford from Beckwith has been waiting for a response from the Minister of Health since November, waiting for information. I guess the minister figures it's too private and will not share correspondence with Norma. By the same token, the mayor of Carleton Place has also been looking for a response from the Minister of Health since last summer, and he hasn't received it. These are some of the things that I hear.

Of course, those are examples from my riding, but we also know that this happens throughout Ontario, often with very tragic results. The recent story of Laura Hillier—no relation—from Burlington: She died waiting for a stem cell transplant to treat her leukemia. She didn't die because of a lack of donors; she had many matching donors. Rather, Laura was on a waiting list for a hospital bed and enduring chemotherapy treatments in the meantime, waiting for a hospital bed.

We spend all this time debating a bill on privacy. What actions is the government actually doing to alleviate and prevent harm and tragedy happening to people seeking health care in this province? I would have liked to see them bring forward some tangible actions to help people in this province.

George and Shirley in Napanee: Their doctor retired and left them without a doctor. They're both on medication and they're both on a waiting list with Health Care Connect for a doctor. The walk-in clinics don't want to renew their prescriptions as they're not their patients.

An interesting one from Robert in Yarker: Robert has been advised that his doctor will be leaving the area shortly and he will need to get a new doctor. Robert has serious health issues and can't be without a doctor. He's called every doctor in the area and cannot find a new

doctor yet. He called up Health Care Connect to get his name on the list and Health Care Connect says, “We can’t put you on the list until your doctor actually leaves.” We have to wait for the tragedy to happen. We have to wait for the consequence to happen before this government agency, which is there to help people, will actually help this person.

Fred in Smiths Falls called me in a panic one night. He had just found out that his wife, who needs cataracts, was not going to get them. The quota had been exhausted. She’s on an indefinite waiting list for cataracts. He’s fearful that she’s going to lose her independence and her mobility, lose her driver’s licence and go blind before she’ll get her cataracts done.

These are the examples that I see and hear frequently. These are the things that are a failing of this government to address.

**1630**

I see in this bill that there is now mandatory reporting of a privacy breach. Why is there not mandatory reporting of a tragedy? Why is there not mandatory reporting when there is a failure in our health care system? I see that there are these huge penalties and fines being imposed for a privacy breach, yet there are no consequences for failures in our health care system, no consequences for those examples that I’ve shared—misplaced priorities, Speaker, absolutely misplaced priorities by this government. They could be doing more, they ought to be doing more and they must do more—not just photo-op politics. Politics and governance are important to people, not just media spots and photo ops.

Linda from Carleton Place was on a waiting list to get a knee. She was advised by her doctor’s office that they had reached their quota that year. She’s hoping that there will be more quota for more knees in May or June of this year after the new budgetary allotments are put forward.

I see the parliamentary secretary listening to what I’m saying. These are all real cases. These are cases that are not old and dated; these are ones that are current that my office is working on.

John from Perth Road: He was on for over a year, waiting for a knee. I could go on.

One of the most tragic ones was the new dialysis unit in Smiths Falls. We had people travelling from Perth through Smiths Falls to Ottawa to get dialysis. They couldn’t get into the dialysis centre in their hometown or close by. You had people from Carleton Place driving through Smiths Falls to go to Kingston to get dialysis, not being able to access it.

Speaker, these are the things that I would like to see this government address, and address quickly. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** It’s a great pleasure to rise on Bill 119, the security of one’s health care information act. I believe, by listening over the last few days, that we have support of all three parties on the importance of making sure that nobody can get to our health care records. The

security of it is important. You only have to look right here in Toronto to what happened to a former mayor, Rob Ford, and what that did, and it went right across the country.

But the real reason why I’m standing is that I would like to talk to what my colleagues have said for the last 20 minutes, in particular the former mayor of North Bay when he talked about a new hospital opening. They had 60 less beds. They had less nurses. Those are the things that are happening in Ontario. I’d like to say to all my colleagues here that I firmly believe there is nothing more important and nothing more precious than making sure we get our health care right. We have a crisis in health care. We might not want to admit it—some parties might want to—but we have a crisis in health care.

I got lucky last night. I went out for dinner last night to Donatello, a nice Italian restaurant in Toronto—great owner. But I ran into four nurses from Windsor and they talked to me about 169 of their co-workers who got laid off on Family Day. They were not feeling good, but they said something very interesting. Records are important, but front-line care is important. They are concerned about what’s going to happen in the hospitals in Windsor. They talked about an aging population: our parents, our grandparents, someone like myself; I’m a grandfather, so I’m getting up there. They talked about long-term care in the hospitals. We have to listen to the front-line workers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Fraser:** It’s a pleasure to respond on Bill 119. I would like to say to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, we all have in our offices situations where people come to us and they’re having problems accessing the health care system. That’s not uncommon. It’s a big, complex system. It doesn’t always work. We have a lot of people working in that, and where you have people working, you can have people fall between the cracks. We’ve all seen that, and failures, and we have to continue to work towards making sure that’s better.

I don’t want to go the route of “You did this, we did that.” What I simply want to say is, when each party in this Legislature was in government, they grappled with the same things and they made decisions based on what they believed was the best thing to do for the whole of the system. Remember, we’re spending about half of government’s money and we all made decisions that affected people’s care. We all did that.

With all due respect, I want to put that out there. That needs to be something that people keep in mind. That doesn’t mean that you don’t continue to press for what you believe is important, but to take into consideration that we’ve all been there and we’ve all had to make very difficult decisions. In times when there’s an economic crisis, there are tough decisions to make. As members, we all have to continue to work hard.

I agree totally on the medical records. This bill makes access to your medical records yours. It does provide for critical incident reporting. It puts some structure to that,

where the patient and the family affected are involved in that. They get that information; that information is shared so it doesn't happen in other hospitals. I think that's a very important part of the legislation. I'd encourage the member to take a look at that because I think it will go to really improve health care in our province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I want to comment on the two speakers from our party, from North Bay and from Lanark-Frontenac and the rest of it.

Those are stories we hear all the time: the hospital in North Bay that's built with scarce funds. The same thing in my riding, in Winchester: extensions put on, a new ICU built, a big ceremony with the opening. Approximately a year later, they're closed. Why? The hospitals are sworn to secrecy. When you ask them personally in social services, they're told that if the story appears in the press, it could be worse next year.

We aren't getting the feedback. Actually, they were upset when I reported that 25% of the beds were closed, because they didn't want that public. But that's what happened.

We hear the government talk about the lack of doctors. It's not a lack of doctors. I see doctors in our area working in the US because they can't get operating time; the orthopedic surgeon who will not take new knee replacements because there's no use making people wait years, he said. This is not a lack of doctors. This is a lack of operating time, and that's fine. I know that all parties have done—but then, let's not talk about it; let's not just say the problem doesn't exist. We see the problems every day.

The issue of medical records: I was in one of the local hospitals the other day. They're spending money looking at what medical record operator they would use. They're trying to choose one, trying to choose the same one the Ottawa Civic is using. They haven't made up their mind; they're still in the process. They're going to have to go ahead with one. Why doesn't the province determine which one we use? Everyone uses it; the eHealth record problem is solved.

The Americans do it, different places do it. This government has got to make a decision and it's got to do something that's out there for the patient.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from London-Fanshawe.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Speaker, health is always one of the most sensitive topics we can debate in the Legislature, at the kitchen table, when you're at a picnic. People talk about their health all the time, so privacy is paramount when we're talking about patient records in a health institution.

I think back. The member from Nipissing talked about eHealth. That was supposed to be the start of electronic records, and that was a costly mess. Then I think about SAMS, the recent change for computer records under community and social services. That also didn't go smoothly.

**1640**

This side of the House kept asking this government to identify those problems when those changes were implemented, and there was a lot of denial there. I hope, when we are actually proceeding with this bill, that when people come to consultations and when there are questions on this side of the House, this government pays attention and stops denying when there are problems. You actually earn more respect when someone indicates a problem and you solve the problem, Speaker, and I'll point out the example today.

This morning, the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London asked a question about a very important program that was successful in the health care system in London where the funding was quietly withdrawn. I just read in the paper this afternoon that apparently that funding has now been reinstated, so that mental health patients can continue to enjoy the program that allows them to integrate into the community; there's peer support there. It was shown as a successful program and actually saved the health care system money.

That's an example of us on this side of the House—yes, we're critics, we're the opposition, but we do have legitimate concerns, and if the government on that side of the House doesn't pay attention to those concerns, problems become bigger and harder to correct.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Nipissing has two minutes.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I want to also thank fellow members from Niagara Falls, Ottawa South, Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry and London-Fanshawe for their thoughtful contributions to this debate.

I think we've heard loud and clear, especially from our member from Addington—

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Lennox.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Well, the long name. I'll give the short name, Addington.

**Interjection:** Lanark-Frontenac.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington—when he talked in detail about the calls that weren't made, the issues that weren't dealt with and the patients who weren't seen. Again, Speaker, I close with this because I can only emphasize that if you're talking about patient health care records and their vital security, you need to be able to have the patients either in a doctor's office, in emergency, in a clinic, in a nurse practitioner facility, many of the telemedicine opportunities that we have in Ontario or in the hospital—you need to have access to that health care.

I think of my hometown with these 60 beds. Again, it's a brand new hospital. It's a hundreds-of-millions-of-dollars hospital that is built and has 60 beds closed. I think of the people—my mother included, incidentally—who are admitted in an emergency, are lined up in the hallway for 12 hours at a time and can't get access because those beds are closed.

Speaker, I leave it at the thought of the 82-year-old woman waiting there to have health care so they can have those vital records.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to stand in my place on behalf of the citizens of Kitchener–Waterloo and lend my thoughts about Bill 119, and also bring their voices to this place.

Bill 119, as you know and as you've heard, will of course be dealing with the privacy of patient information after some high-profile breaches. This piece of legislation is looking to correct some of those breaches. The need to protect patient information stored in electronic health records is a long-standing issue in this place for a number of reasons that are becoming quite well known. I would point to some systemic issues, both within the Ministry of Health and, actually, the Ministry of Finance, and, finally, the need to improve transparency and accountability when medical errors occur.

I've been listening to the debate all afternoon, and I find it really interesting, because the government side of the House doesn't necessarily want to hear about the context of the health care system in which this debate is currently taking place. There are reasons why Bill 119 is needed that point to a very fragmented and, quite honestly, in some cases, broken system of health care.

I know the government will point to the dollars, because the health care budget is the highest amount of money. It's over half—actually it's \$52 billion; it's a lot of money. We have a growing body of evidence, namely the Auditor General's reports where she has reported back to this Legislature, indicating that there are serious breaches of trust. That is the context.

We just came through a provincial budget consultation process. The finance committee met for seven days. We spent one full week together on planes, trains and automobiles, if you will, and we heard from over 146 people. We have the documents and reports from those individuals. We were in Hamilton, Windsor, Thunder Bay and North Bay, and we even went to Ottawa, and then we had two full days here.

Health care was the predominant issue that we heard about from citizens, from medical and health care stakeholders, front-line stakeholders and hospital associations. They stay with you, because health care comes down to trust. It comes down to trust. When a breach of trust does occur, as has happened in this province for over a decade, people are wary. They're concerned. They are nervous about this system.

But the other side of the coin, and I think the government side would agree with me, is that you actually don't know how important these systems are until you need them. If you have experienced a breach of trust around privacy as a patient, as a citizen—I have a citizen who is going through this process—it feels like a violation, Mr. Speaker. It does. When personal information is shared between parties, it feels like a violation of their rights. That is how they see it.

The theme that I would like to draw upon is that at the budget consultation, people were talking about their values as citizens in the province of Ontario, and they

were very much connected to having access—full access—to a health care system which is well funded, responsive and compassionate, whether you're talking about hospice care, long-term care, home care or pain management.

Unfortunately, it does appear that this government is going to be moving ahead with the budget. We haven't even fully recovered from this budget, Mr. Speaker, yet here we are. A budget is going to come down next Thursday. The finance committee has not written their report to the finance minister—a complete departure from the tradition of this House. To the best of my knowledge, this is the earliest that a budget will be coming down from the finance minister—from any government—for no good reason.

If there was ever a good reason for this government to pay attention to the voices of the people of this province, if there was ever a government that needed the assistance of the people of this province, the lived experience of this province, it would be this government. This government needs all the help they can get to craft a budget which is responsive to the needs of the people of this province. Unfortunately, it looks like that is not going to happen. That does not lend itself to a culture, or to a feeling, to the emotion, to the reality of feeling that you're being listened to.

On health care, I know that my colleagues will agree with me, because we heard primarily about health care, especially around the frozen budgets.

People will say, "What does this have to do with privacy? What does this have to do with ensuring that the quality-of-care information is shared between hospitals in a respectable and responsible manner?"

It all comes down to resources. Everything in this place comes down to resources. Everything in this place comes down to honouring your commitment to patients first, and to ensuring that those resources are spent responsibly. Ensuring that privacy is protected requires resources.

**1650**

One of the strongest delegations, I have to admit, came from the CEO from the hospital in Windsor. He told us that their hospital's hydro costs increased by \$700,000 this year alone. One year over, it's an increase of \$700,000. Their total hydro bill at Windsor Regional Hospital is \$4.2 million. He says, "All funding for Windsor Regional Hospital and for hospitals across the province has been frozen for the past five years."

He went on to say, "When the overall pie is frozen and the areas that are not growing in population are funding those areas that are growing in population, we can't continue; we can't sustain it." And then he went on to say, "we can't cut any more."

Our concerns around Bill 119—I do want to say at the outset, is that of course we will be supporting this legislation. It is long overdue, especially on the privacy of patients, which, again, leads to trust.

But at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, you have to look at the entire health care budget holistically, because

if you're going to ask hospitals and hospital administrators who are already saying, "We can't do anything more. Our budgets are stretched. We are already overregulated as hospitals"—the amount of paper that hospital administrators are pushing around hospitals would astound you. That is all just about, in my estimation, liability and litigation. And so whatever method is going to be instilled through Bill 119 needs to be a very clear, very streamlined piece of legislation which is not onerous, but which puts the patient first. Those are our concerns on the issue of privacy of patients.

The issue of quality of care of information: Bill 119 replaces the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, QCIPA, to respond to recent public criticism after a scathing investigation by the Toronto Star, as well as recommendations made by an expert panel review report. This government has broken the record on review panels, on special task forces, on blue-ribbon committees and on round tables. We have enough information that needs to be acted on.

Patients and families sometimes feel—I have one case in my office—that they don't get full answers about what went wrong in a particular incident in a hospital, including the deaths of loved ones and what will be done to improve care in the future. This is actually in the legislation. In the last two budget cycles, a woman has come forward. Her mother died in hospital. She is absolutely haunted. She is haunted by that death because there was a system breakdown. And yet, the results of the review of that death have never been shared with her.

Now, you have to admit that this is a nightmare situation. She came the last two years to listen to the budget. I think this year she probably just gave up, but it is part of the grieving process. She deserves answers. More importantly, if mistakes were made, as her binder like this suggested, and if there was a break in the system, then that review needs to be made public. It needs to be shared with health care professionals so that that doesn't happen again.

There's a need for hospital systems to share information in a responsible way, for critical incidents to be reviewed so that those same mistakes do not happen again. This is not an unreasonable request; it's a long-standing issue.

As the member mentioned, these are large systems and mistakes do happen. People are human and they work in these very stressful conditions. But there is a responsibility to follow through and to make it right, and sometimes making it right involves a responsible way to share the findings of those reviews.

I mentioned the expert panel review report. The report identified 15 events that should never occur in hospitals. I know that sometimes the government side doesn't want to hear this, but in order to address a problem, you actually have to admit that you have a problem. That is why the investigation was important. It's important to look at the data; it's important to look at the evidence.

Remember when the Premier, in her original speech from the throne, said that she was going to be invested in

evidence-based decision-making? There must have been parentheses after that that said "when it was convenient" to her, because we do have evidence on Hydro One that it's not in the best interest of the province, and yet this government continues to go down that route.

The 15 incidents, though, I need to get on the record because they're serious. In the province of Ontario there was surgery on the wrong body part or the wrong patient, or conducting the wrong procedure. There was the wrong tissue, biological implant or blood product given to a patient. In this instance, it was done by a private company, and privatization is the second theme that I would like to draw upon, which we also heard through the budget process.

There was an unintended foreign object left in a patient following a procedure, and patient death or serious harm arising from a list of circumstances while under health care. This pertains to this piece of legislation, because the legislation is trying to correct this, but you have to hear what the problem is in order to address the problem.

"Ultimately," one RN said, "I can tell you that the type of Liberal budget cuts we've seen over the last 10 years do not help these situations." We're talking about stress in hospital systems. That stress is real, and these are the people who are on the front line. They want to make sure that you are hearing what they have experienced.

In September 2015—this is one of the most recent reports, and this was done by Health Quality Ontario—they go on to cite wrong tissue, unintended foreign objects, patient death or serious harm arising from the use of improperly sterilized instruments or equipment provided by the health care facility.

This one in particular I want to raise, because there is a growing trend, and it's incredibly concerning for us as New Democrats, to contract out health care services to the private sector. When that happens, we lose the ability to hold those private companies accountable for their practices. We lose the oversight and the quality control, and when mistakes happen, because they are so focused on profit—and they're making a lot of money in the province of Ontario, I have to tell you, which was also confirmed by the Auditor General—this compromises patient care.

In looking at this information, if you have access to it—that's the key piece—there is a lack of accountability to ensure that those practices and those procedures are corrected. To date, this government has not figured that out.

There was a patient death or serious harm as a result of pharmaceutical errors—this is a well-known issue around the chemotherapy drugs—such as the wrong route administration of chemotherapy, an overdose of hydro-morphone, and an inadvertent injection of epinephrine.

There was a patient death or serious harm as a result of failure to identify and treat metabolic disturbances, any stage III or stage IV pressure ulcer, bedsores—I'm hearing more about bedsores. I know more about bedsores than I ever thought I would and more than I

ever wanted to know. But quite honestly, the connection around the holistic view of health care—if you are not ensuring that these sores are actually taken care of, that best practices are put in place and that the government, through the Ministry of Health, is actually holding these companies accountable for quality care and not for maintaining that profit margin, this is where the system starts to break down.

I understand. It was uncomfortable, quite honestly, in some of these budget consultations. It was uncomfortable for the government to hear, because they are heart-breaking stories. The member from North Bay mentioned it. He said that people came in and shared their stories of pain and heartbreak, of a medical system that failed them.

It all comes back to resources. It all comes back to ensuring that front-line health care providers are well trained, but also are not working in conditions that create a huge amount of stress.

What we are seeing, though, because those working conditions are those health care conditions—this just actually happened last week—is that Waterloo region hospital workers are at higher risk of patient attacks. These are stats that show that this is a growing trend. This goes back to resources. Everything goes back to health care resources.

The need to protect patient information stored in electronic health records: When this originally did pass—I don't need to go all the way down memory lane on this—that minister did have to resign, because due diligence was not maintained throughout the contracting out of that process.

**1700**

These were early days. These were lessons that should have been absorbed by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health around having the appropriate oversight with the ability to audit and control costs and maintain, quite honestly, a conflict-of-interest standard which would meet any other business expectations. That did not happen.

A lot of people during this process found that their own doctor moved their medical health records off-site because they started fresh with electronic. This happened to my own family. I got a bill for \$95 to get my family's health records back. I had to buy back my own health records. I stubbornly decided not to do that. I'm sure that surprises many of you.

I do want to touch on the need to improve transparency and accountability when medical errors occur. I'm actively our health critic. We're tracking these breaches and errors. You can see a direct line of accountability and a direct correlation to the privatization of health care to these medical mistakes. You can. There are currently some legal challenges before the Ministry of Health on this issue, Mr. Speaker, but when Ed Clark has turned his sights from Hydro One and liquor—one day, we will stop talking about wine and beer and marijuana in this place perhaps. He has publicly mused about the need for greater private sector involvement in the health care system, and this is a really interesting piece. Mr. Clark is

suggesting that, in order to fix the problem of health care which began with privatization, we go right back to privatization. It is not a solution; I just want to say that openly.

We have a piece of legislation with a goal of looking to address the privacy of patients' information after some high-profile breaches. We have a piece of legislation that is looking to address and protect patient information stored in electronic health records, and we have a piece of legislation that needs to improve transparency and accountability when medical errors do occur.

Bill 119 has good bones for that. It's a piece which is crafted, I think, in essence to address these core issues. We, of course, will be supporting it, but we will be making some amendments. Each time, we will be getting up and addressing the real human costs of not addressing these issues in a responsible way through a publicly funded health care system, where the government does have oversight and a direct responsible relationship between the patient and the funding and resources that are flowing from this place. This is the imperative and this is the value that people in this province want. They want a health care system that is responsive and which is responsible. And right now, we have a lot of work to go in that regard.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's a pleasure to respond again and a pleasure to respond to the member from Waterloo.

Without repeating myself, I want to reiterate that every party has been there. We've all been there, trying to allocate what scarce resources we have to health care. To simply put critical incidents down to a failure of funding is overly simplistic. Critical incidents occur all across health care. I think it's important to remember that, and it's overly simplistic to focus on that one area.

Currently, right now, we're in a dispute with our province's physicians. I know that the party opposite is continuing to advocate for them. The challenge is, we only have so much money, so it's: Where do we put it that's best going to help the people we serve? We can't do everything. What happens from the members across, with all due respect, is—and I get it—"I'm advocating for whoever I can advocate for. I'm not worried about how that all fits into a budget or how that all gets allocated as a resource. I'm here to advocate." I get it; I just want to put that out there.

I do want to say that, as far as critical incidents go, I know exactly what the member is talking about. I have constituents in my riding who have had critical incidents happen and have not had a resolution because what happened in that incident in terms of investigation was not reported to them. That is just simply wrong. Evidence shows that when you fully disclose critical incidents, actually, your exposure to litigation drops. It's not a natural thing for a lot of administrators to believe.

I think it's a really important piece of legislation and I'm glad that the member across supports it and focused on it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Question and comments?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I appreciate the comments, not only made by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, but also from the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health. He says he gets it. I get it as well. What I get is the fact that the debt in this province has risen over the last 13 years from \$125 billion to \$300 billion. I get the fact that he's saying that they're in a money crunch. I get that. My question is, why are they in a money crunch? We all know, and some of the things—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Mismanagement.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Well, it's been mismanagement. You're right. It's mismanagement in a lot of different files throughout.

I think that we do need to have quicker response time for our medical records. But do you know the thing that really bothers me, Speaker? I've gone and spoken with many, many seniors, as an example—because I do “Sing Along with Rick” and “Caroling with Rick.” I did about 19 different homes around Christmastime and I spoke to these people. I said, “You know what? Some 30, 40, 50 years ago, you helped make Ontario the great province that it once was. Unfortunately, now, as I advocate on your behalf for more funds, more health care dollars, it's becoming more and more difficult.” To me, that is a very unfair way of treating those who once made this province great: reducing the number of health care dollars that they rightly deserve to have. To me, it's almost like we're going to punish you—because people are living longer.

I think that this bill is a good start. It's a good bill and we will support it. We do believe, though, that there are amendments that will need to be added to this particular bill, because we can't continue to go from first to worst in many areas, and health care costs will only continue to increase over the years come.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I have to say it's always a pleasure to rise and weigh in on a bill, especially after comments were made by my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo. She always brings a very well-researched and thoughtful contribution to any debate, and this was no doubt just like the other times that she weighs in.

I have to say that the timing of this bill, Bill 119, I personally find very interesting. At a time when the Liberals are content to push more and more privatization in the province of Ontario, they're trying to shift the focus away from the privatization that's going on and focus on what's happening within our system and how can we manage that and make people feel content that their information is being stored and respected, all the while continuing their privatization agenda, which is also potentially exposing people in other areas. I find that a little interesting.

One of the other salient points that my colleague made was that ensuring that information is protected requires resources. At the time that this bill is brought forward,

we're seeing upheaval, chaos and cutbacks through our health care system, and it's all because of this Liberal government. In order to do this properly, we need to have the resources. I can't see how, with cuts to our overall health system, we're going to be able to do that. Again, it very much feels like it's a case of trying to get people to focus on some of the positive things and kind of putting a rosy spin on some of the real negative and, many would view, scary transformations that are happening within our health care system.

1710

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** It's a pleasure to rise in the House today and speak again on this bill. I just want to acknowledge my colleague from Ottawa South, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, for his words. I feel that he encapsulated the discussion beautifully by focusing on the fact that we're all trying to make decisions to improve the system.

I would just like to spend a little bit of time and bring us back to the focus of the information that is within this piece of legislation. It will improve personal health information generally, and it responds to the need for greater transparency and appropriate disclosure of information to patients during critical incident reviews.

The first section introduces amendments to strengthen the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, as well as introduce rules and governance for shared electronic health records. The second section proposes amendments to current legislation to clarify the use of the Quality of Care Information Protection Act. It will also set requirements to improve transparency toward patients when a critical incident occurs.

We've got three hospitals in Kingston and the Islands. It's very important that those hospitals have the information they need in order to deliver adequate and effective care to patients. I think that this piece of legislation will assist with that and protect patient information at the same time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member for Kitchener–Waterloo: two minutes.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thanks to the members from Chatham–Kent–Essex, Kenora–Rainy River, Kingston and the Islands, and Ottawa South.

I just want to say that I didn't mean to leave you with the impression that I was only talking about resources, because I also mentioned the issue around reporting. The issue around reporting, which is incredibly relevant to this piece of legislation, is that when you contract it out, those arm's-length contracts are a divide around accountability and around reporting, especially when profit is the driver. I share your concern around disclosure of critical incidents, but that is less likely to happen when you don't have the oversight. That's my case against privatization.

My other case against privatization is that it costs more. It ends up costing the people of this province more. There is also a human cost to privatization to the people

who contracted C. difficile and the people who were given the wrong chemotherapy drugs. That lack of oversight has a human cost.

It's true: There is a cost to delivering public health care correctly with integrity. There is also a cost not to. When you don't fund front-line health care, there is this trickle-out effect into the community, which we heard about during budget consultations, that is heartbreaking.

You have a Minister of Health who says that hospitals are only for acute care. That's what he says, but that is where people end up. They end up in the hospital because there isn't a system of hospice care, there isn't a comprehensive pain management strategy, there isn't a long-term-care system that is responsive to an aging demographic and there isn't an addictions or mental health strategy that keeps people out of hospital.

So there is a cost to not funding the community and saying to people, "Stay out of the hospital," when they have nowhere else to go, and I will leave it at that. There is nothing more political than health care, but there is nothing more important in the province of Ontario, as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? Further debate? Last call: Further debate?

Mr. Hoskins has moved second reading of Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004.

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

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

I have to call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1715 to 1716.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** A little late on the bell, but that's okay.

I have a vote for deferral. This is standing order 28(h). They request that the second reading of Bill 119 be deferred until deferred votes on February 18, 2016.

## WASTE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2016

### LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 16, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire et la Loi transitoire de 2016 sur le réacheminement des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** When this was last attended to, it was, I believe, with the official opposition.

Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to take this opportunity to address Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act. Today, I would like to highlight the need for a fundamental reform to increase recycling across Ontario, protect our environment today and into the future, and create good, well-paying jobs throughout the green economy.

For far too long, our province's waste diversion rate has been hopelessly stalled at 25%. While other provinces, like BC, make the right policy choices, Ontario unfortunately falls further and further behind. It's not hard to see why. Instead of empowering the markets to recover materials and recycle them into new products, Kathleen Wynne has done the opposite.

For more than a decade, this government has relied on failed anti-market policies that have held Ontario back from becoming the environmental leader it could be and really should be. To turn this situation around, the Ontario PCs brought forward a bold new plan in 2012 to increase recycling and reduce waste through innovation and competition among businesses in the private sector. Our plan was very clear: Government should set measurable and achievable recycling targets for businesses, establish environmental standards and enforce the rules. Aside from that, government should get out of the way.

I must say, Speaker, you've never looked better in that chair.

Now, back to the debate at hand. Our plan was based on the clear understanding that the recycling industry is a business, not a government program. We knew that, to move forward, the market shouldn't be tied down with red tape. It should be opened up to encourage competition, increase awareness, as well as efficiency, and advance environmental protection.

Just yesterday, the minister mentioned that Bill 151 is the biggest shift in policy seen in this Legislature for some time. It's important that everyone listening today understands the reason for this shift, and that is because the Liberals have finally acknowledged their repeated and long-standing failures on waste diversion. When it comes right down to it, we are pleased to see that the government, however grudgingly, is willing to embrace the common-sense approach we put forward in 2012. This government has adopted key ideas from the PC recycling plan as it reads today in Bill 151. But I have to be clear: We still have concerns. We still have things to talk through. Although we welcome the government's major policy reversal, we remain opposed to all instances of unnecessary regulation, bureaucracy and government intervention that still exist in Bill 151. I will outline these areas in much greater detail later in my speech.

First of all, I would like to talk about why waste diversion is very important to me and my riding. At the crux of it all, it's about jobs and value-added business models that will drive local economies. We can never

lose sight of any policy made in this House. We've got to focus on jobs, the business models must be costed out and we have to drive our local economies.

To that end, it's interesting because, just last week when I attended a policy meeting hosted in Huron county by the Christian Farmers of Ontario, they were asking where this current government stands on biomass. It seems that that whole initiative, if you will, and that whole complement to a comprehensive energy mix seems to have stalled a little bit as well. We have one biomass generator in my riding just outside of Walkerton, and that family, the Froom family, has worked very hard to get it up and running. I applaud them for it. I've enjoyed the tours that I've had of that facility. It works. It's a combination of biomass that generates energy, and this one is successfully hooked to the grid.

I have to tell you that when the provincial association visited that facility a couple of years ago, I did hear some concerns from the participants in that particular tour that they were frustrated at the direction of this particular government because, when it comes to biomass generation, people want to see that it's bankable and predictable in order to invest in that type of energy generation. But today, sadly, in 2016, that whole concept of energy generation is not bankable or predictable, and people have walked away from the opportunities that they thought were bright.

We have a trend here. There are many different people who, for lack of a sustainable plan that's concrete—people are turning away from Ontario. Whether it's investing in biomass generation or investing in manufacturing, that trend—that thread—far extends into so many sectors that are driving our economy in a precarious direction.

In terms of other small businesses, Huron–Bruce is also home to a number of used-tire depots. We have had people out to meet with them to discuss their concerns. While there was maybe some progression made during those discussions, there is still a lot of frustration over all of the red tape and the lack of oversight into the agencies responsible for facilitating recycling. We do have to take a serious look at that as well.

Speaker, I need to carry on. While I touched on specifics from my great riding of Huron–Bruce, I would also like to point out the importance of understanding the diversity of Ontario's geographic landscape as well. Currently, Ontario's municipalities are working collaboratively to deliver waste management services. Recognizing the important role that our municipalities have to play in making Ontario's waste diversion efforts more efficient is crucial. We have to treat municipalities as good partners, and respect them as such.

However, differences such as population density, number of construction projects, or commercial-to-residential space ratios all contribute to the differences between rural and urban communities and can create unique needs with respect to waste diversion. According to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, which we all know as AMO, municipal recycling programs vary,

depending on what is most efficient for the community. Some collect curbside while others depend on depots. What is collected in the blue box can also vary depending on the sorting equipment available, the size of the community and access to markets for recyclable materials.

We need to get waste diversion right because we have diminishing landfill capacity and we rely on the United States to take roughly a quarter of our garbage output every year. That translates into lost jobs, lost revenue and ultimately a weaker local economy.

I'd also like to point out that another important reason we must work with municipalities to decrease the amount of waste that is not being recovered is the whole issue of end-of-life licensed landfills. Since 1989, Ontario has been consistently closing landfills. Developing alternatives to these facilities has been encumbered by increasing costs and lengthy approval and assessment processes. Recovering a greater amount of waste and looking to other sectors, such as IC&I, to accomplish this will help alleviate the diminishing land capacity to store it and allow municipalities to free up funds for other projects that would benefit their communities.

Further, according to Stats Canada, in 2008 Ontario ranked fifth out of eight provinces in efforts to keep waste from ending up in landfills, diverting only 22.6%. To put that in perspective, Nova Scotia led the pack with a diversion rate of 45%, more than double what ours was at that time. This was followed in order by New Brunswick at 35.8%, British Columbia at 34.9% and Quebec at 28.6%. When looked at in these terms, it is clear that under Liberal stewardship, Ontario has been failing to uphold its waste reduction and recycling obligations. Speaker, we can do better; we must do better.

As I mentioned earlier, the goal then is not only to reduce our carbon emissions but to increase capacity to recover waste. Many provinces, such as Manitoba, have recently implemented plans aimed at reducing waste. In particular, I want to focus on their Recycling and Waste Reduction discussion paper from 2014, which I think has set the bar quite high on what a strategy on waste management should look like. It's a strategy that we should look to as an example to be followed.

The government of Manitoba has identified clear targets, such as their aim to cut per capita waste in half by 2020. It outlined a workable timeline which I was asking about earlier today, but I unfortunately did not get a clear answer. It also highlighted key actionable strategies that the government, industry and individuals can undertake to ensure the success of the program and the benefits it will bring to their province economically, and both socially and environmentally. They also found areas to improve monitoring efforts.

In developing a draft strategy, these are core areas that any government should have clear messaging on. As we've seen today, while this government has done their best, they haven't quite hit the mark and their messaging is all over the page.

But now I would like to turn to my next point, which is that in facilitating changes to increase recycling, we

must account for the economics of this process and the commodity markets.

With regard to the economics of recycling and commodity markets, according to the Ontario Waste Management Association, Ontario exports roughly four million tonnes of waste to the US. These are waste processing facilities primarily in Michigan and New York. This is an industry that generates \$2.5 billion in annual revenue and employs about 11,000 labourers. What does this mean? It represents a significant loss to Ontario's economy. In a May 2014 report released by the Conference Board of Canada, analysts found that if waste diversion in Ontario were to reach 60%, as this government had aimed to do by 2008—which was a few years ago, if you would agree with that, Speaker—it could support 13,000 jobs and contribute an additional \$1.5 billion to our provincial GDP. But clearly this government still hasn't gotten it right.

Waste diversion has evolved. It has evolved beyond the three Rs that we know as reduce, reuse and recycle, and it's imperative that we all adapt and adopt an additional R which ties in recovery.

AMO further reinforced these job numbers in their backgrounder from September 2015, Waste Diversion—An Ongoing Success Story, where they found that job creation could reach as high as seven jobs for every 1,000 tonnes of diverted waste, as opposed to less than one job for every 1,000 tonnes sent to the landfill, which is, sadly, under this Liberal government, our current reality.

It's important to recognize that trading markets for post-consumer recycled goods tend to fluctuate from month to month. For example, according to Waste360, in mid-2014, the national average price of post-consumer natural high-density polyethylene, HDPE, was trading at roughly 56 cents per pound. In January 2015, this had dropped to 25 cents per pound. It had risen once again in July 2015 to trade at 34 cents a pound.

Another example can be seen in the trading price of post-consumer PET beverage bottles and jars. In mid-2014, it was trading at 19 cents per pound, dropping to 13.5 cents in April 2015, yet rising again in July to 14.5 cents per pound.

**1730**

Post-consumer product trading markets can be volatile, setting industry highs one day and record lows the next. But by recovering these materials in our own province instead of exporting them to processing sites such as those in Michigan and New York, we could help industries not only manage their environmental impact; we can help them get back and have a competitive edge, save costs on production and encourage them to invest in other areas, such as research and development or green technologies.

The key point here is that industry experts know how to best monitor these trends and act on them. Ultimately, we need to let industry manage these markets since it has the skills and knowledge to do so. We have to stop government interference, and there has been a lot of interference. Under this Liberal government, red tape has

grown exponentially. Ontario has seen more than 300,000 manufacturing jobs disappear, its long-term credit downgraded from AA- to A+, and hydro rates increased by 80% since this Liberal government assumed office in 2002.

On top of all these shortcomings, unfortunately, this government has plans to introduce an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan—although they've waffled a little bit as of yesterday and today on the kickoff to that particular plan—despite promises during the federal election by Premier Wynne to cancel it if enhancements are made to the existing Canada Pension Plan.

This plan, the ORPP, is expected to cost our province an estimated 54,000 jobs and has been opposed by many of Ontario's leading industry experts. Most notably, there is an association that is the umbrella group for many of these industries, known as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. In a letter drafted to the Premier in June of 2015 and signed by more than 150 members, the OCC stated that only 26% of employers in the province believed they could shoulder the burden of this payroll tax.

On top of this, the Liberal government also has plans to introduce a cap-and-trade scheme. Although I think the Premier more adequately described it earlier today, we'll stick with "cap-and-trade scheme." Anyways, it will see Ontarians burdened with further costs on their everyday lives.

Last week, the Liberals made an announcement committing \$92 million to do home retrofits from the Green Investment Fund, which is to be funded by the proceeds of cap-and-trade. Mr. Speaker, we haven't seen a plan from this government for their cap-and-trade scheme. We haven't seen a cost-benefit analysis on their cap-and-trade scheme. I submit to you, Speaker, that Ontarians should not let the government continue to play games with money they haven't even collected. With no plan even announced, why is this Liberal government already spending this money? Many people would have answers to that.

I have to say, Speaker, with all of these initiatives that I have mentioned aimed at taking money out of the pockets of taxpayers, it is no wonder that OCC found, in their Emerging Stronger 2016 report, that only 30% of Ontario's businesses have faith in this Liberal government to strengthen the economy—only 30%. I think that translated into the overwhelming win that we saw in Whitby-Oshawa last week. I congratulate our friend and colleague Lorne Coe on his overwhelming win, and I can't wait to welcome him to this very Legislature on Monday.

But, Speaker, going back, I mentioned the waste diversion initiatives because we have to worry about clear examples of Liberal failure. To Ontarians, when we think about all the failures that we have seen—the inability of the Liberals to get e-health right, the inability to have a government manage properly the hard-pressed dollars that have been squandered on high-priced subsidies for energy we don't need, and scandal after scandal—

I would suggest to Ontarians, sadly, to fasten your seat belts and hang on to what's left in your wallet.

As I mentioned before, the waste management sector contributes \$2.5 billion in annual revenue to our provincial GDP and employs roughly 11,000 people. The last thing we want to see is these numbers diminished, when they should, in fact, be increased, because the Liberals mishandled yet another piece of legislation. Time and again, this government proves that they can't get things right, and we just can't trust them to get it right in the future because of their dismal past record.

I could go on and on about that, but I would now like to turn for a moment to the role that Ontario's industrial, commercial and institutional sectors play in relation to waste diversion. In his 2011 report "What a Waste: Failing to Engage Waste Reduction Solutions," then-Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller found that Ontario's IC&I sectors were responsible for approximately 60% of the province's total waste output, but had a dismal diversion rate of 13%. Now, 13% might not sound too bad to the environmental minister, given that it accounts for a little more than half of the total provincial diversion rate, but it's a whole lot worse when you consider that it has been on a steady decline from 19% since 2002—the same year, incidentally, that the Liberals assumed office.

Mr. Speaker, I have concerns regarding the Liberal failings to tackle the issue of waste diversion in the IC&I sectors. In fact, there are many more that go back for more than a decade. For example, a special report commissioned by Willms and Shier Environmental Lawyers found that of the staggering 7.6 million tonnes of waste being generated by these industries in 2004, 81% ended up in landfills. The same report found that with the release of the government's discussion paper Ontario's 60% Waste Diversion Goal, in 2004, the province's proposed 60% diversion target for municipal solid waste—including IC&I waste—by the end of 2008 would remain unattainable without specifically tackling the IC&I component.

In 2012, the Auditor General's annual report found that the IC&I sector generated approximately 60% of waste in Ontario, but managed to divert only about 12% of its waste. That, Speaker, is a dramatic Liberal failure.

Even the Liberals have recognized their own failings in regard to IC&I. In their own Draft Strategy for a Waste Free Ontario, on page 23, they even admit that they can't get it right. They state:

"Existing regulatory requirements have not driven diversion, as the 3Rs regulations are limited in scope and require 'reasonable efforts' to send source-separated wastes for recycling or reuse.

"There is potential for greater diversion in the IC&I sectors."

If the application of these regulations has failed, it is only because this government has failed to properly reinforce and monitor them.

Speaking of failure, let's recount just how much the current government has failed on waste diversion. The

Liberals came into power with a waste diversion rate of around 25%. Then they promised, in 2004, that they would increase diversion to 60% by 2008. Well, Speaker, it's now 2016 and I can report to this House that Ontario's diversion rate is nowhere near 60%. In fact, 12 years after the Liberals promised to increase recycling, Ontario's waste diversion remains stagnant at just 25%.

Speaker, we just can't trust this government to get anything right.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They can't get anything right.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** They can't. That's right. You know what? That 25% is 35% below the Liberals' target. So what happened to their promise? What happened?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Same as always: They break their promise.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** That's true, and they make a lot of empty promises, as well.

I can tell you that in this stretch goal that they had, they did absolutely nothing to address the largest sources of waste in this province. Instead, they spent their time creating recycling cartels to impose eco taxes on Ontario consumers. These eco tax programs have unfairly increased costs for Ontarians while failing to make any meaningful change in the province's overall diversion rate.

**1740**

Speaker, while this government has failed to make any meaningful change, hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent to finance Liberals' recycling cartels, including Ontario Electronic Stewardship and Ontario Tire Stewardship. Clearly, we need reform.

That's why, in 2012, our party brought forward a bold new plan to increase waste diversion. We saw the economic potential of the recycling industry. We in the PC Party knew that with the right regulatory system, businesses would invest in recovering old tires, plastics and metals that could be recycled into new products and marketed to consumers across the country and around the world. But to unleash this potential, we have to get government out of the way. Sadly, this just isn't happening.

Going back to our plan: We would take steps. We announced that we would eliminate each and every Liberal eco tax program. We would scrap the Liberals' recycling cartels. We would abolish the Liberals' eco tax agency, known as Waste Diversion Ontario, and we would return the government to its true role as a tough regulator. These policy changes would be the first step towards a competitive marketplace.

To create the conditions for this marketplace, we would then have government set measurements and achievable recycling targets for businesses, establish environmental standards and enforce the rules. That's it. That is what government should be doing.

Again, I'm going to repeat this, because just maybe the government might adopt these ideas: To create the proper conditions for an effective recycling, recovering circular economy, we should have a government that sets measurable and achievable recycling targets for busi-

nesses, establishes environmental standards and enforces the rules. And then just stay out of the way.

It would then be the responsibility of businesses, with a competitive marketplace, to find the most effective, efficient and productive way to increase recycling. Some businesses would choose to work on their own; others would choose to work within a collaborative effort to achieve economies of scale. But under our plan, both approaches would work, because government and Waste Diversion Ontario would no longer be in the business of telling industry how to run its operations. If they were to look internally, they should know first and foremost that based on their record, they should not be telling anybody how to run an operation.

Speaker, it was clear the last time the Legislature debated the issue of waste diversion that the Liberals did not agree with our plan. In fact, the Liberal government tabled Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, which inspired such overwhelming opposition that it met with a quick and welcome demise.

Now, as I said earlier in my speech, I am pleasantly surprised to see that the Liberals have in large part adopted the PC vision for an open recycling marketplace. But we still have major concerns with Bill 151 that must be addressed in committee. I want to generally outline our concerns, and then go over the bill in detail to explain the specific problems.

Generally, we believe the following changes must be made to improve the bill: First, establish a clear, legislated timeline to eliminate every single Liberal eco tax program—we stand firmly on that. Secondly, scrap the Liberals' eco tax agency, Waste Diversion Ontario—don't just meld it or massage it into a new authority; it needs to be gone. And thirdly, drop all plans to create a force of waste cops. Yes, we are looking—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Well, folks, on the government side there isn't one person who isn't talking to another person. Isn't that amazing? I would suggest that if you want to have all these discussions, please take them outside, because it's getting very loud. Thanks so much.

Continue.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And because we have such good ideas, I think I'm going to revisit the changes that we're going to recommend to Bill 151. They can take them back to their minister and to their Premier, because they're good ideas.

To improve the bill, we would establish a clear, legislated timeline to eliminate every single Liberal eco tax program. Second, we would scrap the Liberals' eco tax agency, known as Waste Diversion Ontario, not massage it into a new bureaucratic body or authority. Thirdly, we would drop all plans to create a force of waste cops to police recycling bins and garbage cans across the province. Speaker, can you believe it? Their idea of creating jobs in Ontario is creating yet another layer of bureaucracy to police recycling bins and garbage cans—not acceptable. Fourthly, we would cut red tape that

increases costs for Ontarians and impedes environmental protection in our province. If these changes are made, we can stop many of the unintended consequences that the government has failed to see with this proposed legislation.

Now I would like to address the Liberals' eco tax programs. While other provinces advance waste diversion and grow the green economy, Ontario, as I mentioned before, has lagged behind, largely because the Liberals have protected their eco tax programs and recycling cartels out of fear of confronting failure. It's not hard to see why. The Liberals' reaction is a natural tendency of how central planners manage cartels or monopolies. As the Nobel Prize-winning economist Friedrich Hayek pointed out more than 70 years ago, monopoly "is attained through collusive agreement and promoted by public policies." The trouble with this system, as Hayek explains, is that "Where the power which ought to check and control monopoly becomes interested in sheltering and defending its appointees, where for the government to remedy an abuse is to admit responsibility for it, and where criticism of the actions of monopoly means criticism of the government, there is little hope of monopoly becoming the servant of the community."

The good news, Hayek says, is that when monopolistic agreements are invalidated and when these policies are reversed, competitive conditions can finally be restored. With competition, businesses and consumers have more freedom, and our economy can create more jobs and growth.

So, Speaker, you might be saying, "How do we get to a more competitive recycling marketplace in Ontario?" I have the answer for that, and I'm sure you're waiting for it.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** No. Share it. Share it.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Okay, the member from the Prescott area wants to hear. I will gladly share with you.

The first step must be scrapping eco tax programs and cartels. Our party has consistently and clearly made this point for years, yet the Liberal government has always opted to protect the status quo. However, the new environment minister seems to be changing the Liberals' tune, claiming the government will now meet the PC demand of scrapping eco tax programs. We heard a couple of different timelines or time frames earlier this morning.

We welcome this development, but, as always, we know the devil is in the details, especially with this government. Unfortunately, section 14 of schedule 2 makes it optional for the government to phase out or wind up its eco tax programs, so we can't trust it. This is a major concern because, as before, in case after case, time after time, we just can't trust the Liberal government's word. After all, this is the same government that promised to reach 60% waste diversion, yet it has left the rate stalled at 25%. That is why we need assurances that the government will actually follow through with its new-found commitment to scrap its failed programs and its cartels.

The Ontario PCs are calling for a clear, legislated timeline to eliminate the Used Tires Program, the waste electrical and electronic equipment program and the Orange Drop Program. Producers of the materials in these programs should then be individually responsible for meeting recycling targets and standards while having the freedom to meet these obligations as they see fit. This is a fair, reasonable proposal that protects Ontario consumers and taxpayers. Without the government agreeing to this proposal, Ontarians rightly have no reason to believe the Liberals at all.

Next, I'd like to speak about the blue box. The Blue Box Program is one of Ontario's major environmental achievements—no two ways about it. For more than three decades, it has played a critical role in recovering paper and packaging so that they could be recycled into new products. A large part of this program's success is the result of the Waste Diversion Act, which was introduced by the former PC government under Mike Harris. The Harris government passed this act in 2002 to create a more stable funding formula for the Blue Box Program. Rather than just having municipalities foot the bill, the new formula divided the costs between industry and municipalities 50-50.

**1750**

The Harris government's intent was to ensure that the blue box would remain financially sustainable well into the future. It used a bold new principle for reform, called extended producer responsibility. It was the first acknowledgement that producers needed to take responsibility for managing the waste that was created from their products and packaging. Despite some initial uncertainty, the Harris government moved forward with its EPR reforms while closely working with industry and municipalities to build on the growing success of the Blue Box Program.

Looking back on this achievement, it's truly rewarding to see how far Ontario has come in this particular area. Today, 95% of Ontarians have curbside recycling, and the blue box has achieved a diversion rate of more than 67%. This accomplishment is the result of the vision and the leadership of the former PC government and the hard work and dedication of industry, as well as our municipal partners.

Unfortunately, the program has begun to face major challenges under the current Liberal government. This government has allowed Waste Diversion Ontario to pit industry and municipalities against each other in a bitter battle over services and costs. Each year, disputes over funding leave uncertainty for the next. Both sides have called on the government for a solution for years, but their pleas have fallen on deaf ears. Instead of developing a solution in 2013, do you know what the Liberals did? They tabled Bill 91. If you can believe it, this failed bill actually would have legislated a role for the WDO to perpetuate the battle between municipalities and industry by giving it new powers over funding. With such fatal flaws, it's not hard to see why Bill 91 was rejected by Ontarians, rejected by industry and left to die on the

order paper. We all know why it died on the order paper, don't we? Prorogation, a resignation—the list could go on and on.

Thankfully, though, there is a solution for the blue box, and it's what our party actually proposed. The PC plan is to transition the blue box into an industry-led funded program. We acknowledge the good work done by our municipal partners on recycling, but we know that to ensure financial stability into the future, industry must take on full responsibility for the program. This reform would reduce costs for consumers, protect municipal taxpayers and streamline decision-making to increase efficiency. We are glad to see that government has come around to our way of thinking on the blue box, but we remain concerned about how it plans to execute the program's transition. The blue box transition has to be done gradually and carefully.

Speaker, we have seen the frantic pace that this government is moving at to impose its new cap-and-trade scheme in time for its budget. We have called on the Liberals repeatedly to slow down. It's interesting. I think they finally got the message on ORPP and they've definitely slowed down on that. When they don't have a plan, they don't have a fully costed business model, maybe, just perhaps, we can hold out hope that by next week, the Liberals will have slowed down on their cap-and-trade scheme as well.

You know what? Taxpayers, industry and our economy are going to suffer for years as a result of the reign of this particular Liberal government, so it greatly concerns us to think the Liberals may use the same approach with the blue box. This program is too important to hinder with sloppy regulatory work and rushed decision-making. Quite frankly, Ontarians deserve to have no disruptions to their blue box service.

Ontarians have done their part to make the Blue Box Program a success, so the government must commit to do its part as well. To protect the blue box, we would like to see a guarantee that the Liberals will not raise the funding cap for industry without a credible plan in place. This guarantee needs to be clearly spelled out to protect Ontario consumers and taxpayers.

Next, I would like to address the Liberals' plan to give Waste Diversion Ontario new powers and a new name, the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority. The sections dealing with the authority in Bill 151 show that the Liberals have not fully given up on their central planning approach. They've been dragged, kicking and screaming, into accepting the common-sense proposals put forward by the Ontario PCs, but they continue to hold on to some of the worst aspects of the current system and their failed Bill 91.

First of all, it's their consistent and tireless defence of WDO which all Ontarians should consider suspect. WDO is the organization that surprised farmers across Ontario—and I heard about it in my riding of Huron-Bruce—with a 2,200% increase on farm tire taxes. It rubber-stamped \$40 eco taxes on TVs, and it failed to oversee the reckless spending of the tire tax dollars at

Ontario Tire Stewardship, where Ontarians' money was blown on lavish stays at luxurious hotels and fancy dinners of elk tenderloin, wild boar chops and fancy drinks as well. In short, WDO is the problem.

Ontarians need to ask why the Liberals continue to hold up this failed agency as the solution. And why on earth do they think WDO should be rewarded with new powers after years of incompetence? As always, the Liberals' approach does not make any sense.

To quote my colleague the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, if you have an employee who fails to meet his obligations, you don't give him a raise and hand him a promotion; you give him a pink slip and show him the door. That's what needs to happen here, Speaker. It's time for this government to finally realize that it can't keep rewarding bad behaviour, and it's time to put this toothless watchdog out of its misery.

Our position remains clear. To bring about the change Ontario's recycling market needs, we would scrap Waste Diversion Ontario, return the environment ministry to its role as a regulator, leave enforcement to the ministry's enforcement branch, and maintain a limited agency that only collects and analyzes data—that means no policy development, no dictating and no enforcement. These changes would greatly improve oversight, strengthen enforcement and contain costs for businesses and consumers alike.

Unfortunately, it appears as though in this area the Liberals are doomed to repeat the same old mistakes. Not only does WDO get to continue under Bill 151 with massive new powers, it gets an unlimited budget. This government just won't learn from their past mistakes.

Yes, Speaker, you did hear it right: WDO will have an unlimited budget. Ontarians cannot afford that. The

Liberals have not produced one estimate of how much WDO will cost Ontarians. Sound familiar? It's like the cap-and-trade scheme that they're trying to ram down our throats as well.

But going back to WDO instead, they say that WDO's new mandate needs to be worked out in regulation. Regulation happens behind closed doors, outside of the democratic arena. So we worry: How much bigger will WDO get? The Liberals really aren't sure. How much more powerful will WDO get? The Liberals won't say. And how much will WDO cost at the end of the day? The Liberals claim to have no idea.

With policies like this, it's really not that difficult to understand why the Liberals have more than doubled the province's debt to \$315 billion. They've doubled the debt, Speaker, to \$315 billion, and unfortunately they have no plan to bring the budget back to balance. They may say they're striving to achieve it, but based on their failed policy, we know that just won't happen. Just like the Liberal government's financial mismanagement, WDO will follow suit.

In fact, when we take a look at budgets, WDO's current budget recently jumped by nearly \$1 million in just one year. Its budget for 2016 is now \$3.2 million, if you can believe it, and \$1.2 million of that is going to professional fees.

Speaker, I look forward to picking this up at my next opportunity. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
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Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
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Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
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