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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I would like to welcome members of community who have come for the debate on my bill. These are folks who are either currently sitting in the gallery or will be momentarily. Welcome Atqiya Fariha, Arif Zia, Ahmad Gaied, Evonne Joseph, Faizah Islam, Junaid Sohail, Karen Rodman, Kazi Aditi Zahir, Maliha Khan, Mohammed Hashim, Muhsanah Arefin, Neethan Shan, Noor Baig, Sumaiya Halim Mumu, Syeda Samira Rahman, Sanaa Ali-Mohammed, Samiya Abdi, Tariq Syed, Zartasha Zainab, Omar Ha-Redeye, Hana Tariq, as well as my partner, David McGown, and my team members Ahmer Khan and Ohana Oliveira. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION
ON ISLAMOPHOBIA ACT, 2019
LOI DE 2019 SUR LA JOURNÉE
DE COMMÉMORATION ET D'ACTION
CONTRE L'ISLAMOPHOBIE

Ms. Berns-McGown moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 83, An Act to proclaim a Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia / Projet de loi 83, Loi proclamant la Journée de commémoration et d'action contre l'islamophobie.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: It is with a great deal of hope that I stand in the House today to ask my fellow parliamentarians to vote with me to take a strong stand against hate and against Islamophobia in Ontario and in Canada.

A little over two years ago, on January 29, 2017, a shooter walked into the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City shortly after the conclusion of evening prayers at about 8 p.m., and murdered six worshippers and injured 19 others. Ibrahima Barry, Mamadou Tanou Barry, Khaled Belkacemi, Aboubaker Thabti, Abdelkrim Hassane and Azzedine Soufiane lost their lives that night. Communities across Canada, but especially Muslim communities, were and continue to be traumatized by this act of hate-filled terrorism.

Just three weeks ago, another shooter attacked two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in a horrific killing spree that he documented live to social media, murdering 50 innocent men, women and children in cold blood as they prayed, as he was welcomed with “Es salaam aleikum”—“peace be with you.” Let us take a moment to sit with that. He was welcomed with “Es salaam aleikum”; he answered with death. In the hate-filled rant that he left behind, he named the Quebec shooter as an inspiration.

In the days following, here in Ontario, a father said to his four-year-old daughter that it was time to go to the mosque for prayers. She answered, “But, Daddy, I’m afraid to go to the mosque. Isn’t that where they kill Muslims?” Can you imagine how deep the trauma has settled, how long it will sit—the pain, the fear, the questions?

It is no longer possible for anyone anywhere to deny the link between hate and violence and divisive, caustic political rhetoric. It is a link that, as human beings and as legislators, we cannot afford to deny any longer. It is time to act.

Canada prides itself as a welcoming home for diverse communities, and in that pride and in that diversity, we have forgotten that hate can gain a foothold. For too long, we have been oblivious and have allowed hate to grow in this country. We have passed legislation that purports to protect our collective public safety but that names some of us as “other.” Some have protected hate speech under the guise of free speech. We have weakened hate laws so that they are difficult to prosecute. We have minimized the dangers of extremist right-wing groups, and we have justified giving public platforms to hatemongers. We have been slow to quash anti-immigrant bigotry. No one can deny any longer where that leads.

Hate kills. It kills in synagogues and churches and mosques and gurdwaras. It kills on the street and it kills in nightclubs. It kills whether it is called “anti-Semitism” or “anti-Black racism” or “Islamophobia” or “anti-Sikh racism” or “misogyny” or “homophobia,” and we need to confront and eliminate all of it. All of it is odious, and all of it twists us into a society that we do not want to be.

But here’s the thing: We have to eliminate each part of it specifically, because each form of hate manifests differently. It has the same effect: It diminishes lives. It triggers trauma, it induces fear and mistrust, and it makes all of us smaller. But it manifests specifically, and so we have to name it, and we have to confront it specifically as well. Hate kills, but it also robs us, as a society, of the richness and wealth that we could reap and that we could be.

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As a recent Canadian Labour Congress report shows, Islamophobia robs our companies of talent. It prevents people from getting jobs and from being promoted. It means that organizations do not benefit from the diversity that allows them to flourish. It means that women who are visibly Muslim are often underemployed or precariously employed. It means that women and girls endure microaggressions and fear of more serious attacks and harassment on a daily basis. It means that Muslims are told that they are lesser Canadians. It means that Muslims are told they do not belong.

And let us be clear: That is exactly what the hate-mongers want.

The peddlers of hate want Muslims and Jews and Black people and Sikhs and other racialized people to feel unwelcome—to go back where they came from. We need to recognize the profound ignorance that underlies that sentiment, both because of the obvious fact that where racialized people come from is more often Toronto or

Ottawa or Kingston or Kitchener-Waterloo than anywhere outside the province or the country, but also because the peddlers of hate are themselves the descendants of settlers to this country, descendants of people who also came looking for a haven from political discord or poverty back home—people who relied on the goodness of Indigenous peoples to take them in, to teach them to survive on the land and in the winter. Unless we are First Nations, Inuit or Métis, we are all relative newcomers.

Let us think for a moment about what that means.

Just last week, we debated a bill by the member for Oakville North—Burlington to designate March as Hellenic Heritage Month. As the member noted, Greeks in Canada are justly celebrated for their enormous contributions to Canadian life, but it was not always this way. One hundred years ago, we saw anti-Greek riots that devastated businesses and upended lives. Those riots weren't an accident, and although they were triggered by a misunderstanding, the ground had long been set for them by a series of attitudes perpetuated in government and academia by bigoted officials who believed that only western and northern European immigrants could fit in, that only Anglo-Saxons deserved to belong in Canada.

Canada has had to apologize to a long and growing list of communities for racist and bigoted official actions and legislation—a list that includes Indigenous people and the Japanese, Chinese, Sikh, Jewish, Black and queer communities. We've had to apologize for residential schools and for turning away ships of desperate refugees. We've had to apologize for head taxes, for razing communities to the ground and for firing people from their government jobs. We've had to apologize for ignoring people's human rights and their health care.

But even as the list of apologies grows, we find ourselves creating the circumstances for future government apologies. And I ask you today: Let us stop. Let us be better.

I was gratified, when I spoke at the Toronto city hall vigil for the victims of the Christchurch attacks, to see that every speaker—from every party at every level of government and from every organization—used the word “Islamophobia” to describe anti-Muslim hate and bigotry. We need to use the right words if we are to combat what is happening. The Ontario Human Rights Commission defines Islamophobia as “stereotypes, bias or acts of hostility towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general. In addition to individual acts of intolerance and racial profiling, Islamophobia leads to viewing Muslims as a greater security threat on an institutional, systemic and societal level.”

Let us recognize that Islamophobia is not only harmful to Muslims, but that it hurts all of us in Ontario. It diminishes us as a society. It takes us further away from what we say we care about and want to be. It makes us hypocrites. We cannot stand up at vigils and decry Islamophobia if we do not work to confront it and to eradicate it from our society.

So let us recognize January 29 as an annual Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia. To do so will allow us to do three things.

First, we will appropriately commemorate the memory of six individuals who died simply for being who they were. It will give us time to sit each year with the horror of that moment.

Second, it will give us an opportunity to reflect on what we, as a society, can do as government legislators, as organizations and as individuals to eradicate Islamophobia from our midst. It will allow us to reflect on how Islamophobia manifests in any given year, and what we can do about it. It will allow Muslim communities to advocate for what they need, to ensure they feel that they belong in Ontario and that they are valued and cherished.

Finally, this bill will become a template for other provinces and the federal government, and together we can work to make Canada the country we say we want.

Let us be clear, as well, that fighting hate in any of its manifestations is not and cannot be a partisan exercise. It is up to each and every one of us, regardless of political affiliation, to stand up together to fight the scourge of racism and hate in every way it manifests.

Speaker, I lost extended family in the Holocaust, those family members who did not manage to escape Europe before the Shoah descended upon them.

When I was a child, one of our closest family friends was a Hungarian Canadian named Steve Bleyer, who had survived Auschwitz, along with his brother. Most of their family had been murdered. I can still see the tattoo on Steve's arm. I remember being terrified of everything that tattoo represented, and unable to comprehend how anyone could put a child into a concentration camp simply because of who he was.

Steve was the gentlest man I have ever met, and if he felt bitterness for his experiences, he never showed it. He was grateful for his loving wife, his two gorgeous kids, the life he built in Canada as an architect, and the cottage in the Laurentians that he designed. Later, when he began to do Holocaust education in schools, he always said, “Never again for anyone”—not never again for himself and his community; never again for anyone. It is the only way to build a society that works for everyone who lives within it.

Steve is in my thoughts as I dedicate this bill to the memory of the six men who were murdered in Quebec City, and the 50 men, women and children who were murdered in Christchurch.

Let us come together to eliminate Islamophobia, for the sake of all of us. This must be an issue that unites rather than divides us. I implore my colleagues to vote with me today, and to work with me to ensure that this bill is shepherded through committee and enacted into law. Every Ontarian who cares about social harmony and justice will be watching us closely.

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

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Madam Speaker, I tell people I am a proud Canadian Muslim and that Canada is my home. My colleagues call me “the Canadian dream.” However, I am really my grandfather's Canadian dream when he came to this great country in 1967.

Now the Canadian dream may in fact be shattered because hate and chaos are dividing Canadians, and we are witnessing what is happening in the world today. Fringe elements within our society have been able to hijack the kindness and strong values that the vast majority of Canadians and Ontarians hold, by stoking various forms of hatred against minority communities. The rise of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, xenophobia etc. is affecting us right now.

This land was meant to be free. This land was meant to be free for you and me.

On January 29, 2017, this hate spread further into our country. Hate manifested into cold-blooded murder when our Muslim brothers and sisters were gunned down at a mosque in Quebec City, simply for the purpose of a belief. How could this have happened in the land we call free for you and me?

I stand here today in solidarity with all of my parliamentary colleagues who support this non-partisan private member's bill, Bill 83. This act is a reminder that we should not let hatred, bias and prejudice be welcomed in our great province. It is a reminder of how precious life is, and how we need to continuously remember the victims of the horrific attack and to raise awareness on Islamophobia and, most importantly, to combat those who purposely disseminate false and dangerous narratives.

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Madam Speaker, we need this day. It is a reminder to all of us that we need to embrace one another with open arms. This country and this province were built on our diversity. It is what makes us stronger and united. We are no different. We are all the same. We all have the same beating red heart, Madam Speaker.

All religions and moral compasses lead to the same path: They all point to peace, love and acceptance. Let us not let our differences divide us. Let us embrace them, and love and respect one another.

I would like to end my speech with a saying of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him: "Kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever is not kind has no faith."

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm honoured to rise and speak to this important and very timely piece of legislation, which my colleague the member for Beaches–East York has brought before us to this House today. I want to congratulate her on her very moving remarks in introduction of this bill. I want to thank the member for her leadership in presenting this House with a clear call to action and an important first step to take in the fight against the scourge of Islamophobia.

Just over two years ago, Canadians were horrified to learn of a vicious, hateful terrorist attack that caused the deaths of six men at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City and injured many others.

In the time since then, we have continued to see a steady rise in Islamophobia, and hate crimes against Muslims in Ontario and around the world. Just a few weeks ago, the Muslim community in Christchurch, New Zealand, was

victimized by a horrific act of Islamophobic terrorism that left 50 worshippers at two mosques dead—a heinous act perpetrated by a self-avowed white supremacist.

Unfortunately, we also continue to see dog-whistle politics rise up around the world, as elected people who would rather pander to these hate-fuelled extremists in hopes of securing their votes take a cynical, irresponsible and, frankly, disastrous path rather than rise to the bigger calling that should behoove all elected people: of doing everything we can to heal our fractured humanity. Sadly, we even see some of our leaders afraid to clearly denounce hate and stand up for our friends and our neighbours.

Speaker, our Muslim sisters and brothers deserve so much better than this. They, like everyone, should be able to enter houses of worship without fear. They, like everyone, should be able to walk home at night without fear, whether or not they are wearing clothing or other items that identify their faith, like a hijab. We have to take action—all of us, Speaker—and we have to do it now.

This legislation is a way for the government, the members of the opposition bench and the independent members to take a critical first step in the right direction, to start fighting prejudice, to promote understanding and growth rather than ignorance and division, to show—to actually show—that our diversity is, in fact, our greatest strength, and to push back against the rising tide of Islamophobia and hate.

We can do this, Speaker. All of us together, collectively, in this chamber can do this. We can support anti-racism efforts, empowering the many people and organizations engaged in that work, instead of ignoring, undermining or destroying them. We can start today by voting in favour of this legislation.

If we do this, Speaker, I know that we can begin to build the Ontario that we all strive for: a province where Muslim children and all children know and feel that they belong; a province where no one is denied opportunity because of who they are or where they worship or where they live or when they made Ontario their home; a province where people of every faith and every background live together without discrimination and without fear.

I want to thank again, in closing, the member for Beaches–East York for showing us a way forward. I look forward to hearing the rest of the debate, and I want to close my remarks with a solemn and heartfelt salaam aleikum to all.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to be able to speak in support of Bill 83.

A week ago Sunday, I attended a vigil with many of my constituents to honour those Muslims who lost their lives during the horrific shooting in Christchurch, New Zealand. At the vigil, I said that we must continue to combat Islamophobia and take actions against it, together with all forms of hatred and discrimination. I went on to say that we need to renew our commitment to protect and strengthen our communities to be more tolerant for all faiths and creeds.

The Quran teaches that “the true servants of the Most Merciful are those who behave gently and with humility on earth, and whenever the foolish quarrel with them, they reply with words of peace.” This message for many is familiar because in the gospel of Matthew, it speaks not of revenge and retaliation but of turning the other cheek.

In closing, Speaker, if we choose to look for them, the lessons found within our faiths will bind us together and are far more powerful than those things that seek to divide us.

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

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I want to begin by thanking the member for Beaches–East York, Rima Berns-McGown, for bringing this bill forward. She ran on a commitment to advocate for meaningful inclusion, accountable institutions and elimination of all systemic oppression. She is delivering on that commitment for the people of Beaches–East York. The Ontario NDP caucus here at Queen’s Park could not be prouder.

Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms bestows upon every single person in this country the freedom of conscience and religion. As members of this House, we must ensure that these rights are upheld.

In recent years, there has been an uptick in hate crimes all across this country. Whether it be Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia, anti-Black racism or xenophobia, all acts of hatred must be condemned and, most importantly, called out for what they are.

This Legislative Assembly is located in the most multicultural city in the world, but we must remember that even the greatest city in the world is not immune to the rising levels of hate we are seeing all around the globe.

In my riding of York South–Weston, we have had targeted incidents of arson at faith centres, including an Islamic information centre and a Catholic church. Across the city, we have seen mosques and synagogues vandalized, young teens brutally attacked because of their Jewish faith, and Muslim women harassed, intimidated and assaulted for wearing the hijab.

According to Statistics Canada, there was a 67% increase in the number of hate crimes reported to police in Ontario from 2016 to 2017. This increase is, according to Statistics Canada, the most significant increase in the country and was largely as a result of hate crimes targeting Muslim, Black and Jewish populations of this province. Hate crimes targeting Muslims rose 207%; hate crimes targeting Black people rose 84%; and hate crimes targeting Jewish people rose 41%.

Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and anti-Black racism are what they are, and we should not hesitate to call them out as such.

Whether it be in Peterborough, Quebec City or Christchurch, Islamophobia is not and should not be okay.

Following the horrific, terroristic and Islamophobic attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, it is sad that political leaders in this country should have to be shamed into even mentioning the word “Islamophobia.” The people of York South–Weston and the people of this province expect us

to stand up to hate and to call out Islamophobia by its name.

I implore the members of this House to pass this bill, because it is the right thing to do.

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

1400

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: It’s a great honour for me to stand here in support of this bill.

On February 23, 2017, I was in this House and all of us who were there then voted in favour of a motion to denounce Islamophobia. That motion that I had the privilege to present moved to reaffirm that diversity has always played an important part in Ontario’s culture and heritage; recognize the significant contributions that Muslims have made, and continue to make, to Ontario’s cultural and social fabric and prosperity; stand against all forms of hatred, hostility, prejudice, racism and intolerance; rebuke the growing tide of anti-Muslim rhetoric and sentiments; denounce hate attacks, threats of violence and hate crimes against people of the Muslim faith; condemn all forms of Islamophobia; and reaffirm our support to address and prevent systemic racism.

I am so pleased to see that Bill 83 continues this good work, and I am very pleased to see that we will again have a standing together, across party lines, to support our commitment to end racism, end Islamophobia, and end discrimination in Ontario.

During my career at the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, I had the opportunity to see the effect of injustice on people. I saw, as I was working with the National Council of Canadian Muslims, the way in which harassment, intense security and denial of human rights affected people. Madam Speaker, discrimination undermines the human dignity of people who are subject to it, but it also diminishes us all. Discrimination can be internalized. It can stop people from seeing themselves as full citizens, from achieving what they are meant to achieve. Discrimination also diminishes the people who engage in it. It prevents them from seeing the potential of other human beings, of hiring them, of welcoming them, of befriending them.

It has profound effects on our society. We suffer economic loss, we suffer social loss, we suffer moral loss when we don’t allow people to achieve their full potential. When injustices go unremedied, we attack the moral fibre of our society, particularly when we all believe in the rule of law.

Discrimination can spread. It is contagious, and we know why discrimination spreads. It spreads because of indifference and because of the silence of others. Today, let’s not be silent; let’s all vote in favour of the bill. We owe it to ourselves and to Ontario to reaffirm our commitment to equality. It is an act of speech to denounce discrimination.

Like all of you, I’ve had the opportunity to attend many remembrance speeches and many remembrance occasions. It is usually when we exercise what in French we call “le devoir de mémoire”: the duty to remember. When

we attend these celebrations, they are symbolic in the best sense of the word. They lift us out of our day-to-day activities, of the humdrum of small politics, so that we speak truly to the dignity of all of us as human beings.

As Days of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia will continue to occur after this bill, it will force all of us to remember with intensity, to acknowledge the violence experienced by the Muslim communities: the killings that are motivated by hatred and that are perpetrated to scare and to scar. Healing takes many years. As we continue every year to remember, we will acknowledge that loss. Action is needed, and every year we will resolve to act, to listen and to continue to fight. We have to acknowledge the violence because it gives families and their victims a voice. Stories must be told. We cannot be a truly multicultural community unless we acknowledge the atrocities that all of us have lived.

In conclusion, il est très important aujourd'hui de voter pour soutenir cette journée de commémoration et de l'observer pour des années à venir. It is our duty to do so, and it is our duty to do so in the spirit of co-operation and community.

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I want to start with a message of gratitude to the member from Beaches–East York. We have seen various manifestations of this type of bill before various Parliaments in our country, and some have been better than others, but I want to thank you for your leadership, honestly, from the bottom of my heart—I expressed this to you privately some weeks ago—and for making this bill about the unification of this Parliament. I think that is a very powerful symbol that you have led in the denouncement of hate and the promotion of love in this country.

Speaker, we live in a land of justice and liberty, a country that is a symbol of opportunity to so many people around the world, a nation defined by the values that unite us: freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We are proud to live in this country. We are free to worship, free to love, free to live in security and with opportunity.

However, this freedom is in peril for many Canadians, for many minority communities and racialized communities in this country, and we've seen especially in recent years an escalation in the number of hate crimes that manifest here at home, in my community in Vaughan and across this province. It is with regret that Statistics Canada said in 2017 there was a record high of over 2,000 police-reported hate crimes targeting Muslims in this country. They are being targeted with increased ferocity. Many have faced violence and some have faced death.

We are reminded of the most perverse of these acts: a terrorist act on our soil against Muslims, simply because of their faith, in Quebec City at the Quebec City mosque massacre; then the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting; and now the horrific New Zealand devastation. Madam Speaker, we speak with one voice in this Legislature in denouncement of this hate.

By showing solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters, we emphasize the right of all to worship in safety, the constitutionally protected right of freedom of faith and freedom of conscience. We must stand up for this freedom, an inalienable right. Violence, hate, vitriol against people of any faith, sex, orientation or heritage is simply unacceptable, and it will not be tolerated by any member from this House. We stand in the defence of their security and their rights.

All Canadians are standing up. They are speaking out. I observed this first-hand in a ring of peace that surrounded the Baitul Islam Mosque in Vaughan following that terrible attack in New Zealand. It was quite powerful and emotional to observe Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Jews all come together united, strong and free.

Let us be informed by the words of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him: “Do good actions and deeds as God loves those amongst you who carry their affairs with good intention.” So let us be resolved to combat this hate, to name and to shame it, to work to counter the scourge that prevails in the western world and to stand up for that girl to wear her hijab, to stand up for that student who chooses to worship at their mosque, to stand up for the innocent young children who are bullied simply because they are of faith, because the greatest weapon against violence and hate is to embrace a message of love for all and hatred for none.

My colleagues, this legislation is an example of the higher calling of public service. It is a piece of legislation, by its design, to bring us together, and every one of us has a moral imperative to act today. I'm proud to be part of a government and a Parliament that will do so with unanimity of purpose, standing with the member from Beaches–East York, to send a message that love will triumph over hate, and good over evil.

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

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I want to begin, like so many people have already, with sincere gratitude to the MPP from Beaches–East York, my colleague and my friend. I want to believe that everybody in this House was listening while she was speaking, but my real question in the two minutes that I have to chat with everybody in this debate—I want us to focus on what we actually heard, because sometimes we can listen and accept the words, but don't necessarily accept the action that requires us to show that we really heard what somebody was saying.

Ironically, as I stand here, I can hear young people outside of this House who are fighting for their rights. They look to us in this House, who are in this little bubble, for leadership. When it comes to doing the kind of work that the member from Beaches–East York is asking us to do, naming Islamophobia, fighting against Islamophobia has to include action, not just words. That's what I heard.

1410

I heard her say, “Let us stop. Let us do better.” In order for us to do better, one of the things that I believe is really important for us to do is to take responsibility for our own actions in perpetuating a climate that would allow hate to grow. Hate doesn't grow with individuals in a vacuum.

Hate grows when we, as members of this Legislative Assembly, pass laws that provide an opportunity to other people, that make somebody who practises the Muslim faith feel other, feel like a newcomer no matter how long they've been here, feel othered. That's what I heard from the member from Beaches–East York.

With that, I just want to end with a real commitment, because again, it's not just about the words; it's about following through. So my commitment to this House and to every member, no matter which party you're with, is to help with education. I will speak to anybody in this House about Islamophobia, why it's important to speak out against it, why a particular piece of legislation could perpetuate Islamophobia. I hope that they will be present and ready and able and willing to really listen and hear.

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

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I want to begin by thanking the member from Beaches–East York for introducing this private member's bill to the Legislature. Hate and discrimination must never be tolerated in Ontario.

Tragically on January 29, 2017, Canadians saw what the result of festering hate and discrimination can look like, when a shooter murdered six people and injured 19 others shortly after they finished their evening prayers in Quebec City. We must all, as individuals, communities and governments, do what we can to ensure this kind of violent racism never occurs again.

After this attack in 2017, Muslims across the country were traumatized. I'm sure many felt afraid of copycat or similar acts of violence at their mosques, community centres, schools or homes. Canadians of any race or religion should never have to live in fear in this country—certainly not in our great province of Ontario.

If this bill passes, the government of Ontario would join many other cities and other levels of government in condemning this disgusting and hateful act of violence. We would demonstrate to the Muslim community that we stand with them, that we will not let a lone extremist drive the agenda in this province, and we'll work to ensure this type of targeted attack never happens again. We will not support or stand by while individuals or organizations spew anti-Islamic hate.

Madam Speaker, as someone who has seen discrimination and lived through ethnic cleansing against some of the people in Sri Lanka, I can say from first-hand experience that there is nothing more horrifying or sickening than violence against someone because of their race or religion. My family and I escaped a brutal genocide, and we were fortunate enough to come to Canada, a country always imagined to be free of this kind of violent, extremist and intolerant behaviour. I am humbled to be able to speak today in support of this bill, proposing a Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia, because hate, racism, intolerance and the resulting violent acts are something I have fought against my entire life.

I strongly urge all of my colleagues here to support this proposed legislation, to stand together with the Muslim community and to pass this legislation to do our small but

important part to ensure this never happens again in Canada and that all forms of Islamophobia are eradicated.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's truly an honour to stand today to contribute to this really important bill, and I would like to thank the member from Beaches–East York for bringing it forward.

Bill 83 honours the horrific shooting that took place on January 29, 2017, at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City. Six innocent worshippers were killed and 19 others injured in an act of hate and terrorism. This bill pays respect to those lives that were lost and to those lives that irrevocably changed that day. This bill creates a day of remembrance and a day of reflection. It creates an opportunity to look to the future and to think about the work that needs to be done to combat hate and Islamophobia in our communities.

In Canada and globally, heinous acts of hate and fear are happening against Muslims, and we must stand together to denounce violence against all people. When the horrific terrorism attack happened in New Zealand, there was a group of civic and cultural organizations in London that came together to condemn the horrific act that took place in Christchurch, New Zealand, against the innocent Muslim worshippers during that Friday prayer in the two mosques on March 15. The attack resulted in 50 victims and 50 people injured. The organizations were joining together with New Zealanders and Muslim communities around the world that were grieving.

In a couple of quotes that they put in their letters, one was from David Heap, co-chair of the London chapter of the Council of Canadians: "We have to call out racism wherever we hear or see it—in the media or in everyday conversations. Stereotyping that promotes hatred against any group has no place in our communities. We have to do better at listening to the most vulnerable among us."

Again, I just want to say thank you to the member for bringing the bill forward. I look forward to its passing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Beaches–East York for her two-minute reply.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Thank you, Speaker. I am so moved by the words of all of you who contributed to this debate today. I'm so very, very grateful for all of the thoughtful things that you've had to say, the powerful words that you've all said; specifically, thank you to the Leader of the Opposition and to the members for Mississauga East–Cooksville, Whitby, Scarborough–Rouge Park, Ottawa–Vanier, King–Vaughan, Kitchener Centre, York South–Weston and London–Fanshawe for your really moving and powerful words.

I want to take a couple of moments to talk a little bit more about trauma and the nature of trauma and why this is so important that we all do this together. Like many other people in this Legislature and in Ontario, I am a child of trauma. As an academic, I've spent years interviewing people who are survivors and are deeply impacted by trauma—some of that work on my own while I was

teaching at the University of Toronto and some of it with the Mosaic Institute.

Science now tells us what humans have always known: that trauma changes us, down to our very DNA, and that it is transmitted intergenerationally. So it's not only the sons and daughters of the survivors of a traumatic event who suffer, but their descendants as well.

I am sure that everyone can understand how horrific it would be to come to a country, to come to Canada, to escape war or privation, only to experience hate and violence in the very place that was meant to be a haven. Trauma is eased and addressed when governments recognize and work to address what caused it. We have a historic opportunity to take an enormous stride here today to ease the specific trauma that Muslims in Ontario and Canada have experienced and to work to address its root causes, so I thank you for helping me pass it today, get it through committee, and enact it.

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