

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED- Sept 20/12

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I move that, in the opinion of this House, a select committee should be established immediately to develop a comprehensive developmental services strategy for Ontarians, and that in developing its strategy and recommendations, the committee shall focus on the following issues: the urgent need for a comprehensive developmental services strategy to address the needs of children, youth and adults in Ontario with an intellectual disability or who are dually diagnosed with an intellectual disability and a mental illness, and to coordinate the delivery of developmental programs and services across many provincial ministries in addition to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, taking into consideration the following:

- the elementary and secondary school educational needs of children and youth;
- the educational and workplace needs of youth upon completion of secondary school;
- the need to provide social, recreational and inclusionary opportunities for children, youth and adults;
- the need for a range of available and affordable housing options for youth and adults;
- the respite and support needs of families;
- how government should most appropriately support these needs and provide these opportunities.

That the committee shall have the authority to conduct hearings and undertake research and generally shall have such powers and duties as are required to develop recommendations on a comprehensive developmental services strategy to address the needs of children, youth and adults in Ontario with an intellectual disability or who are dually diagnosed with an intellectual disability and a mental illness; and

That the committee shall present an interim report to the House no later than April 30, 2013, and a final report no later than October 31, 2013.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mrs. Elliott has moved private member's notice of motion number 27. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is truly an honour to rise this afternoon to speak to this motion. Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge and thank the many people who have taken the time today to be here in the public and

members' galleries, and the people who have provided support and are watching this debate at home.

The impetus for this resolution motion arose from several sources. The first was the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, which wrote the report several years ago. I had the real privilege of serving on that committee with other members of the Legislature who are here today. We discussed the issue of people who are dually diagnosed, and although the focus of our report at that time was on mental health and addictions, we did believe that the issue was significant and really could form the basis of its own select committee. So I certainly kept that in mind in the past two years and am pleased to have the opportunity to bring this forward today.

Secondly—and I think I'm not alone in this—as members of the Legislature, we hear, on a regular basis in our community offices, from families who are finding it increasingly difficult to support their adult children at home. We can and we must do better for these families, and it's my belief that if we do strike a select committee, we will be able to do just that.

Finally, there was a tragic event that happened in Whitby on April 29 of this year that made the need for a select committee, for me, crystal clear. A young woman named Holly Harrison—18 years old and full of life—tragically died in a house fire. Holly had both an intellectual disability and a mental illness and had been living in a group home for youth, but when she turned 18 she was no longer eligible for their services, and so she was discharged from the home. She didn't have anywhere else to go at that point, and so she started to couch-surf, as many young people in this situation do, because there were no group homes, no transitional housing and no other support services available to her.

I would like to stress, because I know that she was working with several community agencies in Whitby who tried valiantly to support her—but the fact was that there really weren't the programs and services, there wasn't funding in place for them to help Holly.

Holly shouldn't have died. Her family, who are here with us today, want to hear from us, as legislators, to know what we're going to be able to do to make sure this doesn't happen to any other families. I would like to take just a moment to introduce them. Holly's parents—Mr. Tyson Harrison is here; her stepmother, Chrissy Zevenhoven, along with their daughters, Amber Harrison and Matteha Liston, are here. I truly hope that our discussion this afternoon doesn't disappoint them and we can help provide them with some measure of comfort, knowing that Holly did not perish in vain.

Mr. Speaker, the parents of children with intellectual disabilities have formed the basis of our Community Living organizations over the years. They really operated under the radar and didn't provide a problem or concern for government because they were true

self-help organizations. And the parents volunteered with not much of an expectation—other than the fact that there would be a place for their son or daughter to live when they were no longer there and that they would have a happy life. We can't provide them with that measure of comfort anymore. Families are becoming increasingly desperate as they themselves are aging and finding it very, very hard to cope. What I've heard from people, and I'm sure other members of this House have heard the same thing, is that these parents are exhausted and they're desperate. It's a serious situation that's only getting worse as parents age.

I would like to take a moment to read just two of the emails that I've received from people who really, I think, illustrate how serious the situation is. From the first one:

"It has been obvious to many of us in the Community Living movement that the Ministry of Community and Social Services cannot alone meet the growing demands of these families and that a cross-ministry approach may be the only hope for those in dire straits.

"For example, in the last few weeks a mother was forced to leave her seriously disabled son at the doorstep of her local agency because she, a double lung recipient, could no longer look after him 24/7. Evidently, neither could the agency or the ministry."

Another one that I received from one of my constituents, Betty:

"My son is now 21 years old.... finished school ... essentially, we are putting him in daycare again, just like parents 30 years younger than us are doing for their toddlers, except our daycare is much more expensive, much more worrisome and it never, ever, stops....

1540

"My husband and I love our son dearly, but the simple fact is that we can't take care of him anymore, at least not to the extent that we've been doing.

"We have done a good job raising and helping him. Now we need a break. Physically. Emotionally. Financially. We need him in a ministry-run group home. He is social, he has lots of potential, and he needs supervision. This is the only feasible option.

"As you know, there are no group homes available. They're out there, but the line isn't moving.

"Please help us by making group homes more abundant. If it's not possible to create more, maybe there's something else that can be done. Maybe senior citizens in group homes could move to senior retirement homes.

“I don’t have the answers—just suggestions—but I think that the idea above is one way to loosen up this jammed wait-list for exhausted parents like myself.

“We have negligible support. If it’s not my husband or I watching our son, it’s someone we pay.

“Our son is currently enrolled in a day program that costs \$1,000 a month to keep him occupied and social while my husband and I attend our jobs. We still have to pay a worker \$15 an hour on top of that when we can’t be there by 4 p.m.

“We have been responsible for every minute of our son’s life. That’s 21 years, and it will continue for the years beyond our own lives. We are drowning. Please help us. You have the power.”

Although this really speaks to housing and concerns that a lot of parents have expressed, it’s not just about that. It’s about inclusion; it’s about giving people the opportunities to become included in our society, to have options to work if they’re able to, to have meaningful day programs if they’re not able to, and to have social and recreational opportunities. In short, Mr. Speaker, these people deserve to have a life.

It’s estimated that there are somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 people in Ontario with an intellectual disability. Some people are confused about what that means, so just by way of illustration, I would say that includes people with Down’s syndrome, autism, and mild to significant intellectual disabilities, among other things. They need support, and we as legislators need to develop a comprehensive plan to deliver it.

I would like to take the rest of my time—and I see I’m rapidly running out—to briefly review the recent history of developmental services in Ontario, why I believe we need a select committee and what I believe a select committee could accomplish.

In 2004, the government made the decision to close regional facilities that had housed people with significant intellectual disabilities for many years. That would be the Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern Regional Centres. That was a good idea, but we needed to put more into community services. Bill 77 in 2008, the so-called social inclusion act, was another great idea. It was meant to recognize that one size doesn’t fit all, that we need to tailor individual services, and that people should have input in planning their own lives. It’s not just about group homes. But what we need is a range of housing options, from group homes to supported independent living. We need to consider employment opportunities, meaningful day programs and respite for families.

The reality is that for many young people, once they turn 21—and they’re eligible to stay in school until they’re 21—once they finish, it’s like young people drop off the edge of a

cliff. What they end up doing is simply watching TV in their parents' basements, because there are no meaningful supports out there for them. I've received letters from Community Living in Peterborough, from Community Living organizations across Ontario that have really supported the need for a select committee and the need to have an overarching organization to coordinate the programs and services to break down the ministry silos. I think that's really key as we move forward to consider all of these disparate needs that need to be addressed. We know what the problem is. What I truly would like to know is what the solutions are. There are some great solutions that are happening out there in the community, but they're few and far between, they're not connected, and we need to make sure that they're offered across the province of Ontario.

A few things I've heard about that I think are great ideas: One is to have some innovative housing solutions. The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London referred me to a project called Elmdale, which is to create an integrated living and community activity centre for disabled young adults in his community of St. Thomas. It's that kind of outside-of-the-box thinking that we could embrace in a select committee and truly follow.

We need to take a look at employment opportunities. Many people with an intellectual disability automatically are shunted onto ODSP, the Ontario disability support program, not because they want to be, but because there are no meaningful opportunities out there for them. Employers simply aren't hiring them, and they have no opportunities for post-secondary education. We need champions in business, people who will give people with an intellectual disability a chance to have a job. The right job for the right person is out there if we search for it, and we should do it not as an act of charity but because it's a good business practice.

We do have some champions out there. I would especially like to commend Lieutenant Governor Onley for his significant work in this area. I'm proud to say that we also have some champions from my own community. There is a group that has been formed by Mr. Joe Dale and Valerie and Mark Wafer from my community of Whitby called Rotary at Work. They are Rotarians who go around the province of Ontario speaking to fellow Rotarians about why they should hire people with disabilities—with an intellectual disability or a mental health disability—again because you get out more out of it than you put into it. It's a very good business practice.

I'd also like to see a select committee explore post-secondary opportunities. Some of the community colleges in Ontario have what they call CICE—community integration through co-operative education—programs that allow a student to enter a study area of their choice. It's a two-year program. They have learning facilitators who modify the program for them. When they graduate after two years, they will receive a CICE diploma and skills portfolio that will allow them to enter the workforce.

We need to explore these. This isn't something that's core funding of a community college, but I'd like to commend those colleges that have embraced it, including my own community college in my area, Durham College, and Mr. Don Lovisa, who is the president there. I think they're really thinking well ahead of their time.

Finally—and I'm really running out of time here—I would just like to say that we need to think about what kind of society we want to have. We need to look at how we value every person in our community. We should be looking at how we think of everybody, how we can truly include everybody in our community in our society and how we can celebrate their abilities and not really look to how we can accommodate people who have disabilities. This requires a real paradigm shift in our thinking, and until we get there, we're not really going to allow everyone in our community to live lives of purpose and dignity.

For all the reasons I've talked about in starting off the discussion today, I really would urge all members of this House to support this resolution for a select committee. I think this is truly a non-partisan issue. We can do very good work together to honour Holly's family, families that are here today, families that are listening, and families across Ontario and their sons and daughters. Thank you.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm sorry actually to have to stand on something like this today; that we actually have to have a select committee put in place. But I am happy to be able to stand for the people who have come to me concerning these matters that the select committee would help.

I'd also like to send our best wishes and sympathies to the family of Holly, on behalf of the NDP caucus. I'm very sorry. Things like this shouldn't have to happen. We shouldn't have to have residents—people—falling through the cracks. How is it that we have a system that, after the age of 18 or 21, depending on where they're falling into the system, they have nowhere else to turn? How is it that we have no homes for these people? These are serious concerns.

I know that in Hamilton we had a young woman who, I believe, kind of fell through the same cracks. When I was working downtown, I would see her often. Unfortunately, she fell into addictions and those kinds of things, just because she had nowhere else to turn, and there's always a nice dealer there, waiting to pick up somebody who has nowhere else to turn. They prey on the vulnerable. A couple of years ago, unfortunately, this woman was found dead in an alley at the back of a house. This is what happens because they have nowhere to go, right? So I look forward to this select committee to deal with those kinds of issues.

I know I've always been visited by people in my riding who have children who are now adults switching from special supports at home into Passport and the trouble they're running into there. Families are now expected to become an employer, hiring their own people, unless they're willing to pay a portion of the money they've been given to have that service done for them.

That's a big problem, because the funding didn't change, so the same person who was receiving, say, \$6,000 or \$8,000 a year now has to take that exact same money and figure out how to do that for themselves, or pay an agency to do it for them. At the same time, the wages increased—and don't get me wrong on that one, because the wages certainly did need to increase for people who were providing these services. Some of these workers that I had spoken to, because they've come to me also, were making \$10 or \$12 an hour. Now they're being bumped up, and thank the Almighty for that, because who can afford to survive on a wage like that?

1550

I just wanted to read here a letter dated June 2011. Then-Minister Madeleine Meilleur stated:

“I want to reiterate that these changes will not impact the amount of funding a person with a developmental disability is currently eligible to receive, and the level of service provided to stakeholders by the ministry will remain the same as we transition.”

Speaking to families in my riding, this is not the fact. That's not what has happened. People are falling behind.

I know I have to close down here because I have other members who are really happy to speak to this bill also. I congratulate you on bringing this forward. I know that it's something that needs to be done and I look forward to being part of that discussion.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate. Let me first offer my congratulations to the member from Whitby–Oshawa for bringing forward what I think is another great motion. The last one she brought forward stimulated a number of us to decide to put our partisan differences aside and to work on an issue that had been ignored for far too long, and that was mental health and addictions. The outcome of that has been that I think we have had a government that has been responsive to that report because it was developed by all sides.

There is a good time to have select committees and there is a time that perhaps isn't a good time to have them. I think the choice of a select committee as a vehicle for mental

health and addictions, the people that served on that committee and the attitude they brought to the table, made a big difference. If the member is envisioning that type of process again, I think she'll find support on this side of the House and I think she'll find support from the members that decide they would like to serve on the committee should it take place.

It's a very similar motion to the one that helped create the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. People praise that committee and those members that did a lot of hard work on it, not only for the report itself, but for the way they arrived at that decision. That is, we all sat down in the room and decided that this issue was bigger than our partisan differences, that we were going to be able to look at this objectively, not overly criticize each other, not point the finger—this is a very adversarial place. Sometimes things get done; sometimes they don't get done. Often we spend an awful lot of time finding out what's wrong with each other. In the select committee process, what we did is, we looked at what was right with each other. We looked at what good ideas we could bring forward and also, I think, we placed the public on a pedestal. What became the prime objective was to get the information from the public as to what was actually happening out there in the real world.

I'd like to extend, certainly, my condolences and my thanks for coming today to the Harrison family, to Holly's family. If their presence here today can help some of us gain a better appreciation of why this work needs to be done, I think it's time very, very well spent. I know that it must be really difficult for you to be here today.

We know there's a lot more work to do. I think we have a grasp of what that work might be. Perhaps the value of a select committee is that we would be able to focus that work. One thing that I liked about the select committee—along with all sorts of other things; it was one of the best political experiences that I've had and I certainly am proud of the outcome—is the way that the government responded to it. I'm not here to brag about the government. I think we've done a very good job. I think for the most part the opposition parties have agreed with the response from the government, because they felt that they were part of it. If we can frame this in the same way, if we can take this issue and we can bring it forward in a nonpartisan way, if we can lay it before the Legislature like we did with the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, I think it could lead to the sort of work that's being done right now in mental health and addictions. It could start to be done, then, in the developmental sector as well, because I think that was a really successful process. So I'm not absolutely sure a select committee is the right vehicle for this; I'm pretty sure it is. Certainly, I'd like to see the House leaders get together on this.

I would ask the House, I would ask my colleagues from all three parties, to give their support to this motion today, to allow it to continue along the process. That's what we did the last time around, and we ended up with something that I think is going to stand

the test of time, and it's one of the best things that I've seen come out of this House in the nine years that I've been here.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to speak in support of the motion from my colleague the member for Whitby–Oshawa.

I also want to extend my deepest condolences to the Harrison family. I thank you very much for being here and sharing in our debate, as well as the people in the gallery and also the thousands—millions—who are watching at home.

This is a debate that's being watched by many in the developmental sector in my riding of Leeds–Grenville. I can say that the overwhelming response from those in that sector in my riding, when I told them about this resolution, was, "It's about time," and I agree with them. I think it's time that we start listening to the pleas of the clients, the families and the staff who have incredible challenges trying to manage these essential services with compassion.

I believe the select committee is the best way to handle it. I think a lot of good can come out of that process. I'm glad the member for Oakville talked about the mental health and addictions select committee. I know that when people come into my constituency office and I show them the 23 recommendations that that committee had, people say, "That's the solution we're looking for." So I appreciate the work that others, including the member from Whitby–Oshawa, did on that committee. I'm disappointed that the government hasn't moved forward on the recommendations, but I know that the road map is there, and I think we need it for the developmental services sector.

We need this committee to begin the very hard work of developing a comprehensive strategy to address the critical stresses on the agencies and families that are working, in my opinion, on an unimaginable burden. I spoke to many of the families, the agency staffers, and I hear the desperation in their voices. I met with the Legacy families from my own Brockville and District Association for Community Involvement. I listened to the fear that they have for the future. These are parents who made decisions to care for their children through to adulthood. They are now in their 70s and 80s. Their children are in their 40s and 50s. They don't know what's going to happen to them when they are no longer able to look after them. Speaker, it's heartbreaking.

I hear the same frustration when I talk to the three executive directors of my Community Living associations: Michael Humes in Brockville, Ted Shuh in North Grenville and Colleen Kelly-Jansen in Gananoque.

In closing, Speaker, I think, speaking to those three, they applaud this resolution because it's the start of a process that they've been desperately trying to get moving. I'm proud today to stand up for those families, those individuals and those workers, to give them a voice and to help voice their frustration. I'm hoping that my colleague's motion is passed and that there is some political will here in the Legislative Assembly to get on with it. Establish this committee and let's look at some solutions.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to stand and to support the member from Whitby–Oshawa in this proposal, this motion for a select committee. I just want to sing her praises for a minute. She has certainly been one of the movers and shakers behind the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, but she has also been a woman that I have co-sponsored a number of bills with. She has always stood on the side of the marginalized, and this is just another example of that, and she certainly stood with them in a non-partisan way.

I want to address for a second the talk from the member from Oakville about the select committee, because I think that's a good example of how something should and could work when all parties come together. It's very much the template that this particular motion is built on.

However, the problem is, Mr. Speaker, that of the 23 recommendations from that committee—23 recommendations that took hundreds of submissions, hundreds of hours, hundreds of miles of travel and probably tens of thousands of taxpayers' dollars—unfortunately, our friends across the aisle have acted on 0.5 of them, and that was over a year ago.

1600

So my hope is that as we all come together—it sounds like we will—to support this recommendation, that we actually put our shoulders behind it—and I'm appealing to the government side here—that not only do you put it into place, not only do we get the recommendations, but of course that we actually act on them. That's the critical piece that was missing from that former iteration.

I just want to go over a few stats because it's important to share with this House how bad things are. SSAH, which is Special Services at Home, a program that used to provide services to children and adults as of April 2012, now only provides services to children. Here are the waiting list statistics: 8,500 children on the wait-list versus 13,000 receiving service; currently almost 14,000 adults with developmental disabilities are receiving care under the SSAH, with 300 on the wait-list. There's been a huge upheaval—we've heard about that—due to the changes in criteria for this program.

So let's talk about Passport, a program for adults that transfers funding directly to them or their families. It currently serves 3,769 people, but there are 3,763 people on the wait-list. You would literally have to double the capacity to serve all of those people on the wait-list. We know that there are 2,700 people who have had the eligibility for developmental services confirmed, and an additional 2,500 who are currently being assessed for the services.

Residential services: Again, you see these huge wait-lists—over 10,000 people. Again, in the last six months we've seen a huge upheaval in this service. For example, if a person needing those services is over the age of 25, they're going to be transferred to a Passport program, and within this program—we've already heard—they're going to have to administer the funds themselves and become, de facto, their own employers.

Let's just take a quote from Community Living Ontario, which says, "Nearly 23,000 people are languishing on waiting lists. Decades of chronic underfunding of the developmental services sector is placing in peril children and adults who have an intellectual disability, their families and the agencies that support them." There's nothing to be proud about this for this government. Nothing in this file is anything to crow about. There's so much work to do and so much need.

I want to give some shout-outs in the few minutes remaining to some of the phenomenal activists in my own riding. They're not just in my own riding; they're activists for the whole province. People like Marilyn Dolmage. People like the Patersons, whom I brought down here over and over for their son Teddy, who were looking for Passport funding, and finally, finally they got a little bit of help from this government. I think they came down three or four times, asked three or four questions. Obviously we can't do this for every family; that's why we need some solutions.

I want to also share a happy story. Marianna Adams—and I'll call out her name—was born with Down's syndrome. Marianna was really a young woman raised by her family and nurtured by her community. When I was back in active ministry as a United Church minister, she was part of our church, and she was one of the solid volunteers of our church. Because we set up a circle of support for Marianna from the community, because she got Community Living access, because her parents and all the parents in the community came together to look after her, she ended up being partnered with Andreas Prinz, who also was born with Down's syndrome, and they now live on their own. They're a happily married couple. I want to just give a shout-out to Marianna and Andreas. I see them all the time in our community. They're an example of what can happen if we actually do the right things for people. They still need some assistance; the community comes together to provide that. But that's a happy example.

I also want to give my condolences to Holly's family and to all of those more normal—unfortunately—bad, unhappy examples of people who aren't getting the services that they need, and that's the reality of care in this province.

So, absolutely, we in the New Democratic Party support this. Absolutely, we look forward to it being struck and to the recommendations, the only caveat being, please, please, let's make this different from the mental health and addictions committee in that, when the recommendations come forward, let us ask the government to actually enact them. Otherwise, not only is it a waste of taxpayers' dollars, not only is it a waste of time and travel, but it's a tragedy, because all of those who came to deputize, who came to testify, who told their stories—agonizing stories, many of them—did not get the resources that they asked for at the end of the day. Let us not have the same situation with this select committee.

Do we support it? Absolutely. It's the first step of many steps. Please don't let it be the last step. Please let the stories of those born with a developmental disability be the stories of Marianna and Andreas, and not the story of Holly. That's what I think we're all asking for here.

Again, I commend the member from Whitby—Oshawa for bringing this forward, as is her wont. It's what she does. Let's not let her down either. She and our member also, of course, from Nickel Belt, who sat on that committee, who did such good work—let's not let either of them down. Finally, let's not let down those people who exist with developmental disabilities and their families, who are in the thousands across Ontario, for whom not much has been done at all in the last nine years.

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

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: First of all, I too would like to express my condolences to Holly's family. Thank you for being here. Thank you for the difference you are making for people in this sector.

I want to start off by talking about how committed the member from Whitby—Oshawa is to identifying the issues and opportunities in this sector.

Shortly after I was elected in October last year and before I was appointed as parliamentary assistant to the Minister for Children and Youth Services, she invited me to her office to meet with all the developmental services organizations in Durham. I was just so pleased that she did that and included me in that dialogue. Then I believe we had another meeting as well earlier this summer. Just getting together, working together in a non-partisan way in Durham, was so rewarding, that we could identify those issues in Durham. Many of them, of course, extend more broadly to the province.

I just wanted to acknowledge that I know first-hand how committed she is, and that commitment actually extended even further when I coordinated a mental health summit this summer with all the MPPs in Durham, and that included members from the PC Party as well as my colleague Joe Dickson from Ajax–Pickering.

Of course, in that summit, where we brought together service providers in Durham, where we brought together different stakeholders, it was clear that the issues around developmental services were very important, that there were some gaps, that there are some opportunities there, and the member from Whitby–Oshawa was just fantastic in that. She was so supportive, and I appreciated her leadership in that.

There's definitely more work to do, and thus we have this resolution for a select committee. As my colleague from Oakville said, we're not quite sure how it will go forward. Of course, select committees are going to be discussed, decided on and negotiated with the House leaders.

Although there's more work to do, Speaker, I think it is important to acknowledge some of the gains that have been made in this sector. The good news is, we're not starting from zero. I want to just talk briefly about some of those gains that have been made in the last eight years.

The Liberal government has increased funding for developmental services every year since it came into power in 2003. That's something that we can all be proud of. We have taken steps to modernize developmental services in Ontario and made them more accessible, flexible and financially sustainable. Our government has invested more than \$575 million in new ongoing funding for developmental services since 2003. That's a 58% increase in operating funding since 2003. It translates into 2,900 more residential placements, 4,600 more people receiving the special services at home since 2003 and 3,800 adults now receiving the Passport support that other members have talked about.

1610

Yes, there's more work to do, but we do need to recognize that this has been an ongoing commitment of the government. Most recently, in the 2011 budget, increases went forward for both Passport and special services at home, as I mentioned. We have increased funding every year since 2003, and over 50% of our new investments since 2003 in developmental services have gone to help people in this sector.

As we did in 2011, this year's budget also provided an additional \$25 million for residential services and community-based programming for people in urgent need, such as clients with aging parents who can no longer care for their adult children at home. So I don't think we're starting from zero, but absolutely I agree there's more work to do, and I'm very pleased to speak today in support of this motion.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the motion of my colleague the member from Whitby–Oshawa to develop a select committee to address the needs of children, youth and adults in Ontario with an intellectual disability or who are dually diagnosed with an intellectual disability and a mental illness, and to coordinate those services.

I think that, as she has rightly said, there is a desperate need out there to address these services. We do have to do a much better job. I want to thank Holly's family for coming here today also. It is quite an act of bravery to deal with these issues and to try to make things better for other people who do encounter really the dysfunctionality that exists out there with developmental services. I know that the service providers—in all our ridings, we've heard stories. I certainly have some valiant people within my riding who do their best to coordinate the services for these vulnerable people.

I know that when I talked to Community Living Kawartha Lakes today, before we spoke, executive director Teresa Jordan talked with our staff, and I want to thank her for that. That serves the Northumberland, Haliburton, Lindsay and Peterborough areas. They stated a statistic that is quite shocking to me, that there are approximately 25 individuals who live in long-term-care facilities with their parents because of the shortage of homes in our area, and they, as one of my colleagues said, are the lucky ones, that they actually have a connection to someone. Unfortunately, they do have to go into a long-term-care centre, which is not the best facility for them, but those are the choices that are out there right now.

The predominant issue certainly is a lot of older parents, 70s, 80s, who have adult children at home that they've looked after all their lives, and they have no alternative places for them to go, no appropriate places. We have to do better than that as a society.

I know that Community Living Durham North, too, which also serves my riding, the front thing on their website was that the member from Whitby–Oshawa has a motion today and to please go and support. So I know that we share Durham, as many other colleagues in the Legislature do. Certainly they're supportive of this initiative that's moved forward.

I know there are other service providers. I know that Kawartha Participation Projects do their best to provide self-directed support, complex care and affordable housing for people with diverse needs so they can live independently a little bit longer, and some supports that are out there.

There are a lot of statistics that you've heard today. There's no question that's true. We're all living it in our ridings, the thousands of people waiting for just the Passport program alone. So if there is a select committee that we can co-ordinate all parties to further this help for these people, I am certainly 100% supportive. Thank you for the time, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm also happy to support this resolution. I was on that Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions.

I guess I'd like to talk very briefly about the value and the difference between a select committee and a standing committee. Standing committees, which we normally would have set up in this chamber, have very limited scope in what they can review and what they can discuss, limited to specific pieces of legislations, specific ministries.

The beauty of a standing committee is that it can cover so many different ministries, and if anything, what this resolution does is it reinforces just how many ministries need to be part of the discussion: education; post-secondary education; economic development, with the jobs side of it; housing; health; community and social services.

If a select committee was able to delve into the issues raised by the motion, then you actually start looking at the individual as a whole and not try to hive them off by different ministries and solve it ministry by ministry—because if we learned anything from the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, it's that you don't successfully assist an individual if you try to do it that way.

I'm pleased to support the resolution. We could all spend a lot of time talking about individual families within our communities that we have tried to help and have been blocked by waiting lists and by no availability. The scope of the motion is absolutely detailed, but there's also a parameter where it talks about timelines that will motivate anyone who is lucky enough to participate in that committee move.

I hope that what we would see is something that happened very quickly with the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, and that was that the focus very quickly became the families, the individuals; we weren't talking about, "Well, we can't do that because the ministries don't do that"—or individual sectors. We very quickly realized that if we wanted to hear from the experts, then we needed to talk to the families and talk to the individuals impacted. I think that the way that the member from Whitby–Oshawa, our deputy leader, has written this motion, the same thing could happen very successfully with this motion if it's passed. I'm pleased to support it, and it sounds like other members of the Legislature feel the same.

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the motion by the member from Whitby–Oshawa on a select committee on developmental services.

Speaker, as you know, because you were one of the members who served on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions—I, too, was honoured to serve with the member from Whitby–Oshawa on that select committee. What was interesting about the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, as my colleague from Halton has mentioned, is how everybody came together. There was a conscious decision to set aside politics even though there were members from all three parties. There was a conscious decision that the purpose of the committee was not to assign blame for problems that we all knew needed to be addressed, and that our common focus was a common goal and that our common goal—as you know, Speaker, because you were there—was to find solutions.

It was very rewarding, because we heard from people all over the province about what the issues were, how we might address them, and we did ultimately come to a consensus report. Because of the goodwill that went into the formation of that report, because of the careful thought, because we were able to honestly and frankly talk about what was wrong and how we could fix it, I think that report has had a lot of traction. It has had a lot of traction in the mental health community. I know that there are all sorts of ways in which it has impacted government policy. In fact, those initiatives are still moving forward. I recently spoke with a stakeholder group that looks at children's mental health on how that is still influencing policy which is moving forward. My concern, and I'll be quite honest, is: Can we re-create that in this minority atmosphere, where this House has become so poisonous and the atmosphere is so poisonous? I hope that it is possible to recreate that atmosphere, because it will only work if it is a consensus-driven, co-operative atmosphere.

1620

What did we learn? Like Holly's family—and thank you so much for being here—one of the things that we heard about at the select committee that I think still needs more focus was the gaps in services for people who have dual diagnoses, that you go to the mental health side of the system and the mental health side says, "We don't know how to handle people with a developmental delay," and you go to the developmental services sector and they say, "Well, we don't know what to do with mental health issues. We just do developmental services." If you've got a dual diagnosis, there's a huge gap. We need to focus on that, because I truly believe that that's a place that needs a lot more attention.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Haldimand–Norfolk.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Haldimand–Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you, Speaker. Further to this resolution, there is concern out there that this current government is putting people at risk of social exclusion. Essentially, the Ministry of Community and Social Services has created a crisis for young adults with developmental disabilities. I reference a report by the Special Services at Home/Passport Coalition, where families were devastated to learn that as of April 1, 2012, adults with developmental disabilities were no longer qualified for SSAH, special services at home, once they turned age 18. Many of these same families worked very hard in 1990 to ensure that the government expanded this program to fit their needs. Now they see this hard work going down the drain.

The ministry tells people that funding is available for adults with developmental disabilities through Passport. Families have found this to be a falsehood, as the funding is totally unavailable to many. And to those where it is available, it's not nearly enough and does not cover all the kinds of supports required.

Over the past several years, we've seen what I consider chronic underfunding of developmental services. Supports in place have failed to better the lives of these people. What we've failed to recognize at times is that those with disabilities are not given rights or recourse to challenge the supports and services they are eligible for or those that they do receive. It's been discussed in this House. We can keep people in their homes, whether they're seniors or people with developmental disabilities. It's best for them; it's best for their families. It's best for the government if we financially assist families. We provide the necessary supports. We keep those with developmental disabilities out of government-run programs, which we know can at times be very inefficient and costly.

Speaker, there is a lot of work to be done for a select committee, and I fully support the resolution before the House today.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will use the few seconds that are afforded to me to give my support to the member from Whitby–Oshawa's motion for a select committee on developmental services. She had come to me to talk about her motion, and this is certainly something that I wholeheartedly supported. So here again, I want to publicly say I support her motion; the NDP caucus will be giving its support to this motion, and we will try really hard to make sure that this select committee actually sees the light of day and that we can bring forward recommendations that will make the lives of people easier.

Sorry for your loss.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Whitby–Oshawa, you have two minutes to reply.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I would like to end by thanking a number of people—first of all, the members who have participated in the discussion this afternoon: I'd like to thank the members from Hamilton Mountain, Oakville, Leeds–Grenville, Parkdale–High Park, Pickering–Scarborough East, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Dufferin–Caledon, Guelph, Haldimand–Norfolk and Nickel Belt. I'm truly grateful for all of your comments and reasonably optimistic, given the tone that the debate has taken this afternoon.

The concern that has been expressed with respect to whether a select committee can function in a non-partisan manner in a minority government is a valid concern. But to that I would say that I think this is truly a non-partisan issue, and I think there are members here who are committed to helping the families that truly need our help. To the people out there who are watching and to the people who are here listening today: That's what you've elected us to do. You want us to work together; you want us to find real solutions to real problems. I think there's enough goodwill in this House that we will be able to achieve that.

I'd also like to thank the people in the galleries who have attended here today. I'd especially like to thank Holly's family for being here today, for your commitment to all that you've gone through so recently to make sure this doesn't happen to another family.

With that, I'd just like to say thank you to everyone for participating in this debate today. I really think that, with all of us working together, we can really find some solutions to make sure this doesn't happen to another young person and that we will really come up with a report we can be proud of and that will serve its purpose and really help families that truly need our help. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.