



Ontario  
**Andrea Horwath**  
MPP Hamilton Centre

**EXCERPT FROM HANSARD**  
**Official Record of the Ontario Legislature**

**Andrea Horwath, MPP for Hamilton Centre and Leader of Ontario's NDP, asked the following question during Question Period in the Ontario Legislature on November 17, 2009, regarding the McGuinty government's cuts to Children's Aid Societies and children's mental health agencies:**

**CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES**

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. All management and unionized staff at children's aid societies and children's mental health agencies will be wearing blue ribbons on national child day on Friday. The blue ribbon indicates that the McGuinty government has failed children at risk, as the agencies that help them prepare their layoff notices and teeter on bankruptcy and outright closure. On behalf of the children who depend on these vital agencies, I ask: Will the Premier commit that no children's aid society will cut services, layoff staff or file for bankruptcy?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance again to speak in this House on this critically important issue with respect to finding a pathway forward for the sustainability of children's aid societies. I have told this House before and it is our commitment to the kids that drives us to find a sustainable pathway forward for children's aid societies. Children's aid societies do some of the most important work, but they also must work in partnership in the communities in which they live and operate to make sure that we are able to put kids first and find the best outcomes for kids. We are actively working right across the province with respect to the work being undertaken in our regional offices to work line by line through budgets and to find a sustainable pathway forward. At the same time, we will be making some announcements shortly with respect to the individuals that will be on our commission to promote the sustainability of children's aid societies. I look forward to working with our partners across the province to find—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The children of this province do not need another commission. They need their children's aid societies to be there for them when they need them. The only pathway this government is preparing is a pathway to bankruptcy and closure of children's aid societies. Payukotayno James and Hudson Bay Family Services has issued layoff notices already; so has York Region CAS. Native Child and Family Services of Toronto faces a \$1.4 million shortfall. Chatham-Kent Children's Aid Society is preparing for bankruptcy as we speak. The children's aid society in Kenora can't meet the \$600,000 monthly cost of protecting high-needs children and will soon be unable to make its payroll. When management and unionized staff at these agencies sound their blue ribbon alert on Friday, what will this government do to ensure no layoffs, no services are cut, no closures on Ontario's child welfare and protection agencies?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** One of the things that we need to do is work within communities across the province. If the member opposite had an opportunity to talk to those who are out in communities, she would well know that this ministry is working at the regional level to manage cash flow, to work with agencies, to find that partnership.

But let's be clear on the facts in this case: children's aid society funding has gone from \$500 million to \$1.4 billion in the last 10 years. That level of increase is not sustainable. We need to find a way to do better and we need to find a way to deliver more services and better outcomes to the kids. I can tell you that every single day, my focus is on the children of this province, finding a way to deliver services to them and being open to the fact that we need to find a better and new pathway forward. The old way will not be the way of the future. We need to continue working with communities—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.