



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature  
Third Session

# Alberta Hansard

Tuesday evening, April 20, 2010

Issue 31e

The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta**  
**The 27th Legislature**  
 Third Session

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 Mitzel, Len, Cypress-Medicine Hat, Deputy Chair of Committees

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## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

### Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Cao in the chair]

**The Chair:** Hon. members, it's 7:30. The chair shall now call the committee to order.

#### Bill 7

#### Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity on the bill.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much. Very briefly, I'm pleased to hear that an amendment was accepted this afternoon to allow the disenfranchised or the homeless to actually participate in the important enfranchisement of having a vote. I think that was very progressive legislation, and I'm pleased to hear that it went forward.

Briefly, my concerns are what is not in this particular bill such as fixed election dates, concerns over leadership financing. However, I do want to note and I am very pleased that the issue with regard to leadership financing rules, disclosure, accountability, and transparency has been passed along by the Minister of Justice to committee – I believe it's the Standing Committee on the Economy – to come up with solutions and improve the transparency and accountability process. Therefore, I think that's a major step in the right direction.

What I would have liked to have seen also in Bill 7 would have been moving toward a citizens' assembly with the thought of at least having for discussion proportional representation because this first past the post system is not involving a sufficient number of Albertans. The fact that only 41 per cent participated in the last election was an all-time Canadian low as well as a provincial low.

So Bill 7 is a start, but with Lorne Gibson being basically summarily dismissed and his 189 recommendations, very few of which appear in this bill, not being taken into account, I believe that democracy in Alberta could be better served.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Hon. members, may we revert briefly to Introduction of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

#### Introduction of Guests

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Mitzel:** Thank you. Mr. Chairman and hon. members, it's my pleasure this evening to introduce to you 29 students from various high schools across Alberta who are participating in the Forum for Young Albertans program. They are accompanied by their seven chaperones. The Forum for Young Albertans is a nonpartisan political learning opportunity for Alberta high school students. The program provides a wide variety of experiences for participants, including insight into the judicial system, the role of the bureaucracy, the function of interest groups, and the legislative process. The Speaker met with the students this morning in the Chamber, and this evening the Deputy Speaker enjoyed a dinner together with these students. These students will be meeting with many other members throughout the week. I'd ask the students and chaperones

seated in the members' gallery to rise and please accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

#### Bill 7

#### Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010

(continued)

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-*Buffalo* on the bill.

**Mr. Hehr:** I'll speak in third. I'm okay.

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for *Airdrie-Chestermere* on the bill.

**Mr. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Bill 7, the Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010, is all about the democratic process and about how we can make our democracy more transparent, make it stronger, make it more fair. I understand that, and I do actually applaud the government on several of the amendments in the bill as I think they are a step in the right direction. Of course, there are many things that we think are omitted. In order to put that into context, I feel that it is necessary to talk a little bit about the state of our democracy from my perspective. I know very clearly that there are hon. members of this Assembly that will disagree with my assessment of the state of our democracy. That's fair. Thankfully, we have a democracy that we can debate in and that we can have differences of opinion in, and this is all good.

There are things that I do not think are very healthy in our democratic system, and there are things that need to be addressed. I felt so strongly about that, Mr. Chair, that I left the governing PC caucus and became a member of the Wildrose Alliance caucus a few short months ago. I did not do this on a whim. It's something I thought about very deeply, and it was, without doubt, the hardest, most difficult decision in a lot of ways that I've ever had to make. I wanted to comment on that, and I wanted to talk about that in order that I could put on the record for this Assembly and for people listening and for my constituents the reasons why I made the decision that I did. This, of course, will set the context for the rest of the discussion, the points that I want to bring up later on Bill 7.

With that, I'm going to read excerpts from my statement on why I made the decision that I did three short months ago so that we can better understand some of the flaws that I think should be addressed in Bill 7 and should be addressed as we move forward as a Legislature. So here we go.

As has been reported, I have made the decision to join the Wildrose Alliance [caucus and] Party.

Leaving the PC Party was a very difficult decision for me and my family. We value the friendships we have with many of our former caucus colleagues, party members and their families, and know that some may feel upset with [this] decision.

Ultimately, however, my political loyalties reside with the people of . . . Alberta and especially with those in the constituency of *Airdrie-Chestermere* who elected me to represent them. And it is principally to all of those that I wish to explain my decision to cross the floor.

Most Albertans will be disappointed to know that [in my view] politics in our province has evolved into a process that is almost completely undemocratic. Not only are there [rarely] free votes in the Legislature, there are very few free votes [from my point of view] in caucus. Virtually all legislation is created and developed by various unelected government appointees with direction from the Premier and a small cadre of Cabinet Ministers whose distinguishing attribute is unconditional allegiance to [their leader]. All other elected MLAs [in my experience] generally have little, if any, real input into the [major] decisions that impact the lives of their constituents.

Final government decisions are highly influenced by the Premier's chief-of-staff . . . This unelected [government appointee] is now paid more than the Premier (nearly \$400,000 per year) and has effectively been given the power to override the views of the elected caucus [in some situations]. As a result, [Albertans] essentially have governance [at times] by bureaucratic fiat rather than by [the people's] democratically elected representatives.

Predictably, this undemocratic system has resulted in policies that are contrary to the small-c conservative sensibilities of most Albertans. From massive royalty hikes on our energy entrepreneurs, to awarding untendered transmission line contracts worth billions of dollars, [to the return to debt financing], to failing to protect the rights of free speech of our citizens, to behind-closed-doors salary increases, to the highly questionable \$2 billion carbon capture and storage experiment (I could go on) – the advice and words of warning from many caucus MLAs have been largely ignored and dismissed, and extremely poor policy decisions have resulted.

7:40

Equally disturbing is that [the Premier and his inner circle] considers it a serious offence if elected MLAs speak up publicly for their constituents. By way of example, [the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo], a former Cabinet Minister . . . was ejected from . . . caucus . . . for simply speaking up [on behalf of] his most vulnerable constituents.

In response to publicly suggesting the need for improved fiscal responsibility, I and [some of] the other so-called "Fiscal Seven" had our positions within government [at the time] threatened . . . Even behind closed doors, MLAs who contradict the . . . chief-of-staff, the Premier, or a prominent Minister [in my experience were] often derided, shouted down, and threatened with having their political careers limited in some fashion.

Simply put, [it is my belief that] our system of governance has become entirely dysfunctional and is not something I can continue to be part of. Over the past two years, I committed myself to trying to make a positive impact within the government caucus [by advocating for the views and needs of my constituents, both in private and in public]. This is what the citizens of Alberta pay me to do.

That is what my constituents expect of me. I believe that defending poor public policy that has been developed by a small band of [largely] out-of-touch government appointees [and insiders, would be a poor investment of my life and of taxpayers' money.]

I . . . entered public life to try to make a difference for our province. I believe, with the right leadership, Alberta can become an example to the world of the unparalleled success that [comes from] protecting economic and individual freedoms, adhering to principles of fiscal and personal responsibility and remaining true to authentic democratic values.

These are principles I believe in. They are also principles held by the majority of my constituents who entrusted me with the honour of representing them. I have therefore determined that I will support the political party that best reflects and respects those principles.

In the Wildrose Alliance, I see a party which understands [and a caucus which understands] that the role of elected representatives is to vote in the best interests of their constituents, rather than to inform constituents of their [political] party's talking points.

I see in [the Wildrose leader] Danielle Smith a leader who is articulate, competent and committed to the modern, small-c conservative principles that I and the majority of my constituents hold dear.

And it is for [this reason] that I have decided to leave the Alberta PC Party [and caucus] and join Danielle Smith's Wildrose Alliance.

I, again, Mr. Chair, feel that this is an extremely important decision that I had to make. There were many that felt when I crossed the floor that I should resign and a by-election should be held in my constituency. I considered that a lot, and of course I've

issued a challenge to the governing caucus, to the Premier, on that matter, which I'll talk about in a second. I wanted to address why – and this actually directly affects Bill 7, the Election Statutes Amendment Act – our system needs a little bit of work and why we've kind of gotten the role of an elected representative mixed up and turned around a little bit. So I again would read into the record excerpts of a piece entitled: why a by-election would not be in the best interests of my constituents. I will let them decide whether to agree with it or not.

Last week [at the time] I decided to leave the PC Party and join the Wildrose Alliance. As I explained in my public statement, I did this because I feel by doing so I will be able to more effectively represent and advocate for the needs and views of my constituents.

I did not make this decision in isolation. Over the past six months alone, I have had many hundreds of active PC Party members express to me that they had completely lost confidence in the current government. A significant number of these encouraged me to consider a different party affiliation – one that would more closely reflect small-c conservative values.

In the first two days after publicly announcing my decision, I received over 500 emails and phone calls from constituents on this matter. The vast majority of these have expressed agreement with my decision. Extensive polling conducted in the constituency over the last week has confirmed this overwhelming support.

However, some of those who do not support my decision have suggested that I should resign my seat and hold a by-election. Others feel I should sit as an Independent until the next election is called.

I carefully considered both of these options in the days and weeks leading up to my decision to cross the floor and came to the firm conclusion that both options were unacceptable. I wish to explain this conclusion.

On one level, I would be happy to contest a by-election. As stated earlier, constituent feedback and polling point to the likelihood of an overwhelming Wildrose Alliance victory should such an election be called.

The problem is that if I were to resign my seat, election law states that a by-election would not need to be called for 6 months. Assuming the Premier would likely delay the date as long as possible in hopes of recovering his Party's failing popularity [in this area], this would mean my constituents would be left without an MLA for 6 months. I receive hundreds of inquiries each week from constituents with a diverse range of concerns, varying from needing to access programs for the disabled to providing input for a Government Bill before the Legislature. To deny my constituents this representation (especially during the critical spring budget session of the Legislature) would be undemocratic and irresponsible.

I also felt that sitting as an Independent would be a mistake. My job is to represent the needs and views of my constituents in the most effective way possible. As an Independent, I would not have the opportunity to ask daily questions in question period. I would have less government resources at my disposal to fight for the infrastructure, policies and other initiatives those I represent wish me to advocate for. I therefore determined this option would also not be in my constituents' best interests.

And that brings me to my last, and potentially, most important point. As I've explained, one of the key reasons for my leaving the PC Party was due to the unacceptable concentration of decision-making power in the Premier's small (and largely unelected) inner circle. It is a widely accepted and unfortunate fact that Canada's Premiers and Prime Ministers hold more executive power than almost any comparable elected office in the world; even more than the Office of the President of the United States [for example].

We saw this power used a few months ago when the Premier ejected [the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo] from caucus for simply defending the needs of his senior constituents. On this basis, it would appear that the government feels that kicking out an elected MLA against his will (and without a vote by caucus) is

democratic, but an MLA voluntarily leaving his Party in order to better represent his constituents is not.

One of the few checks on the power of the Premier's Office is the ability of an elected MLA to leave the caucus and sit with another party that better reflects the views and desires of his constituents. Whether it be incompetence, a lack of democracy, repeated poor policy decisions [or any other reason], an elected representative in our system needs to be able to say to the government, "You have failed my constituents – and on their behalf, I will sit with another group that allows me to better represent their rights and their views."

Under our system, we elect individuals, not political parties, to represent our interests in government. And representing my constituents' interests above that of a party is precisely why I have made the decision to cross the floor to the Wildrose Alliance.

Mr. Chairman, those are a couple of the statements that were made after that difficult decision, and I felt that they needed to be put on the record just so that there was a record of why I conducted the activity and why I did what I did.

Since that time, of course, there have been government members, specifically ministers, that have again asked that I run in a by-election. So my final piece – and, I'm sure, thankfully, for many of you – is my challenge to the Premier on that. I'll leave with this, and we can move on to fixed election dates and other fun things.

My Challenge to the Premier.

Democracy in our province is hurting.

[In the] last election Alberta had the lowest voter turnout in Canadian history. There is almost universal cynicism towards elected officials and their intentions [which is unfortunate and untrue.] And there is a prevailing feeling that the average Albertan has no voice or influence on the provincial issues that affect them personally.

We need democratic renewal in the worst way.

A couple of months ago I crossed the floor to Danielle Smith's Wildrose Alliance – a party I feel will, if elected by Albertans, usher in an unprecedented wave of democratic reform and government transparency.

Although I am confident the vast majority of my constituents support my decision to cross the floor, several individuals (including Cabinet Ministers in [the Premier's] government) have challenged me to step down and run in a by-election.

Initially, I chose not to do so because it would mean leaving my riding (the second most populous in Alberta) without representation for 6 months; and frankly, because I think an MLA should be able, on behalf of his constituents, to leave a party that [he or she feels] is incompetent and failing those that MLA represents.

That said, I wish to issue a challenge to the Premier and his government should they feel so strongly about the need for a by-election.

I will agree to resign and hold a by-election under the following conditions:

- First, so we don't waste taxpayer money, the Premier needs to announce the by-election on the same day as municipal elections to be held this fall (Oct. 18th). I will resign my seat exactly one day prior to the Premier dropping the election writ (this date must also be mutually agreed to) so he can call the election under current by-election law.

7:50

- Second, in order that Alberta retains full Senate representation in Ottawa starting in 2011 when Senator Tommy Banks retires, the Premier must call for a Senate election on that same day (Oct. 18th). This will also save taxpayer money. So far the Premier has refused to commit to Senate elections in the fall which means Albertans will be underrepresented starting in 2011 – this is unacceptable; and
- Lastly, we need to start addressing the democratic deficit in this province. I would therefore request the Premier fix an exact election date in 2012 (whatever date he wants is fine).

I'll give the Premier until the end of spring session to take me up on this deal – so he's got [a lot] of time to think about it.

Hopefully, at least some good for our democracy (i.e. senate elections and fixed election dates) will come of this.

Mr. Chair, I thank you for this opportunity to put these things on the record. I know that they're not the easiest things for some people in this Chamber to listen to, so I do thank the members opposite for grinning and bearing it. They are things I feel very passionately about.

It should be noted, too, that despite all that has been said in this Chamber back and forth and despite what many people may believe, I actually do have a great deal of respect for members opposite and members of all parties as I believe that we are here for the right reasons by and large. We're here to try to make a difference for Albertans and for our constituents. Although I do not agree with the methods employed by the government at this time – I don't condone them – and I think they are out of touch and they need to improve in the way that they conduct our democracy, I don't for a minute want anyone to feel that I think of them as any lesser people or anything like that. I know they're here for the right reasons and they're good folks, even the hon. minister over there, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, although it's a little shaky from time to time.

With that, I will sit down, and we can get back to the debate on Bill 7. Thank you.

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore on the bill.

**Mr. Hinman:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I feel that we need to go over a few more things one last time as we're debating Bill 7, the Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010. I think the most important thing in a democracy is having a fair election. There are many things in this bill that set out and clarify some of the situations that have been in question before or challenged, and those are all good, but there are still some areas that concern me, and I feel that they need to be addressed.

One that I spoke about earlier – and many members have, but I want to address it once more – is the concern under section 4.1(1), test of new equipment and procedures. I'm very concerned with the latitude that's allowed in this area. I think that one of the things that really needs to be in there – and I hope that being on the record, the Chief Electoral Officer will look back and look at this. There needs to be a mechanism of tracing the actual vote. When we talk about electronic voting, you know, whether we're going to be able to do it in the future with our cellphone or other things, the problem and what we need to make sure that we avoid is, in fact: is it traceable? Is there evidence of the way people actually voted?

I know over in Europe it's quite amazing that the cellphone is becoming almost their lifeline. They can go up to vending machines; they can go golfing. They just literally dial in, and they're able to buy their pop, buy a sandwich, go to a movie. It's quite interesting how they're transforming into an electronic world.

**Ms Pastoor:** Every marketing firm knows what they've done.

**Mr. Hinman:** Yes.

The problem with voting is that there's no evidence, and we need to know that when someone goes in and votes, there is a scrutineer, that they can challenge it, that they can check it and make sure that it's right. This is a real concern to me going forward, that this bill still allows the Chief Electoral Officer to make that option and say: well, we want to go strictly electronic. If it's not traceable, to me it's not acceptable. We need to be able to track that back, and the individual should be able to know that their vote is going to count.

If we want electronic counting, that's very different. Whether you use a punch card, whether you have a reader and you want to blacken a box, whatever it is, and you can literally put it through a machine, kind of like swiping your credit card or your debit card, and then you have it there, and then you put it in a box for evidence so it can be checked on after I feel is very important. An area of great concern to me is that we would possibly go down that route saying: "Oh, no. It's foolproof. You don't need to worry about it." There's nothing foolproof if there isn't evidence in a tracking system that you can go through.

Another area that we see at municipal levels and in many provinces and countries in the world: set election dates. Very disappointed that that hasn't been set into this bill. Set election dates are quite important when it comes to people wanting to look at running and knowing when it's going to happen. One of the toughest things, if someone is running a business or has a job, is to not be able to know when it's going to be called. They can try to gear up only to find out that it doesn't happen. If we really want to involve more people – if they know that in March 2012 there's going to be a provincial election, people can gear their business. They can gear their life to prepare for that. But if, in fact, tomorrow the Premier decides that we're calling an election, it's very hard, especially for opposition parties because for some reason the government party always seems to have a little better knowledge of when that's being called. They're told to get everything ready and to get their signs printed, those types of things. So you can kind of observe and be prepared.

Set election dates are really important, in my mind, if we're going to have a greater participation and people wanting to run and people perhaps even planning their vacations knowing: I'm going to take a week off in March 2012 because I want to help the candidate of my choice and to spend maximum time. There are a lot of people that are really dedicated and want to see the democratic process go forward. There are just thousands of volunteer hours that are given. So it would be a huge advantage if those people could actually plan and be prepared for those things and, again, involve more people because they know that it's coming and they prepare and they're excited because they get to participate and can plan for it. So it's something else that I hope, as this government continues sitting, they'll continue putting through the debate inside their caucus, hopefully, and say: "You know, it's the right thing to do. Let's bring in set election dates."

There's been a lot of discussion and debate about how we involve Albertans: how do we get them to really come out and vote? As I've said before, door-knocking is a great privilege, to get out and to meet Albertans: "What are your concerns? Why do you vote the way you do? What would you like to see government do different?" Probably the most discouraging thing that I've heard – again, if you take that cloud, there's always a silver lining – is the number of people that say: "You know, it doesn't matter who we vote for. You're all the same once you get in there. You don't represent us. The biggest thing is that you say one thing when you're here at my door, but then if you go and do something different or start supporting something else, what am I supposed to do? What can I do to stop you from not keeping your word on something that you're supporting?"

To me, if there's one thing that we could engage Canadians, Albertans, the municipal level, even our school boards, and everything else is to know that the people that we elect are always accountable to the people who elected them. There's only one process that I know of on accountability, and that's recall. To me, if recall was to be in the Election Statutes Amendment Act – I know many people say that should be a separate bill, that we can't bring

in an amendment to add something to a bill. So that's a little bit disappointing. Recall is the ultimate accountability. If someone decides to do something – and we'll use the example of centralizing health care – and the people look at that and they disagree, there's nothing they can do. And human nature is such that when there isn't anything that we can do, why should we bother worrying or wasting any of our time or energy fighting against something: "There's nothing we can do. The government is going to pass this. We're going to have to wait three years or four years. They just came forward, and there's nothing that we can do."

8:00

Many people just feel, you know, that once every four years or every three years – the democratic process isn't democratic for the other 900, 1,200 days. I believe if we really want to engage Albertans and know that it makes a difference, if we really want to be accountable, recall is something that we need to look at. There are just so many areas. We need to look at the Election Statutes Amendment Act and say: what do we do so that Albertans are engaged, so they think that their voting makes a difference?

Another area that I've spoken on and I feel is important to bring it up again. If you talk about these things enough times, you know, you start to think through it and think: "Well, you know, maybe that is okay. That does have some credibility. That might involve more Albertans, and they'll have a desire to engage and be part of that." But being a small caucus, not having official party status, the way it's set up makes it very difficult to do the research, to get to ask the questions and hold the government accountable. I don't feel that our system and our set-up right now is really one where people say: "You know what? I'm going to vote for those parties because it's good, and I like to see the government being held accountable." They look at it as, "Well, my vote doesn't count."

It's interesting with the new Electoral Boundaries Commission, the big debate that is out there. So many individuals are saying: "Is it one Albertan? Is it one vote?" They are saying, "Well, you know, we're only a .97" or "This area actually is a .67, and this one actually is a 1.34." We're so concerned, and rightfully so. Is it one Albertan? Is it one vote? Again, I see the importance of that, the merit of that, but to take it one step further, if in fact 250,000 Albertans have voted for the Liberal party and their seats go down from 16 to nine, has there been a dynamic change in the desires of Albertans? I would say no, it hasn't, that we need to look at the actual number of votes.

To me, if in fact Albertans were to realize, you know, "If I vote for the Wildrose Alliance, the Liberals, or whatever the new party might be, I know that if they get an elected member, there's going to be \$5 of research money going to that caucus," all of a sudden people will say: "No, I want that research. I want them to be able to get the message out and to send that to Albertans." That's really what it is. What's our goal? What do we want to achieve, and what are we trying to do? Are we trying to make a better health care system? Do we want more access for kids to get into universities? Do we want universities to be affordable, or do we want kids to think that it's free?

There is lots of discussion that we have on those things, yet we don't really tie it in often to elections. There's no tie-back, and there's no discussion, so when you fund the different parties by the number of Albertans that actually vote in that area, that's the philosophical debate: the research money, if we want to talk, that goes into that. Research money is invaluable. If you talk to, you know, a lot of the different companies that are moving forward, they look at it and they say: well, there's a percentage here that needs to go into research to make sure that we're always current and we're keeping up on things.

The democratic process is no different. We need to stay current. We need to be looking at the new ideas and having that research money going there. I think that that's something that would address and, again, would engage Albertans to say: my vote will make a difference. Whether there's 60,000 or 600,000 who vote for that party, it makes a difference, and it's the voters that are driving it rather than some Members' Services Committee who has a majority of government members and says: well, we're going to pick this party or that party; we'll give these ones extra funding but not those ones for partisan reasons. I want to engage Albertans and make them realize: no, you need to get out and vote because our votes are going to count so that more research can be done.

There are so many areas, Mr. Chair, where the Election Statutes Amendment Act is looking after some of the penny thoughts, the small ideas. How do we make sure these elections are fair? How do we do that? Those are all important, but I feel like we're missing the big picture. How do we engage Albertans? How do we ensure that what goes on in this House reflects the will of Albertans the best? How do we have a debate?

I was very disappointed in the emergency debate discussion that we had the other day. The Speaker got up and read all of the questions and the members' statements that had gone on, but there is no opposition party date, where you get to pick a discussion and do that. There was no discussion on cataract eye surgery. There were some questions that were attempted to be asked. The answers were more propaganda than answers. There was no discussion, and there's no way to do it.

Albertans, again, those that were contacting us, said: we just want a debate in there; let's have an open debate. That was the only way of doing that. Those are all different areas. Are we going to change our thoughts and, you know, look at a way of ensuring that the opposition parties can pick some debates and bring them forward? Like I say, this Bill 7 addresses a lot of the smaller issues, which are always important, but have we addressed the big issues? Are we moving forward?

One area, I guess, that I'd just like to share a little bit of thought on is that if you look back 50 years or a hundred years here in this wonderful province of ours and you see how things have evolved, whether it's in the aircraft carriers or the telecommunications, it's amazing the progress that we've made. Yet when it comes to the democratic process, have we evolved and gone forward in any direction? I would say no. We're stuck in that same old process of 1905, 1920, 1960, 1970, 1990, and nothing has changed.

We just are going through an Electoral Boundaries Commission on how we're going to change things, and many, many Albertans that I run into say: "Why do we need four more MLAs? What's the sense in that? There are already too many of you. There's got to be a better way of reducing that." I think there is.

You know, we're all shareholders. We talk about one Albertan, one vote, but how do we actually get to vote those shares? Why should I go out and vote those shares? When you're a minority shareholder, even in a corporation, and you get the annual report and they're saying to vote on who's going to be on the board and what their awards are going to be, you just think: "Oh, there are 27 million shares out there. I own 500 of them. Is there any point in me submitting my vote?" That's what Albertans often ask: "Is there any point in me submitting my vote?"

Another idea that I think is worth discussing and, again, we don't do enough is two ways to engage Albertans. Again, these are just ideas for discussion. I think that's the important thing; you always throw the idea out there. There's no question that in the urban area, where it's more concentrated, it's far easier to be able to represent those people. They have much more in common than in a rural area,

where they might be spread over hundreds and hundreds of miles and very diverse in what's going on in that area.

Let's say, for the sake of the cities, we were to amalgamate every riding into two ridings. We'd take two and put them into one and reduce the city MLAs by half. But your voting authority: again, this is where if you want to be electronic in areas where you can do it, you can show that the Member for Calgary-Glenmore voted this way on this vote. But the votes that I would have would actually represent whether there are 30,000 or, as in Airdrie-Chestermere, 65,000. You'd actually be voting for the number of people that you're representing, just like we do as shareholders. That's the type of electronic voting that, to me, would add great value and efficiency in how we're representing the people that we're asked to represent.

It doesn't have to be just one mouth that represents 40,000 people. That one mouth might do, as in the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, for 90,000 people. So when he pushes his button on voting, there's a huge vote there. Boom. All of a sudden it makes a difference. That would engage Albertans to say: well, no, I want to get out and vote.

Again, you just take your whole area or, if we really wanted to put in another novel idea, the number of people that actually came out and voted in your riding. If that was 12,000 people that voted, then you'd be representing 12,000. Then people would say: well, no, I want my MLA to have some clout. So maybe instead of 12,000 voting, 18,000 would or 25,000 would because you'd know that that MLA would be representing the number of votes they have. Or if we really wanted to take the next leap, say that you only vote for the number of people that actually voted for you, whether that was 4,200 or 6,000. You could do that.

#### 8:10

Many people say: "What about the bicameral system? We need a Senate here in Alberta." There are some interesting, novel ideas on that as well, where the acting leader or the leaders of the different parties could actually vote a second time on a bill, representing the number of votes that that party received, yea or nay. It would have to go through a double vote, the first one by the members, the people on that level, but the second one by the parties to say: you know, well, there were 250,000 for the Liberals; there were 80,000 for the Wildrose Alliance and 90,000 for this one independent. You'd have a double check, where Albertans could really be in a much more democratic process, where you'd be representing them. There are a lot of interesting ideas.

Bill 7, like I say, is looking at the ground level. But to me we really need to expand the election statutes act. How are we going to engage more Albertans? How are we going to represent them? How are we going to be able to stop the government from doing something that the people really don't want, like the new royalty framework, the centralization of health care, billions of dollars on CO<sub>2</sub> wish thoughts, or \$300 million on ethanol production because they decide that's the energy program that we want to go with, where they leave out windmills or biomass or geothermal? They're picking winners and losers. That isn't government's job, to pick winners and losers. We don't have a democratic system where we're able to send that message to the government.

I hope that as we continue working in this House, we'll expand our thoughts and our ideas to say: how do we engage Albertans? How do we actually make their vote count? Most important of all, how do we ensure that we as elected representatives are accountable to the people that we represent and not the party that we represent? Are we looking into all of those things? I would say that we're falling short on that. We can do much better.

I'll look forward to listening to further debate by other members on this bill.

**The Chair:** Any other hon. members? The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere on the bill.

**Mr. Anderson:** Yeah, on the bill. I wanted to talk a little bit about: we've heard a lot of comments over what would improve our democracy the most. Everyone knows that we have a 40 per cent voter turnout roughly, and I don't think anyone is proud of that number. I don't think you can blame it on one or two or three or even four things. There are numerous reasons why we have such a low voter turnout.

I've also noticed that there's really a disconnect. I mean, many people in this Chamber had the opportunity to have dinner tonight with some young Albertans. You know, you talk with these young people. They're so engaged in the democratic process, and they're so excited to be there. It's just a breath of fresh air. But they're the exceptions to the general rule. Generally, when you talk to young Albertans or any Albertans about democracy and about politics and that sort of thing, their eyes kind of glaze over.

There's also a lot of cynicism towards politicians. You know what? Some of that is earned. No doubt about it. Some of it isn't earned, though. I mean, some of it is just simply not true. No one in here is corrupt or is taking money under the table. I sure hope not. I sure don't suspect anyone is. Maybe that's naïveté on my part, but I don't think that's the case. I hope it's not. People don't understand that the average person going into public life really does just want to contribute to their society and to contribute to their community and to their province and to their country.

We've got to start thinking about what would engage Albertans. What would get Albertans excited about democracy again? There are all kinds of gimmicks that we can throw out there, you know, like you see in the States, Rock the Vote and all these funny things. I think there's a fundamental underlying problem, and it's one of many. I don't think this is a panacea. This isn't going to solve everything. But if there was one thing that we could do in this Legislature that I think would contribute the most to getting Albertans engaged in the democratic process and giving them more faith in our democratic process, it would be the concept of enshrining mandatory free votes on all legislation and restoring the rightful role of an elected member to represent his constituents first and foremost over any other consideration. Party line, all these things: none of these things would matter as much as just representing your constituents on a base level.

When you go in and you vote on a bill in the Legislature, it should be because you honestly believe as an MLA that that is in your constituents' best interests and it's what they want, or if they're not engaged and they don't understand, you've analyzed the problem for them and you think that this is what they would want if they had analyzed it and done the background work on it. When we go into the House, that's all we should think about. We shouldn't think about what the party talking points are or anything like that. We shouldn't think about anything other than what is in our constituents' best interests.

People always say: well, okay, that sounds really great. Right? Everybody believes: yeah, sure, an MLA should be his or her constituents' voice to Edmonton, not their party's or Edmonton's voice to his or her constituents. I think everyone believes that or thinks that that's how it should work, but in fact it doesn't. We all know this in this Chamber. Everyone knows this, that that's not how it works.

I mean, sure, there's no doubt that many MLAs in the governing caucus and otherwise go and in caucus and behind closed doors and in private meetings and these sorts of things advocate for a viewpoint of their constituents. There's no doubt that that happens. Absolutely. But at the end of the day when they go into the House

and actually put a vote down, actually stand up and vote on something or say yea or nay on something, they are essentially voting the party line. They are essentially voting what their party wants them to do, and then they're given talking points to take back and explain it to their constituents.

This isn't just Alberta in our country. This unfortunately is the case across Canada federally. We have an opportunity in this province. I mean, I look at some of the members over there, and I know that they're reform minded, that they want to change the system. I know that. I've had discussions into the wee hours of the morning with many of them on how we could make democracy stronger here and really get constituents engaged and totally reform the system so that we had free votes and representatives were empowered to represent their constituents first and foremost above any consideration. There's such an opportunity over there to do that, to spearhead that change, because the governing caucus does have a massive majority right now: 68 seats.

I tell you, if they would enshrine free votes as a mandatory staple of Alberta politics in the Legislature, I believe that the electorate would reward them handsomely for doing that. Sure, does it cede a little bit of power from the Premier's office? Obviously, it does. The Premier still has lots of power in that situation, lots of things that the executive does still and has the power over, but yeah, there's no doubt that the Premier and the cabinet would lose a little bit of power. They'd have to go do their groundwork. They'd have to go out there and have a good ground game and convince MLAs that this is the way it needs to work and that this is why it benefits the various constituencies, et cetera, et cetera. They would have to do that.

If people believed that they were sending somebody to Edmonton that first and foremost had their interests top of mind when they voted on a bill or when they voted in any committee, if that is what they thought they were voting for, I really think that would improve our democracy greatly. People would actually believe that they were voting for something. They would actually examine the policies of the individual candidates and look at their resumé's and look at their track record.

I mean, when I was a government member – I'll just use myself as an example; I won't use any of the government members – how on earth would my constituents know how I voted in caucus on Bill 50, for example? They all know now, but how would they know that? They couldn't possibly know it because I wouldn't be allowed to go out and tell them how I voted on it, and I certainly wouldn't be able to vote against the bill because it was decided in caucus otherwise. In some cases it is decided in the Premier's office otherwise. I just think that it's wrong.

**8:20**

Every election you should go into that election as an incumbent and be able to put your record before the people and say: "This is how I voted on a bill or on a motion or whatever. This is what I did. Yeah, I know that's what the party was saying and that's what the Premier was saying, but I voted this way." If we did that, I really think that the reverence for democracy and the opinion about elected officials would be greatly increased. Right now, unfortunately, it's just not the case. No one knows how their MLA votes on things.

I mean, there are people in every party that range on the spectrum. Obviously, we have different opinions on things, and we've voted against each other on a couple of things.

**Mr. Hinman:** Which one, for example?

**Mr. Anderson:** Well, don't even get me started.

In the governing caucus, I mean, there are people that are very conservative, absolute small "c" fiscal conservatives. Then there are



others that, frankly, in any other province would be Liberals or New Democrats. It's a huge spectrum. I know. I was two years in that party. It's a huge spectrum. It's a big tent, as they say, and that's fine. I personally think that you can make a tent so big that eventually you don't stand for anything, but that's a debate for another day.

The point is that if I'm somebody in Edmonton – I don't know. Just pick a riding anywhere. I don't want to pick on anybody. If I'm a constituent in Edmonton-Whatever and my Tory MLA is running in another election as an incumbent, how the heck do I know what that Tory MLA voted on? I know what the party's record is. I know what the Premier's agenda is. That's pretty clear in the media. The Premier and his cabinet, obviously, are on the record on virtually everything, but how do I know what that individual MLA advocated for? Caucus meetings aren't published. The votes in caucus aren't published. The results from votes aren't published. I mean, you can't have democracy without transparency and accountability. You just can't do it. You can't have it as strong as it should be anyway.

I just really believe, you know, very strongly that if we empowered the individual MLA and we made sure that every vote they took was on the record – it doesn't mean every discussion has to be on the record. I realize that in order to get things done, you've got to have private discussions and private debates. I get that. But at the end of the day an MLA has to cast a vote, and when they cast that vote, the only thing on their mind should be that after getting all the evidence together, after hearing from the Premier and the cabinet and the caucus and the opposition parties and my constituents and reading the research and doing all these things, this is the conclusion that I think is in the best interests of my constituents, not what's in the best interest of my party or what's in the best interest of me personally, politically, or in the best interest of anything or in the interest of caucus solidarity or any of these other funny excuses that we use but just in the interests of my constituents.

If we could do that, if we could restore that level of trust with the electorate as elected officials, I really think that things would change. Albertans would get more involved because they would know they could go to an individual MLA and could advocate to that MLA. You know what? Your individual constituents would actually feel that they could sway your mind, and maybe they could, and you could take that message to Edmonton. But right now it doesn't work that way. Why bother to go see your MLA? I mean, sure, you can go and talk. But I know how these things work. Constituents come in, they go and talk, the well-meaning MLA goes and tries to find the minister or brings it up in caucus, but it's so busy, and it gets swept under the rug. There's not really time to debate it, and all kinds of things happen. In my view, it's just not true democracy.

Again, I don't blame the governing party for it. It's the way our system is set up in Canada, frankly. But that doesn't mean we need to always have it this way. You know, some people say: "Well, how would you do this? How would you enshrine mandatory free votes? You know, you can't have the government fall. Right? The government might fall. If somebody votes against the government's budget in their own party and the party falls, then you call an election. That's no good. So you've got to have whipped caucus votes, party line votes."

Well, you know what? I look at Quebec. They have a constitution, and their constitution, unless it conflicts with the federal constitution, takes precedence and is the binding law. Well, why don't we start looking at maybe an Alberta constitution? Why don't we start thinking about enshrining mandatory free votes in Alberta so that just because a government loses a vote on a bill, that doesn't trigger an automatic election? You have to have a vote of nonconfidence that is completely separate and stand-alone in order

for the government to fall. In other words, opposition parties and government members can vote on something, can vote on an issue according to what they think their constituents want, and if the bill doesn't pass or if it's not going to pass, then the government and the opposition parties have to go back and make it work until it's got the majority of free votes in the House. That way the government won't feel threatened that: oh, we've got to pass it or our government will fall. I think it'll make for better legislation. I really do. Again, I think it will re-engage Albertans a lot more.

If we enshrine that principle in the constitution, in an Alberta constitution, I think it's sound to say that that would override any conventions that might be in place and that it would be allowed and would be constitutional and would be democratic. There's no reason why we have to continue to use the exact same system in the exact same way that's been around for 200, 300 years if you go back to, you know, talking about the Westminster system. We can change it. We can evolve – it is possible – and we should. I mean, we can set our own course in democracy, and we should.

We've got some great minds in this House from all parties, so let's put them together, and let's figure out a way to make mandatory free votes something that Alberta pioneers. We could do that. I'm really convinced of that. People say: well, if you have mandatory free votes, then situations might occur where you might break the budget. In other words, you have a budget set, and then someone brings a bill and through horse-trading, et cetera, you have another monetary bill that comes forward, and all of a sudden you've broken the budget and you've, you know, screwed up everything and, oh, the whole system would fall apart.

Well, that's again easily solved. It's called pay-as-you-go legislation. It's been implemented in many different places, of course, the United States being the foremost before the current administration. During the Clinton years they had pay-as-you-go legislation. If a new initiative came forward and was passed by a free vote in the House, if it cost something, it would have to be offset by a corresponding tax increase or cut to some other program area. Of course, that kept the pork barrel and the horse-trading and all that in check, and as you know, they ran huge surpluses during the Clinton administration. That was mostly from 1994. You had a Democratic President and a Republican Congress that came together and actually got something done on that front and controlled their spending.

You know, the little things that people say: oh, we can't have free votes because of X. There are ways that we can institute a system that would allow for these free votes without mass chaos or huge spending increases or governments falling every five minutes. I mean, we can do that, and I think that the people of Alberta would want us to do that.

It's something I feel very passionate about, obviously, and it's one of the reasons I left the government caucus. I didn't feel that this principle was top of mind. In fact, I didn't think at the time that it was anywhere close to top of mind. I feel that now that I'm in opposition I have the ability to advocate very freely the viewpoints of my constituents. I feel my constituents want this. I bet you most of our constituents want this. Sure, it's not their number one concern. I understand that. A lot of times people, especially our constituents because they're not in the process and they don't understand government like the people in this House do, know the system is broken, but they just can't put their finger on it. If you ask them, they know something is wrong, that something just doesn't feel right about this system. We've got to be big enough and smart enough to realize why certain things are broken. What's wrong with the system?

I think that, honestly, the reason why people feel their vote has absolutely no bearing whatsoever is because when they go into a

voting booth, they know full well that even if they really like the local MLA or they don't like him or they like somebody, it doesn't matter because it's all going to come down to what the leader of the party says. Period. That's all that's going to matter. That, essentially, disenfranchises them, and in fact I would say that it disenfranchises all Albertans. It disenfranchises them all except for the ones that live in Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. Those are the only ones, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, where the MLA really, honestly does have a huge say in what laws are passed and in what things happen.

8:30

There are a few other cabinet ministers where that would be the case as well, but the vast majority – the vast majority – of MLAs have very little input. Sure, they have a little. You know, they can suggest, but at the end of the day, if they don't vote along the party lines, they're punished in some way and in some fashion, and that's just the way it is. We saw that with the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, and we've all seen it in the internal party politics and internal party discipline that occurs on that side of the House and that, I'm sure, occurs in all kinds of parties across Canada.

We have a chance to change it. We've got the minds in here to do it. We have a lot of new MLAs in here that have only been on the job for a couple of years, and I think we even have a few of the veterans. You know, they've been around. I think there are some reform-minded people among our veteran bench as well. Why don't we get together and actually re-engage Albertans, restore the role of the MLA, restore the role of the elected representative? If we do that, I really believe democracy in Alberta will be stronger than it has ever been in the recent past.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Any other hon. members wish to speak on the bill?  
Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[The clauses of Bill 7 as amended agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

**The Chair:** Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Opposed? Carried.  
The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Renner:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the committee now rise and report Bill 7.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne.

**Mr. VanderBurg:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bills: Bill 12, Bill 13, Bill 14, and Bill 9. The committee reports the following bill with some amendments: Bill 7. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

Thank you, sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Those in agreement with the report, please say aye.

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Opposed, please say no. So ordered.

## Government Bills and Orders

### Third Reading

#### Bill 10

#### Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2010

**Mr. Renner:** Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to move third reading of Bill 10, but before I do, might I suggest that the House give unanimous consent to amending standing orders to shorten the duration of the break between bells to one minute in the event of a division for the rest of this evening?

[Unanimous consent granted]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Renner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, too, hon. members. It's my pleasure to move on behalf of the Minister of Justice third reading of Bill 10, Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2010.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 10, as a reminder to everyone, will allow the civil forfeiture process to continue to make crime unprofitable and will allow us to fund a wider range of victim and crime reduction programs. It's important legislation that will help to address the growing issue of gang crime and keep our communities safer, and for that reason I encourage all members to support Bill 10 in third reading.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. I speak in support of Bill 10, Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2010. It accomplishes two main goals. One, it supports the victims by forcing the criminal to pay restitution, and it also takes away that funding that criminal organizations would use to their benefit to further their own devious demands. Therefore, I believe that it should go forward, and I support it in third.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

**Mr. Hehr:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke on this extensively in second and in committee. I, too, would like to speak in support of this bill. It does a couple of good things. It takes away some money and illegal profits, property of criminals who have gained access to their largesse by victimizing or by criminal activity here in Alberta. It gives the government the ability to do that. It also is going to allow more people to benefit from victims of crime funding. This is a pool of money that has gathered for some time now, and this will allow more people and more organizations to be able to apply for it and to be able to get compensation.

Again, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak in support of this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows five minutes for comments or questions.

Seeing none, does any other hon. member wish to speak on the bill?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 10 read a third time]

8:40

**Bill 11**  
**Witness Security Act**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is now my pleasure to move third reading of Bill 11, the Witness Security Act.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it's a privilege to rise and speak in support of this bill. It establishes a province-wide witness protection program tailored for witnesses requiring short-term protection. It seems to me that this is a good bill because of the elements of organized crime that are moving into this province. It allows us to do more of our Alberta's-own solutions to our own criminal enterprises that are going on, and it gives us some more flexibility to do some good police work here at home.

I'm glad to support this, and I hope this takes a bite out of crime, I guess. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. Very briefly speaking in support of Bill 11, the Witness Security Act, what it does is parallel our federal system, it provides support for individuals who feel threatened, it encourages them to come forward and testify without fear of retribution, and therefore it is well worth supporting. It improves the carrying out of justice in this province by protecting individuals who are in a vulnerable position and allows them to testify with the assurance that they will be protected.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comments or questions.

Seeing none, any other hon. member wish to speak on the bill?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 11 read a third time]

**Bill 13**  
**Securities Amendment Act, 2010**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

**Mr. Dallas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the hon. Minister of Finance and Enterprise I'm pleased to rise and move third reading of Bill 13, the Securities Amendment Act, 2010.

As was covered during prior debate, Bill 13 represents Alberta's commitment to ongoing reform of our securities regulatory system under the 2004 provincial-territorial memorandum of understanding regarding securities regulation. This bill builds on the work that Alberta has done since 2004 to further modernize, harmonize, and streamline Alberta's securities laws and also to ensure that Alberta supports Canada in meeting its international commitments. At their heart these amendments will ensure Alberta investors can continue to have confidence in our securities regulatory system.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. Again, speaking in support but with a degree of measured concerns over Bill 13, Securities Amendment Act, 2010, it seems that Alberta and Quebec are the holdouts in terms of a national securities commission, and interestingly we, or at least this province, frequently criticize decisions Quebec has made and accuse Quebec of being the recipient of Alberta's largesse when it comes to transfer payments. We're going to have to work somewhat more diligently across this nation.

While we're in Bill 13 agreeing to the passport system that exists across the nation, tightening of security is going to be extremely important. We have seen in this province billions of dollars lost because of weak regulation for asset-backed commercial paper. We haven't got hammered to the same extent that our southern trading partner has, but we definitely need to tighten up security regulation.

ATB suffered several million dollars in hits. AIMCo likewise suffered hits. We have the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta, who lost significant millions of dollars on their endowment funds because of investments in very risky asset-backed commercial paper.

One of the principles of the Alberta Liberal Party is that 30 to 35 per cent of all nonrenewable energy gains would be set aside in a fund. Approximately a third of that fund would go to supporting postsecondary endowment funds but with the proviso that the Auditor General would have strong regulatory powers over how investments are made because while endowment funds are private donations, to a large extent, from universities, the fund we're talking about would come directly from nonrenewable resource revenue.

Also, all Liberal constituency associations across the province are submitting resolutions for our policy convention here in Edmonton on May 15 and 16. With the importance of saving for the future to avoid this recessionary boom and bust, one of the resolutions that's being put forward by Calgary-Varsity under the name of Kurt Hansen, who is a director – he'd actually like to see between 40 and 50 per cent of nonrenewable funds put into the heritage trust fund so that we could build it up to a faster extent and have kind of an insurance policy against the ebb and flow of surpluses.

I do support this legislation, and it is, as I say, in keeping with other provinces. Therefore, it's extremely important that we maintain our relationship, especially our financial and trade relationship, with other provinces. Bill 13, the Securities Amendment Act, 2010, goes a long way to that establishment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other hon. member wish to speak on the bill?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 13 read a third time]

**Bill 14**  
**Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2010**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Renner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Minister of Transportation I'm pleased to move third reading of Bill 14, the Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2010.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Yes. I hope members of the government are keeping track of the support that they're receiving on a wide variety of

legislation. I want them to note that that support is not just restricted to the Liberal Official Opposition, but for the most part you've seen the support from the Wildrose party and previously from the ND Party.

The point I wish to make in referencing Bill 14, the Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2010, is that when the legislation makes sense, we embrace it; we support it. Bill 14 makes sense because the fines that are realized within a certain geographic location go back to that location that is paying for the police enforcement. It makes absolute sense, and therefore I am supporting Bill 14.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other hon. member wish to speak on the bill?

Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 14 read a third time]

8:50

**Bill 9**  
**Local Authorities Election Statutes**  
**Amendment Act, 2010**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater.

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's now my pleasure to move third reading of Bill 9, the Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much. While I can't cheer as loudly for Bill 9, the Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010, as I have for other legislation, it does move in the right direction. It does correct mistakes that were previously made that shut out the local authorities. It does address concerns that were brought forward by both the AUMA and the AAMD and C. It is attempting, as I say, to correct the mistakes previously made in Bill 203.

There is, beyond a doubt, a need to equalize, to have a common set of standards, whether it be municipal or provincial, in terms of how financing and how authority is given with regard to campaign funds. We as provincial legislators have the advantage of being able to offer a tax return for our campaign donations, and through that process there is a great deal of scrutiny and oversight, as there must be. The local municipal politicians do not have those advantages, but the same strict rules as to campaign financing need to apply not only to municipal elections but also to leadership elections. It is my hope that through the standing committee, as we review the legislation about leadership campaigns and financing, we'll finally in this province have a set of rules that apply universally, whether it's on leadership, whether it's municipal, or whether it's provincial.

Bill 9 isn't the be-all and end-all in terms of accountability, but it's a step in the right direction, and therefore we support it. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a privilege for me to stand up and speak in support of Bill 9, the Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010. I think this bill is a good start to bringing more autonomy to local elections. It sets some limits on donations that can be given and how they can be tracked. I think it clears up some of the misconceptions that were in the first attempt at this bill, and I think it'll go a long way to start bringing some clarification to our municipal elections.

I would like to add, though, that I hope this is just the first part of this bill, the Local Authorities Election Statutes Amendment Act. I'd like to see in the future them possibly going to a system like we have with the provincial government, with the Chief Electoral Officer overseeing all elections here in Alberta, with a tax receipt being involved and some scrutiny. The tax receipt would also encourage more individuals to run and more individuals to give as well as have a uniformity of rules that go forward between different bodies and different elections in this province.

Like I said, I'm supportive of this bill. It's a good start to bringing some of the Wild West days of municipal elections sort of in line with election standards and election principles.

Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of questions or comments.

Seeing none, any hon. member want to join the debate on Bill 9? Seeing none, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 9 read a third time]

**Bill 7**  
**Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Renner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be pleased to move on behalf of the Minister of Justice third reading of Bill 7, the Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere.

**Mr. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to touch on, since this is the last opportunity to speak to this bill – and I've talked, obviously, a lot about the different aspects of democracy that I'm concerned about. But there are a few points, almost a laundry list – well, five or six things – I just wanted to comment on briefly. I really do feel that as we go forward with this bill and with other bills, we need to be looking at these issues.

I want to first just quickly talk about the Public Accounts issue. If we're going to have a functioning democracy where there's accountability in this Legislature, we need to make sure that we have a transparent and accountable Public Accounts Committee. What went on there, with the hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed being given, essentially, veto power, having to sign off on every committee move, is not appropriate, Mr. Speaker. The Wildrose wants to be on the record for that. I hope that in the coming days that will be reversed.

There should be broad powers. I can't tell you how many times – and I've only been in opposition for one session – I've asked for documents from departments, and I've gotten a snow job on it. You know, "We can't do it for this reason," or they just ignore the request. It's just wrong. We've got to be able to hold the government to account. The government has all the resources in the world to defend their decisions and to defend their budget.

As an opposition and on behalf of the Official Opposition, I guess, I would say that all we're asking for is the ability to summon the documents that we need to see in order to hold the government to account. If they're making good decisions, if they're making decisions that don't have ulterior motives, they should be able to put those documents on the table, and we should be able to summon witnesses and documents. The chair, which is a member of the Official Opposition, should be able to ask for those documents, and

they should be given, plain and simple, unless there's a national or provincial security issue or whatever. Those are the only times where they shouldn't be given, especially to members of the committee.

That's one thing I wanted to get on the record. If we're going to improve our democracy going forward, it can't just start at Bill 7 and end at Bill 7. We've got to make sure that that harmful decision is reversed.

The second point. I want to be fair to the Deputy Premier. He's been listening throughout this discussion, and, you know, he's been very thoughtful as he's been listening. I want to be on the record as saying, though – and it could have been anyone: the Deputy Premier, the Premier, any of the government cabinet ministers – that I do not believe that it is right for a government to on behalf of the government caucus submit what they feel the electoral boundary should be changed to to what is supposed to be a nonpartisan commission. That is just wrong.

It's one thing for an individual MLA or a party constituency association or someone else to do it, but when the government does it, when it comes from the office of the Premier or the Deputy Premier or a high-ranking minister, that puts undue influence, in my view, on that boundary commission. They are extremely compromised right now. You know, it's easy to say: oh, it's just a submission. It's not just a submission. It's a submission from the people that appointed them.

Again, this was a decision of government, you know, and I feel that it should be corrected, that it should be withdrawn. The commission should be allowed to do its work without having that pressure of having to deal with this submission. It's not right. It shouldn't happen. I mean, in my electoral boundary, for example, in Airdrie-Chestermere, it's quite funny. Foothills-Rocky View now starts on the west, Mr. Speaker. It goes to Airdrie. It's cut in half by Airdrie-Chestermere and Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. Then it actually starts again on the west. In other words, it's cut into two completely separate land masses without any kind of continuous border. That's what they're suggesting. I had a reporter tell me: oh, I don't think I've ever heard of anything like that before. Well, he's right. It's because it hasn't happened before. These are some really silly things.

9:00

We've done the analysis on Calgary-Glenmore. They've added polls that went Liberal in the last election and taken away Conservative ones. I understand, you know, that we all want to do well for our different constituencies, and we all want to be re-elected, but it is absolutely wrong for the government on behalf of government to do this. I really hope that the government will reconsider taking that off the table and making it absolutely, abundantly clear to this commission that there's no pressure whatsoever to implement the changes that they're proposing because it's not right, and it's undemocratic.

Thirdly, opposition caucus allowance. Right now the New Democrats, with two seats, have what's called a leader's allowance. It's not a leader's allowance; it's a caucus allowance. It's used for caucus research. It's used for caucus activities. The NDP gets it; the Wildrose, with three members, doesn't get it. It's so difficult. We have two researchers. I've got to tell you that every day I'm here, I'm up till 1 or 2 in the morning, trying to work through everything that's going on, trying to research the bills and look at it because we just do not have what we need to put a support staff together.

Again, the pattern here is democracy and a little bit of the lack thereof. All we're asking is that we be treated the same as our New Democratic friends so that we can put the resources – they have

eight or nine staff; we have four. Two of them are assistants for three people, and then we have two researchers. It's so difficult to do this. I mean, I'm not trying to cry anyone a river. I'm just saying that if we're going to be able to do our job as an opposition, which is to research the bills and research the background information on those bills, we need to be able to have the ability to hire people to help us do that. If the government members think that some of our arguments are off base, well, then hopefully these researchers can help us to have arguments that they feel are better.

The point is that we've got to be able to have those resources available to us and be treated at least as fairly as the NDP caucus. It's only democratic. It's only fair. We'll talk about that in Members' Services Committee, but I wanted to get that on the record since we're about to close for the session.

I also want to make sure, going to the bill, that we need to be very, very, very careful when we start playing around with electronic voting. That is a very dangerous thing to do. I'm, obviously, one of the youngest members of this Assembly – I think third youngest – and I understand the need to be proactive with new media and new technologies. I get that. But there has got to be a paper trail. There have got to be scrutineers. There's got to be a way to verify voting.

If we allow it to go to electronic voting, yeah, you know what? The first, the second, the third time might go well, but it's just a matter of time before some really smart guy who is corrupt – and I'm sure no one in this room would think about doing it, but there are people out there that have no problem looking into ways to rig elections and to do different things that would bring our democracy, frankly, down. That is a slippery slope that we've got to be very, very careful of, and I sure hope that the hon. members opposite will not consider moving in that direction as we go forward.

On the issue of government advertising during an election, which is in Bill 7, again, I think that we need to start looking at making sure that the government, other than for public health emergencies and other emergencies, should not be able to advertise during an election period. That's not the place for the government to be spending government resources telling Albertans how great a job they're doing. It's not just this government that does it; governments across this country do it. It doesn't make it right. Again, we need to be leaders on this, and we can start in this House and make sure that we lead by example, that the government doesn't advertise during elections.

Finally, the concept of fixed election dates. It's not the cure-all. It's not the thing that's going to make it so that we have 70 per cent voting or 80 per cent voting turnout. It's not going to cure all ills, for sure. But it's not democratic. It just simply is not democratic. Everyone here knows it's not democratic. The government has total control on when they call it. They can prepare for it. They can roll out their programs all in line with it. The opposition can be caught completely flat footed. Of course, we do our best. All the opposition parties always do. But when I was in government, I advocated strongly for this, and I know there are members over there that believe in this, that in order to have a truly democratic election race, there has got to be a fixed election date. It is just not fair. It's too rigged in one direction if we don't do that, or too biased to the governing party if we don't do that. It's just the right thing to do. You know what? It's not as convenient for the government, for sure. That's life. But it's the right thing to do.

You know, Alberta has been a leader on so many different things that haven't been convenient: reforming our financial affairs in the early '90s to mid-90s, where we went from a province on the verge of insolvency, frankly, to one that got out of the mess and started to save for a time. Now we've fallen back into the same traps again, but the leadership we showed as a province in the '90s, for that

period of time, was something that spread to the rest of Canada and became, actually, the de facto way that governments ran their finances. We can do that with democracy. We can do it with fixed election dates, we can do it with making sure that the opposition is given the resources that they need to be effective, and we can do it by what I talked about earlier, which is enshrining free votes as an absolute staple of our democratic system to restore the role of MLAs.

There are some good things in this bill, Bill 7. There are things that are being left out that should be in there. But at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we have come up short with this bill, by and large. We can do way more. In the next year and a half or two years or – who knows? – six months or a year before the next election, whenever that is, I just hope that the MLAs, some of the more reform-minded MLAs in this government, whoever they may be, can really sit down and try to push the agenda of democratic reform so that they can leave that as a legacy.

Frankly, I think the voters will reward them for it. This is not in the Wildrose's best interests for them to do this. But if they would show forethought and the pioneering spirit on the issues of democratic reform, I believe the people of Alberta would reward them handsomely for doing so. I really do. So I hope they do it because it's the right thing to do, and it will make us a stronger democracy as we go forward.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Assembly for their time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. In speaking in third to Bill 7, Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010, I want to comment very briefly about what works. This evening we're seeing an example of what works in terms of parliamentary tradition. Our House leaders, through communication, established what would be the agenda for tonight. Agreements were made, and part of the agreement was that tomorrow we would have our question period. I'm very grateful that tomorrow we'll also have our regular Public Accounts because, as the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere pointed out in his previous discussion, a correction has to be made in Public Accounts.

This past Wednesday, a week ago, the Westminster parliamentary tradition was overridden by a private member's motion from Wetaskiwin-Camrose. He has an opportunity tomorrow to correct the mistake that was made. For those members who aren't aware, not only does it go against Westminster parliamentary tradition, but it flies in the face of our own established regulations that say that only the chair of Public Accounts can sign the correspondence.

9:10

Now, speaking, again, as to what works with regard to Bill 7, Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2010. After a fashion, we do have a record of how we vote in this House. Possibly the methodology is used to a greater degree by members of the opposition, not because government doesn't necessarily want to be involved but because of the size of the government. The opposition has the opportunity to get on record how they are going to vote on a particular bill, and we've seen examples of that tonight on five bills already. While each bill does not have a personal record, *Hansard* does provide the record of the direction that members have, whether they support a piece of legislation or whether they're opposed to it.

One of the largest improvements in the democratic process that I will give the hon. the Premier credit for is the all-party standing policy committees because there is a transparent, accountable record of where members stand within the committees. While there may be differing opinions, those opinions are recorded, so while it's not an

actual vote or a check-off assigned to various constituencies, there is that democratic opportunity of getting on record for the direction that you're supporting.

With regard to the free vote, again, maybe this is, to quote the hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill, the silver lining in the dark cloud. But as a member of the opposition and as whip for the opposition I view my role more as a facilitator than as a disciplinarian. I do not dictate to my membership, whether it's in a private member's bill or it's in a regular piece of legislation, how they should vote. I'm very proud as a member of the opposition that members are free, based on their conscience and their constituents' desires, to vote how they feel they should to be true to themselves and to be true to their constituents. So while that vote may not be individually recorded, it is there, and it is free.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

**Mr. Boutilier:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, it's a pleasure to come and speak regarding Bill 7. I can say that there are some positive initiatives in this bill, yet it does fall short. Theory is: go big, or go home. I certainly suggest in terms of go home as one option. The other is to look and see what can be changed and amended to make this a better bill for Albertans.

I find it really quite interesting that perception is reality for those of us who have served at municipal councils or provincially or even federally. For that reason, perception can become reality. That's why we need to be concerned about this bill, Bill 7.

Presently the Alberta Legislature is not allowed to advertise during elections, and properly so. One has to ask the question: why should the government be allowed to advertise during elections? The Alberta Legislature is not allowed; why should the government be allowed? I think that is a shortcoming that needs to be addressed.

Second of all, it's important to recognize fixed election dates. The reality of it is that fixed election dates truly do provide certainty. For all in this House, especially on the government side, which I sat on for 13 years, there is quite a lot of upheaval in the last year before an election: "When is he going to call it? When do you think? What's going to go on? Is he going to shuffle the cabinet before he calls it for those who are not running again? You know, we'd better get those things all fixed up before the next election."

There's so much uncertainty within the government when this takes place. I think that for members on the government side, that would certainly provide greater certainty, knowing that on March 11, 2012, there will be a provincial election. I think that's healthy for democratic reform, considering that so many provinces do that.

Another issue may be this: what is the leverage of the Premier? Often within caucuses knives occasionally come out for those interested in becoming the next leader. I find it interesting that the Deputy Premier put in a 209-page report in terms of electoral boundary review. That's very well intended, but speaking of those who may be interested in being the Premier in the future.

Think of the upheaval that actually takes place when it comes to the next election. If a lot of knives come out within their own government party, there's certainly one way for the Premier under the existing system to fix that. He can put away the knives by just simply dropping a writ, because there is no fixed election date. So I'm operating under the fact that by this time next year we'll be into an election.

Ultimately, my theory is that in protection an amendment to this bill can ultimately provide certainty to not only people across Alberta; it will provide certainty to the government members

because then they know. There can be no games played, and all Albertans know. It's not like: "Let's do a poll and see how we're doing. Well, we're only down by 20 points now. We're going to do it now because, ultimately, you know what that means? We could be down 30 points next month, so we'd better go and cut our losses when we are here." All of those things are whoever the governing party is, whoever the opposition is, but clearly it's not a level playing field.

I want to say that to keep to the spirit of democratic reform, why wouldn't we go ahead and have a fixed election date so that the head of Executive Council could not come forward to his cabinet and simply say, "I want to drop the writ today, and all you ministers are going to sign the writ because this is what we want to do"? Can you imagine if there was a large number of members on the opposite side who thought, "Maybe we want to change the leader"? That leader, who right now is called the Premier and the President of Executive Council, has the authority to say: "Well, I can quiet all of you down. I don't even have to kick you out of my caucus. I'll just drop a writ and call an election." No matter how many people are over there on the other side. My view is that under the existing system prepare for an election about this time next year. The issue would be – why? – because of discontent within their own governing party.

You know, in all fairness to the members on the government side it's not just discontent from them. They are just simply mirroring what their constituents and voters are telling them. That's exactly how democracy should work, and that's exactly how democratic reform should work. So at this time do the right thing. I would strongly suggest to the Attorney General that this bill, the Election Statutes Amendment Act, I believe, can best serve all Albertans. No matter if you're on the government side, no matter if you're on the opposition side, no matter where you sit as an Albertan, I think this is healthy. This is something that reflects not a 20th century way of thinking but, rather, a 21st century way of thinking.

The future is really about those who are not content with the existing system we have. Let's be bold. Let's be persistent. Let's be determined as we go forward. Let us go forward. It's a level playing field for everyone to feel comfortable that the good job you do as MLAs, in no matter what political party you represent or even as an independent, no matter what you do, at the end of the day it is the voters who will determine if you've done your job or not to deserve the honour and the privilege to return to this House.

Under the present structure this time next year we'll be wondering who will be invited back based on what voters think. Why don't we end that uncertainty and simply amend, simply say that in March 2012 there will be a provincial election? That would be the honourable thing and the most democratic thing in terms of reform in this 21st century.

I might add: who knows where the polls would be at that time? It could be good for the government; it could be bad. It could be good for the Wildrose or the New Democrats. Who knows? Maybe the New Democrats would be leading the polls. Who knows? They may not. Who knows? Maybe it would be the Liberals who are leading the polls. Who knows? It could be the government leading the polls. Who knows? It could be the new independent party leading the polls. Whatever that is, let us not forget that in politics perception is reality, and the perception of what we witness here is something that is not fair. It is something that is not on a level playing field, and that, I believe, is an Alberta value and an Alberta value that we all cherish.

9:20

I know members on the other side agree with what I'm saying, but right now they cannot speak out because of the fear of repercussion.

Election democratic reform is a positive initiative no matter what political party, and at the end of the day it will serve the very voters that elected each and every one of us to this very office and Legislative Assembly that we sit in. I know it is an honour and a privilege for all of us to sit here, so why don't we do the right thing and, in doing the right thing, have a fixed election date?

One final question would be to the Deputy Premier, who filed under the electoral boundary issue 209 pages. That's a busy night for one person, 209 pages. I must admit, I ask the question: would the Deputy Premier have by chance checked with Elections Alberta on all of the poll locations, of how they were and the results of those poll locations in the last election? To the Deputy Premier: I'd really like to know if, in fact, he's had the opportunity to see what the poll results were from Elections Alberta in the last election.

What it would do, then, if he comes back and says, "I haven't seen them," is that would be actually quite something because it would say that polling stations and divisions of electoral boundaries then, really, are more pure. It's more what I view as democratic reform in terms of viewing. But I have to ask: did the Deputy Premier actually go and has his office in his Spruce Grove constituency gone and asked for the polling stations? Does he know the results of the polling stations in Airdrie-Chestermere? Does he know of them in every constituency here? I think we all know where I'm leading relative to the perception of the next number of seats and how the boundaries would look.

I actually believe – and I'm going to quote and conclude with Joan Crockett from the *Calgary Herald* and Rob Breakenridge from QR77 in Calgary, who were on *Alberta Primetime*. I'm sure many of you might have watched *Alberta Primetime*. They're on there tonight. They said that of the five members of the committee three of them are Conservative, and there are two Liberals. What they find interesting about the Deputy Premier's submission, 209 pages, and a majority of members appointed by the government, is that it appears that the government's ideas may be very different than the Electoral Boundaries Commission's, the perception being that the government would go forward to submit under the perception of suggesting: we don't agree with the commission. Yet they appointed the majority of the members. One has to ask the question. Tonight on *Alberta Primetime* Rob Breakenridge and Joan Crockett were really, really quite perplexed by what they viewed as an assault on democracy based on the 209-page submission.

I'm quite certain now that the Deputy Premier will withdraw that at the proper time. I'm also quite certain that perception is important, but I think fixed election dates are an absolute necessity to reflect on the 21st century. The Legislature is not allowed to advertise during elections, so consequently why would the government be allowed to advertise during elections? Because there's a fear, in fairness to the government members, that it might be perceived that you're doing something to try to potentially buy votes. None of you would want to have that perception. I certainly wouldn't. I'm really suggesting to you another favour, to take on my free advice tonight.

To the Deputy Premier. The question that I ask – and feel free to use part of my 20 minutes to stand up and say if you are aware. Has your MLA office, in fact, contacted Elections Alberta relative to polling results of the last election? I would appreciate that answer because it will be even more pure if he were stand up and say: no, we have not requested that information from Elections Alberta. I think that perception will help the Deputy Premier and the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

On that note, I want to say that we are in the 21st century. Let us move forward with democratic reform. Rather than all of that uncertainty and speculation of what the President of Executive

Council will do in the third or fourth year, especially with those interested in becoming Premier in the future, potential leadership hopefuls from whatever political party, I think it would be really, really interesting to avoid that tool to be used by one person in terms of as we go forward. It'll be a level playing field. It'll be more democratic. And guess what? Welcome to the 21st century.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comments or questions.

Seeing none, the chair now shall recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo on the bill.

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the comments of the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo. They really hit the nail on the head here. A lot of the stuff we do in this House and our legislative changes should follow the Caesar's wife rule; that is, Caesar's wife should not only be pure but be seen to be pure. That takes a lot of what's in the Legislature, a lot of the legislation that we do here above and beyond what is necessary to give the voting public the assurances they need that everything is above board, that their politicians are playing by the rules, that everything is fair and balanced.

Rightly or wrongly right now in this country and in this province we have an electorate who is disengaged. They think about all politicians: "Shake them up in the bag. It doesn't really matter. They don't care anyway, or they're all in it for themselves." We know that's not true, but we really have to go, then, above and beyond what is necessary to try to win back the support of Joe and Jane Albertan, the average citizen, to restore their faith in democracy.

I think we could have done a lot better on this bill than we did. I would give the government a C minus on this bill. They implemented roughly one-half of the old Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations, and really that's not quite good enough. We were looking for a whole-scale change to the way things have always been, the way things always have been done. Well, we could have gone a lot further.

We hear tonight, you know, lots of discussion on fixed election dates. That's one of those things, Mr. Speaker, that could have and should have been done. It would have removed the political gerrymandering, the political opportunism when a party in power can select a date to go to the polls. It would have made things free and clear for people to understand, when they are going to the polls, that elections happen as a regular occurrence in this province and not as a matter of expediency for one party or another to go to the polls.

I would also suggest that we could have moved right away on having leaders report their donors right to the Chief Electoral Officer. There was no need to send it to committee. Nevertheless, I wish it was so right now, but at least it's a start. At least it's getting the ball rolling to have this eventuality.

I for one am interested in who donates to leaders' campaigns. That to me would be one of those things where if an Alberta citizen didn't know, well, they might assume the worst. They'd assume that something untoward is going on there if politicians don't want to reveal who, in fact, has donated to their campaign. I'll tell you what; that's one of those Caesar's wife rules we should do. We should be posting that stuff to assure Joe and Jane Albertan that there is no chicanery or hijinks going on in the backrooms, that no Premier or no politician has been bought. That's one of those things that can happen.

There are a few other things that I could go on to, but I discussed these quite extensively in both second and committee. I really hope

that this bill, although it starts off okay, will continue to be revised and revamped and that over the course of time many of the rationales for change put forward by the former Chief Electoral Officer are implemented and that we move to some of these things that appear obvious to rank-and-file Albertans, to make democracy not only pure but seen to be more pure.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on this bill tonight.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of questions and answers.

Seeing none, the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

9:30

**Mr. Hinman:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege once again to rise and debate Bill 7 at third reading in this House. Again, there are some small details, you know, the 189 recommendations that have come forward. It's good to see them coming forward, but again I have to comment that we are missing the big scope of democratic reform, and the Election Statutes Amendment Act is falling short.

It's been spoken to at length by many members, and I just need to bring it up again briefly. Fixed election dates are so critical in taking that level of what we want to call election gerrymandering out. The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo certainly addressed that. Why would we want the Premier to be in a position where in order to maintain his power and authority, he has the ability to say, "Step in line or I'm going to call an election"? It's just wrong to be able to use something like that on the Alberta electorate in order to maintain power and authority and control over the people.

Again, many people have discussed the importance of banning government ads. There's a necessity for emergency announcements and job applications. There are a few legitimate areas, but there is no question that the government in the past has had a bad record of promoting their policies by saying, "This is a wonderful thing for Albertans" and promoting that. It's just not right. It needs to be banned during an election.

Another area that I believe for some reason I've missed on the list, the donations for new parties. There has been nothing made to accommodate for new parties to be able to get up and running – and it's very difficult and a challenge to do that – to be able to put money into a trust, in fact, so that once this party is up and running, people can get those political donations that allow grassroots people to be part of that. Again, why are we not allowing, you know, for those people who want to start a new party a method and a way of doing that?

Some of the democratic deficits that we've been looking at and mentioned many times tonight: what happened on the Public Accounts Committee. Again, it's just so backwards to think that a government member, the co-chair, has to sign off before a letter or a request can be put forward there.

You know, setting that election date, again, like I say, whether it's the third Monday in March or the third Monday in October or something, gives people the ability to plan and to set forward and to want to be able to work on those.

Again, you know, I've just got to make a comment that the manipulation that's going on, it seems, in wanting to give – well, speaking as a government person, let's make sure that we're in our best position to go into this; let's be able to call it on a date, and at this point let's make sure that we change the boundaries. I personally have been very disappointed in the attempt at the boundaries redistribution and even what has gone forward on the first one in that the number one consideration in my mind – of course, we're looking



at representation by population, but you need to look at it geographically. To want to make leaps across rivers, reservoirs, or major roadways such as Macleod Trail and say, “Oh, we’ll link this one community over across,” when the problems in that community really have no relationship – I’m just so disappointed to see the Deputy Premier put forward his 207-page report and say, “You know, this is what we think needs to be adjusted.” Again, you look at it, and there’s just no question that gerrymandering is going on. You look at that, you can analyze, go look at the poll results and realize that this is what’s going on.

You know, just to look at my own riding of Calgary-Glenmore, why wouldn’t you adapt Kingsland in? That’s a part of the community of Southwood. Why would you annex that out and put it across Macleod Trail into Acadia? What we’re going to call the new riding we don’t know, but it just doesn’t make sense for the areas that you’re representing to be pulling a little area out; you know, like Chestermere getting thrown all the way over into Calgary-Foothills. There’s just so much of that. The people look at that, and the blogs are saying: “This is unbelievable. It’s so blatant. Why are they doing that?”

Again, the democratic accountability on what this government has been doing in the last year and a half is just astounding to many people that I talk to. Bill 50 empowering the minister to make a declaration to say: “You know what? We need power lines, so therefore I’m going to be declare it, and they’re going to be made.” There are no needs tests anymore. It’s just shocking. The centralized health care decisions. You know, we’re going to say from Edmonton what’s going on, and we’ll say what’s going to be in Calgary, what’s going to be in Lethbridge, what’s going to be in Fort McMurray or Grande Prairie or Red Deer. Again, that’s centralized decision. And such things as the royalty framework fiasco . . . [interjections]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, if you have private conversations, please go outside the Chamber. Thank you.

Hon. member, continue.

**Mr. Hinman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that, as we see, as we break for the summer, there’s been a great democratic deficit. Bill 7 is not addressing it. The other bills are there. I guess perhaps the most important thing to me is that some of these bills should remain over the summer so people can comment on them. We shouldn’t be closing off and passing Bill 7. There’s a lot missing there. Again, it’s kind of being pushed through. We have to accept that with the way our current system is set up. I believe that the people have been speaking to the MLAs, and they’re not listening. It’s going to be interesting as we go through the summer.

Like I say, what interested me the most were the comments from the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo in his 13 years in government about the things that go on inside caucus. It’s just quite amazing to think that the Premier is going to be left in a position that he can call an election at any time. This fall he can come forward and say: “You know what? Our health care, like our new royalty framework, is a failure. We’ve got a new idea. Here’s what we’re going to present. By the way, people, we want your mandate to do it, so we’re going to call an election.”

That’s what I see coming this fall. They’re going to be bringing forward a big bill and then say that they need to go to the people because of the failure of this government. It’s sad that we’ve lost the Alberta advantage, that we’ve regressed to this point to where our number 1 bill, Bill 1, was: let’s be competitive. To pass all this legislation saying that now we’re going to be competitive: we’re not

going to be. Based on the principles of sound economics, based on the principles of a free market, we’re not going to let entrepreneurs who have good ideas on how to develop energy go out and do that. Instead, we’re going to pick \$300 million for this type of energy, or we’re going to put \$2 billion into CO<sub>2</sub>.

We’re lacking in so many areas. Again, Bill 7 is just one more example of that. I get a strong feeling that it’s going to pass here in about the next 30 seconds, so I’ll sit down and see how the vote goes. I’m very disappointed with this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comments or questions.

Seeing none, the hon. Deputy Premier.

**Mr. Horner:** On the bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** On the bill?

**Mr. Horner:** Yes, please.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have sat here for a couple of hours listening to some hon. members in this House essentially accuse this member of doing something akin to gerrymandering, akin to dishonourable conduct. I find that reprehensible. [interjection] Hon. member, I have the floor. I listened to your ramble; you’ll listen to mine.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Premier has the floor.

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere talk about a report from government. There is no report from government. There was a compilation of individual maps drawn up by individual MLAs talking to their constituents, compiled in a binder for the ease of reference of the committee. That was submitted several weeks ago, prior to the written deadline. I, like many other MLAs from the Liberal opposition, from the ND opposition made an appointment to go and see the boundaries commission. The research for those private members that compiled that document was not done by government employees; it was done by our caucus. Our caucus is also called the government caucus because we form the government. The hon. member should perhaps look at the submission. I doubt that he has. He would see that it is not a report that flows to a conclusion. In fact, there are a number of errors where there is confrontation, where the maps don’t match up.

Mr. Speaker, before levelling such erroneous and, I would say, reprehensible charges, he might want to look at the *Hansard* from the public discussion that we had with the commission last night. He might want to read the comments that I gave to the commission that outlined that this is for their benefit, for their information but that they had a very tough job to do, and we were going to accept what they had to do because there was conflict within the compilation that we gave them. I find it incredible that the morning after I was there, after a number of other MLAs have been there, they would have a press conference because they think they have found something.

The compilation, Mr. Speaker, that was submitted was submitted, as I said, prior to the deadline.

9:40

**Mr. Liepert:** Sleazy.

**Mr. Horner:** That would be one term I would use, hon. member.

Many of the MLAs in the past boundary reviews have presented. I presented in the last boundary review. In fact, the discussion in our

caucus was that after the interim report MLAs should present because we represent our constituents. The hon. member has made some comments, I understand, to the press on what he thought happened in caucus. Obviously, he was wrong.

The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo had quite a ramble. He did talk about a lot of things, and he talked a lot about stuff that didn't make a lot of sense to me. He asked me whether or not I knew the poll results. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I know the poll results from my constituency. I would suggest that the hon. member knows the poll results from his constituency. I would guess that the hon. members, all private members, know the poll results. As you well know, those poll results are public information. It's a report that's presented. It's open to the public.

Did I phone up the boundaries commission and ask for poll results? No. I didn't have to. Nor did I look for them, because I didn't do the compilation. I did my own, and I would suggest that the hon. members might want to do their own work, too. But, Mr. Speaker, I didn't put in poll results. I didn't put in any of those sorts of things.

The hon. member is just trying to make some publicity for himself. The accusation of gerrymandering I find reprehensible.

I think this act goes a long way for democracy in this province. I fully support it, and I believe my members should, too.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes for comment or question. The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. I appreciate the clarifications made by the hon. Deputy Premier. My single question is: will you honour the results of the electoral commission's findings?

**Mr. Horner:** Let me talk a little bit about what happened last time. Last time the commission went around the province, they did a similar type of process. We had a commission that was set up. We had some very honourable gentlemen and, I believe, two women, if I'm not mistaken, honourable Albertans that served on the committee last time we did this process. They did the process of going around the province. They went around the province and did the public meetings.

They prepared an interim report. We all got a look at the interim report. I noticed, Mr. Speaker, that in that interim report the Alexander reserve was carved out of the constituency of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert for some reason. I also noticed that there was a section of St. Albert that was added into that constituency. When talking to the mayor and talking to the chief of the Alexander band at the time, they suggested that they didn't want to be in a different constituency. What were they supposed to do? How were they supposed to remedy this? I said: "Well, you make a presentation. I can make that presentation as your MLA and talk about the various things that are going to happen in the future with that." So we made that presentation.

I'm very happy to say that the change that we suggested to the commission at that time of bringing the Alexander band back into the riding of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert ended up coming into the new ridings. It came in, Mr. Speaker, because when people turn left out of their driveway to go into town, when they turn left out of their driveway to go and vote, or they're part of a community like Morinville, where they do all of their trading, that makes the most sense for that to be a part of the community.

Hon. members would be interested to note that at the presentation we did the other night, we talked a lot about community leagues.

We talked a lot about keeping community leagues together where they belong to communities of interest, which really are the principles that the boundary commission used.

We talked a lot about natural boundaries, in my case the Sturgeon county boundary. Why wouldn't we use the Sturgeon county boundary? I know that in many of the submissions, part of the compilation that I put together and gave to the commission several weeks ago, a lot of the private members said: you know, we want to have boundary lines that are rivers or trade corridors or community leagues or whatever they might be. That was put into our submission.

Certainly, when we talked about . . .

**Mr. Boutilier:** Come on, Doug. Sit down and take another question.

**Mr. Horner:** Let me answer, Member.

When we talked about the last boundary review – and, Mr. Speaker, you'll know because you were in this Legislative Assembly – we actually lost a couple of ridings in the last boundary review. They were, I might add, PC ridings that were lost. They were rural ones. We had a lot of submissions, and yes, we honoured whatever the commission came out with.

Again, if hon. members would take the time to read the *Hansard*, which will be available from the public meetings that are a part of this process, they would find that what we told the committee was: here are the reasons why and the principles that surrounded all of these discussions; this is why we're putting these forward. We will obviously accept whatever the boundary commission submits to this Legislature for debate in this Legislature because that's what happens. That's the process. We'll honour that process.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere.

**Mr. Anderson:** Thank you. Really quickly because I know we're short of time. I respect that the Deputy Premier has to rise up and defend himself. I'm sorry if he felt that that was defamatory or disingenuous, but the fact remains that there was a letter sent out on his letterhead on behalf of the government caucus from the office of the Deputy Premier that specifically laid out in a very co-ordinated way – all the different maps co-ordinated with each other, and it showed very specifically the way that this government wanted the boundaries to be redrawn. That is unacceptable, totally unacceptable.

The other thing. In the same letter, Deputy Premier, you asked for a meeting at the bottom of the letter. You asked for a meeting. Was that a private meeting? What kind was it? Was it just a presentation? Why didn't you say "presentation"? The question I have for the Deputy Premier is to explain this. How does he not think that this proposal that they're putting forward will not cause immense pressure on this commission, that the government appoints, to gerrymander – the answer is that it will create a lot of pressure.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) time has ended.

Back to the bill.

**Hon. Members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Seeing no other hon. member wishing to join the debate on the bill, the chair shall now call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 7 read a third time]

9:50

**Bill 12**  
**Body Armour Control Act**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Government House Leader to move third reading.

**Mr. Renner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Strathcona I would like to move Bill 12, the Body Armour Control Act.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. Having previously participated in second and also in committee, I understand why there is objection to this particular bill. However, as I declared during the committee stage, I support and our caucus supports the fact that Chief Boyd and Chief Hanson, respectively the chiefs of Edmonton and Calgary, believe that this will provide them with one more tool in terms of fighting crime. The Liberal Party is on record as being tough on crime, and if this will accomplish that in the chiefs' minds and will provide their members a degree of support as they go about the doing of their duties – the Liberal caucus has met with the chiefs and fully supports their intention in attempting to uphold the laws of this province.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere on the bill.

**Mr. Anderson:** Sure. The good thing about third reading is that there's 29(2)(a). I asked these questions in committee, and I want to ask them to the government members now or to any government member who is willing to take this up. Please explain to me – please explain to me – why in this bill . . .

**Mr. Liepert:** He can't do that. He's got to refer to . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** Bill 12.

**Mr. Anderson:** No, no. This is Bill 12. Calm down, Energy. Calm down.

Is this 29(2)(a) for Calgary-Varsity?

**The Deputy Speaker:** No. For the first two members it's not 29(2)(a). After you are speaking, it will be 29(2)(a).

**Mr. Anderson:** That's right. Get your facts straight, Minister. Good grief.

Anyway, we're on the bill, Bill 12. What I'd like to know from these individuals – and I hope that they'll talk about it – is: why would you support disbanding the gun registry, yet you support what essentially is a body armour registry? It's one thing to support a bill that is going to add an additional penalty to using body armour in the perpetration of a crime. I understand that. I can agree with that. That makes sense. It's entirely another thing to say that we've got to take this body armour and that we've got to register it, for law-abiding citizens to register it. It's a waste of money. It's a waste of resources.

I just do not understand how a government on that side of the House can say over and over and over again, almost every time I've heard them talk about it, that they're against the gun registry, that it's a boondoggle, that criminals don't register their guns, that it doesn't cut down on crime, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, on and on and on. Great. I agree with all that. Then they turn around and they

say in the same breath, "Oh, well, we're going to support, essentially, a body armour registry," where you have law-abiding citizens that need to register their body armour. They say: "Well, the police support it. The police support it." Well, great. The police supported the gun registry, so what's the difference?

I would like to know from this government: why the contradiction? It's a clear contradiction. There's no difference between registering and licensing; it's the same blinking thing. You still have to go to the government and say that you have it and register it. It's the same thing. So what's the difference? Why do they not support the gun registry, yet they support a body armour registry? That's the only part of the bill we have a problem with. That's the only problem. No one in here is saying that we think gang members should be able to wear body armour around. We're not saying that. We disagree with it. If they're using it in the perpetration of a crime, a shooting, whatever, we totally agree. Why not outlaw it or ban it in nightclubs? If that's a problem, ban it in nightclubs. Fine. I understand the reasoning behind that.

But then you go the next step. You take policing resources, that should be used for many of the initiatives that the hon. Justice minister has put forward, that are good initiatives – she wants to increase police on our streets. Fantastic. I agree with it. She wants to, you know, make sure that we have more sheriffs. Well, that's the Solicitor General. That's great. We want more ICE teams. That's great. These are all great things. So why are we using money, especially when times are tight financially, to essentially create a body armour registry? Of course, it's going to be integrated, but it's still going to cost money. There's no reason.

Criminals and gang members aren't going to register their body armour. It's ridiculous to think that they will. They won't. They absolutely will not do that. The only people that this affects are law-abiding citizens that for whatever reason feel they would like to, whether it's in their job or whether it's a woman that wants to wear a stab vest for whatever reason. Perhaps she has a hostile ex. I don't know. There are a hundred reasons. The point is: why do we take that liberty away?

You know what? The government is right. There aren't tens of thousands of Albertans that wear body armour. No one is saying that, but it does affect our personal liberty and a little bit more. It takes away an option that law-abiding citizens have, makes it more difficult for law-abiding citizens to protect themselves and to make a choice, to just make a choice. That's not right. It's also, like I said, a waste of taxpayer money. That's the other issue. So there's a liberty issue, and there's also a waste of taxpayer dollars issue.

I keep asking the other members on that side, and I have yet to hear any excuse other than: oh, the police want it. Well, police wanted the long gun registry, too. We agree with the police, I think, in this House on lots of different things, on most things. We want to give them all the tools that we can to fight crime, but there is a limit. That's why we didn't support the long gun registry. There's a limit to what we want to do because at some point it becomes burdensome and wasteful for taxpayers, and it starts taking away our liberties. The long gun registry: why should we have law-abiding farmers register their guns, their long guns, their hunting rifles? It's stupid. It's a silly law, and that's why we didn't support it.

It didn't create the intended effect that the government at the time, the federal Liberal government, was trying to get, so we fought it, and we're still kind of fighting it. It's now officially kind of gone, but now we have to dismantle the bureaucracy, and it still has to get through the Senate and all that stuff. The point is that it's moving. We spent all that time trying to get that out, and it took over a billion dollars before we realized the mistake there. Now we're going to duplicate it in Alberta, of all places, with a body armour registry?

I'm sure it won't cost as much, but it will still cost something. What if it costs \$80,000? Say that it's really cheap and we get it done for \$80,000. Well, that's a police officer. What if it takes \$160,000? Well, that's two police officers or a new ICE team or something.

The point is that it takes resources out of effective policing resources, and it puts them into something that is absolutely ineffective. It's just totally ineffective to have a body armour registry. I would ask that the Justice minister and this government review that policy, and before they go and put it into regulation, I would hope that they would find a way to get it out. Leave the rest of it in there. Make it illegal to use it and run around with it in a nightclub and intimidate people. That's fine. I don't know how you'd word it; that's the Justice minister's job. But figure that out and slap a big penalty on them if they're using it in a crime, in a gang shooting, or make it an asset that can be seized when it's found with other illegal weapons or illegal narcotics or whatever. That's fine. We can all agree on that. But let's not take this to the silly step, to the silly level, where we start making law-abiding citizens register body armour. It's expensive. There's no reason to do it.

I know that 29(2)(a) is meant to question the speaker, but I would welcome the opportunity of two or three members of this government explaining the contradiction of why they support, essentially, a body armour registry and why they do not support a long gun registry. Hopefully, they can find a logical explanation for that because I think that Albertans would like to know. We certainly would like to know. That's the point of this House. That's why we're here, to debate these things. So somebody explain it to me. It's an open question, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under Standing Order 29(2)(a) there are five minutes for comments or questions.

Seeing nobody taking on 29(2)(a), the chair shall now recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo on the bill.

10:00

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and speak in favour of this bill. Obviously, you can see that there are tensions in every legislation like that between civil liberties and, again, protection of the average citizen. I think in this bill it strikes the right balance. It doesn't seem to be logical that this is interfering with many Albertans' rights, if any. It allows for the police to do their work more efficiently and effectively. It is targeted primarily at gang members, and they are the ones currently using this stuff to do their nefarious deeds. It allows people who actually need the body armour legislation a process to get it and to use it effectively so that they can perform their jobs. Again, this bill tries to cut through that and tries to strike a balance between those two equations and I think does an effective job of doing this.

It does weigh on me that both of the police chiefs spoke very in favour with it. I realize that from their perspective they're having a real war out there on gang crime infiltrating the Alberta scene. If we can give them tools like this that can help, well, I'm supportive of it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It was a privilege to speak to this this evening.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing no other hon. members, I shall now recognize the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo on the bill.

**Mr. Boutilier:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On Bill 12, the Body Armour Control Act, I think there are some very good points in the bill that have been recognized from members from all corners of this House. I say that there certainly is probably more positive than there is negative.

The issue, though, that the Member for Airdrie-Chestermere had mentioned relative to the contradiction I think is a fair question. It's also possible, as I know in my time on the government side, that sometimes when bills are introduced, there are contradictions and sometimes the question relative to, you know: what are the costs versus the benefit? As we know, we have to do a cost-benefit analysis, the cost of five more police officers for the bureaucratic red tape of a registry. Who would prefer five more police officers than the bureaucracy, especially in light of the fact that, certainly, I know in my time on that side of the House we supported the idea of government being out of our face when it came to ridiculous registries such as the long gun and others? I'm pleased to say that under the federal government and Prime Minister Harper that is being rectified.

I'm going to give the benefit of the doubt on Bill 12 to the Attorney General, recognizing the important points that have been raised by many members of this House but specifically on the contradiction referenced by the Member for Airdrie-Chestermere. I think in all due fairness to provide the Attorney General with an opportunity to have a reflection of what has been discussed in here and to make the appropriate change relative to this because at the end of the day I think the destination of where we want to get to most of us in here can agree with. It's sometimes that the journey of getting to that destination may require a few changes or detours or even pulling over to the side of the road.

At this point the Member for Airdrie-Chestermere has raised, I think, reasonable, measured questions on the contradiction that exists, and I'd welcome the opportunity for the Attorney General to clarify or at least give a better understanding for me on that contradiction that I don't have the answer to as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** On 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, the chair shall now recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore on the bill.

**Mr. Hinman:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was interesting today that the one New Democratic member had an amendment passed, and she says that never has that happened before. So with Churchill's hope of never, never giving up, I will stand up once more to speak against Bill 12, the Body Armour Control Act, and to give my reasons why I feel that this isn't in the best interests of this House to pass this bill.

First of all, to kind of look at a different angle, this really is giving a false sense of security or else possibly just the perception of action to appease those people that are upset about it. The problems with body armour are occurring and happening in some of our cities, so it says: oh, we need to do something and react. We've got too many bills that come forward, though, where a year later we have to bring amendments to or do something different to or let them kind of fall by the wayside.

We tried to get a proclamation date on child pornography reporting but failed to. Seeing that there's no proclamation date on this one, I hope that this one, if it does pass tonight, which I'm fearful that it will, will sit on the side, and government will say, "Well, we passed the bill; we forgot to proclaim it" or whatever so that we don't have to allocate manpower, allocate taxes, and allocate other resources towards actually registering or licensing, as they like to say, which is another sense of registering, body armour. It just isn't going to be in the best use of their – I mean, the point that I brought up before and again on a last hope of this bill not passing is that it's fines and penalties that we want to impose on perpetrators of crime.

That's who we want to focus our bills on, those that are actually endangering the lives of citizens. For someone to buy and wear body armour isn't a danger to others, but if they're using that and they're becoming bold and brash and making threats, then that's an opportunity where we can pass legislation to say that for someone who's wearing body armour and making threats, we're going to increase the fine, we're going to increase the penalty, and we're going to go after those individuals.

To just go after the idea that if we set up this registry, this licensing agency, somehow Albertans are going to be safer I don't think is going to work. The criminals that want this body armour are going to circumvent it. They're going to get people that will argue and debate for them to show why they legally need it. You know: "I've had threats on my life. Therefore, I need it." And they say: "Oh, are you a gang member?" "Oh, absolutely not."

I mean, this is just this false sense of—ordinary Albertans, yes, are going to answer that, but those that are perpetrators of crimes, those that are part of criminal gangs are not going to respect this law. It's not going to accomplish anything. It's going to take up tax dollars, it's going to take up resources, and it's going to take up manpower in order to function on these things.

We don't need to do this. I hope that we'll have a vote against this, realizing that we can spend our time, our resources, and our manpower in better areas and go forward. Let's restore the Alberta advantage. Fortis et Liber, strong and free. Albertans want their freedoms to do these things and the opportunity to make that choice for themselves.

That's all I'll say. I hope that we'll have a vote against this. It's my last chance to speak against it.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

**Hon. Members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is any other member wishing to join the debate on the bill?

Seeing none, the chair shall now put the question.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:08 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**10:10**

For the motion:

Amery	Griffiths	Lund
Berger	Hancock	Marz
Blackett	Hayden	McQueen
Campbell	Hehr	Mitzel
Chase	Horner	Pastoor
Dallas	Jacobs	Redford
Danyluk	Klimchuk	Renner
Drysdale	Knight	Rodney
Elniski	Leskiw	VanderBurg
Evans	Liepert	Xiao
Fawcett	Lukaszk	

Against the motion:

Anderson	Boutilier	Hinman
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Totals: For – 32 Against – 3

[Motion carried; Bill 12 read a third time]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Hancock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we adjourn until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 10:14 p.m. to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]











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**STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

**Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund**

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Elniski  
Blakeman  
DeLong  
Forsyth  
Groeneveld  
Johnston  
MacDonald  
Quest

**Standing Committee on Community Services**

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Hehr  
Allred  
Anderson  
Benito  
Bhullar  
Chase  
Johnston  
Notley  
Rodney  
Sarich  
Taylor

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Chase  
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Fawcett  
Griffiths  
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Taylor  
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Rogers  
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Weadick

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Deputy Chair: Ms Woo-Paw  
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Amery      Kang  
Benito      Lindsay  
Bhardwaj      McQueen  
Boutilier      Olson  
Calahasen      Sandhu  
Dallas      Sarich  
Doerksen      Taft  
Drysdale      Xiao  
Hinman

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Amery      Lindsay  
Berger      McFarland  
Calahasen      Mitzel  
DeLong      Notley  
Doerksen      Pastoor  
Forsyth      Quest  
Groeneveld      Sherman  
Hinman      Tarchuk  
Jacobs      Taylor  
Leskiw

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Rodney  
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Benito      Kang  
Calahasen      Mason  
Chase      Olson  
Dallas      Sandhu  
Elniski      Vandermeer  
Fawcett      Xiao  
Griffiths

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Kang  
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Brown  
Calahasen  
Cao  
Forsyth  
Johnson  
MacDonald  
Rogers  
Sandhu  
Xiao

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Boutilier  
Dallas  
Hehr  
Jacobs  
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