



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature  
Fourth Session

# Alberta Hansard

Monday, April 11, 2011

Issue 20

The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

# Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 27th Legislature

Fourth Session

Kowalski, Hon. Ken, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, Speaker  
Cao, Wayne C.N., Calgary-Fort, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees  
Mitzel, Len, Cypress-Medicine Hat, Deputy Chair of Committees

Ady, Hon. Cindy, Calgary-Shaw (PC)	Klimchuk, Hon. Heather, Edmonton-Glenora (PC)
Allred, Ken, St. Albert (PC)	Knight, Hon. Mel, Grande Prairie-Smoky (PC)
Amery, Moe, Calgary-East (PC)	Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)
Anderson, Rob, Airdrie-Chestermere (WA), WA Opposition House Leader	Liepert, Hon. Ron, Calgary-West (PC)
Benito, Carl, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)	Lindsay, Fred, Stony Plain (PC)
Berger, Evan, Livingstone-Macleod (PC)	Lukaszuk, Hon. Thomas A., Edmonton-Castle Downs (PC), Deputy Government House Leader
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)	Lund, Ty, Rocky Mountain House (PC)
Bhullar, Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Montrose (PC)	MacDonald, Hugh, Edmonton-Gold Bar (AL)
Blackett, Hon. Lindsay, Calgary-North West (PC)	Marz, Richard, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (PC)
Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (AL), Official Opposition House Leader	Mason, Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (ND), Leader of the ND Opposition
Boutilier, Guy C., Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (WA)	McFarland, Barry, Little Bow (PC)
Brown, Dr. Neil, QC, Calgary-Nose Hill (PC)	McQueen, Diana, Drayton Valley-Calmar (PC)
Calahasen, Pearl, Lesser Slave Lake (PC)	Morton, F.L., Foothills-Rocky View (PC)
Campbell, Robin, West Yellowhead (PC), Government Whip	Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND), ND Opposition House Leader
Chase, Harry B., Calgary-Varsity (AL), Official Opposition Whip	Oberle, Hon. Frank, Peace River (PC)
Dallas, Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)	Olson, Hon. Verlyn, QC, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (PC), Deputy Government House Leader
Danyluk, Hon. Ray, Lac La Biche-St. Paul (PC)	Ouellette, Hon. Luke, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (PC)
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)	Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (AL), Official Opposition Deputy Whip, Official Opposition Deputy Leader
Denis, Hon. Jonathan, QC, Calgary-Egmont (PC), Deputy Government House Leader	Prins, Ray, Lacombe-Ponoka (PC)
Doerksen, Arno, Strathmore-Brooks (PC), Deputy Government Whip	Quest, Dave, Strathcona (PC)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)	Redford, Alison M., QC, Calgary-Elbow (PC)
Elniski, Doug, Edmonton-Calder (PC)	Renner, Hon. Rob, Medicine Hat (PC), Deputy Government House Leader
Evans, Hon. Iris, Sherwood Park (PC)	Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)
Fawcett, Kyle, Calgary-North Hill (PC)	Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont-Devon (PC)
Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (WA), WA Opposition Whip	Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)
Fritz, Hon. Yvonne, Calgary-Cross (PC)	Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC)
Goudreau, Hon. Hector G., Dunvegan-Central Peace (PC)	Sherman, Dr. Raj, Edmonton-Meadowlark (Ind)
Griffiths, Doug, Battle River-Wainwright (PC)	Snelgrove, Hon. Lloyd, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)
Groeneveld, George, Highwood (PC)	Stelmach, Hon. Ed, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (PC), Premier
Hancock, Hon. Dave, QC, Edmonton-Whitemud (PC), Government House Leader	Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL), Leader of the Official Opposition
Hayden, Hon. Jack, Drumheller-Stettler (PC)	Taft, Dr. Kevin, Edmonton-Riverview (AL)
Hehr, Kent, Calgary-Buffalo (AL)	Tarchuk, Janis, Banff-Cochrane (PC)
Hinman, Paul, Calgary-Glenmore (WA), WA Opposition Deputy Leader	Taylor, Dave, Calgary-Currie (AB)
Horne, Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)	VanderBurg, George, Whitecourt-St. Anne (PC)
Horner, Doug, Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert (PC)	Vandermeer, Tony, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (PC)
Jablonski, Hon. Mary Anne, Red Deer-North (PC)	Weadick, Hon. Greg, Lethbridge-West (PC)
Jacobs, Broyce, Cardston-Taber-Warner (PC)	Webber, Hon. Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC)
Johnson, Jeff, Athabasca-Redwater (PC)	Woo-Paw, Teresa, Calgary-Mackay (PC)
Johnston, Art, Calgary-Hays (PC)	Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC)
Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (AL)	Zwozdesky, Hon. Gene, Edmonton-Mill Creek (PC), Deputy Government House Leader

## Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Clerk	W.J. David McNeil	Committee Research Co-ordinator	Philip Massolin
Law Clerk/Director of		Sergeant-at-Arms	Brian G. Hodgson
Interparliamentary Relations	Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms	Chris Caughell
Senior Parliamentary Counsel/		Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms	Gordon H. Munk
Director of House Services	Shannon Dean	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>	Liz Sim
Parliamentary Counsel	Stephanie LeBlanc		

## Party standings:

Progressive Conservative: 67    Alberta Liberal: 8    Wildrose Alliance: 4    New Democrat: 2    Alberta: 1    Independent: 1

### **Executive Council**

Ed Stelmach	Premier, President of Executive Council, Chair of Agenda and Priorities Committee, Vice-chair of Treasury Board, Liaison to the Canadian Armed Forces
Lloyd Snelgrove	President of the Treasury Board, Minister of Finance and Enterprise
Dave Hancock	Minister of Education, Political Minister for Edmonton
Iris Evans	Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations
Mel Knight	Minister of Sustainable Resource Development
Luke Ouellette	Minister of Transportation
Rob Renner	Minister of Environment
Verlyn Olson	Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Yvonne Fritz	Minister of Children and Youth Services, Political Minister for Calgary
Jack Hayden	Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Political Minister for Rural Alberta
Ray Danyluk	Minister of Infrastructure
Gene Zwozdesky	Minister of Health and Wellness
Ron Liepert	Minister of Energy
Mary Anne Jablonski	Minister of Seniors and Community Supports
Len Webber	Minister of Aboriginal Relations
Heather Klimchuk	Minister of Service Alberta
Lindsay Blackett	Minister of Culture and Community Spirit
Cindy Ady	Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Hector Goudreau	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Frank Oberle	Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security
Jonathan Denis	Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs
Thomas Lukaszuk	Minister of Employment and Immigration
Greg Weadick	Minister of Advanced Education and Technology

### **Parliamentary Assistants**

Evan Berger	Sustainable Resource Development
Manmeet Singh Bhullar	Municipal Affairs
Cal Dallas	Finance and Enterprise
Fred Horne	Health and Wellness
Broyce Jacobs	Agriculture and Rural Development
Jeff Johnson	Treasury Board (Oil Sands Sustainable Development Secretariat)
Diana McQueen	Energy
Janice Sarich	Education
Teresa Woo-Paw	Employment and Immigration

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

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

Chair: Ms Tarchuk  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Elniski

DeLong  
Forsyth  
Groeneveld  
Johnston  
MacDonald  
Quest  
Taft

### Standing Committee on Community Services

Chair: Mr. Doerksen  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Hehr

Allred  
Anderson  
Benito  
Bhullar  
Chase  
Johnston  
Notley  
Rodney  
Sarich  
Taylor

### Standing Committee on the Economy

Chair: Mr. Bhardwaj  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Chase

Amery  
Dallas  
Fawcett  
Hinman  
Johnson  
Lund  
Taft  
Tarchuk  
Taylor  
Woo-Paw

### Standing Committee on Health

Chair: Mr. McFarland  
Deputy Chair: Ms Pastoor

Forsyth  
Griffiths  
Groeneveld  
Horne  
Lindsay  
Notley  
Quest  
Sherman  
Swann  
Vandermeer

### Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Mitzel  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Lund

Bhullar  
Blakeman  
Campbell  
Hinman  
Lindsay  
MacDonald  
Marz  
Notley  
Quest  
Rogers

### Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Kowalski  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Campbell

Amery  
Anderson  
Bhullar  
Elniski  
Hehr  
Leskiw  
Mason  
Pastoor  
Rogers  
VanderBurg

### Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Dr. Brown  
Deputy Chair: Ms Woo-Paw

Allred	Kang
Benito	Lindsay
Boutilier	McQueen
Calahasen	Morton
Dallas	Redford
Doerksen	Sandhu
Drysdale	Sarich
Hinman	Taft
Horner	Xiao
Jacobs	

### Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Mr. Prins  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Hancock

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

### Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. MacDonald  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Rodney

Allred	Griffiths
Anderson	Groeneveld
Benito	Kang
Calahasen	Mason
Chase	Sandhu
Dallas	Vandermeer
Elniski	Xiao
Fawcett	

### Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services

Chair: Mr. Drysdale  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Kang

Boutilier  
Brown  
Calahasen  
Cao  
Forsyth  
Johnson  
MacDonald  
Rogers  
Sandhu  
Xiao

### Standing Committee on Resources and Environment

Chair: Mr. Prins  
Deputy Chair: Ms Blakeman

Anderson  
Berger  
Boutilier  
Hehr  
Jacobs  
Marz  
Mason  
McQueen  
Mitzel  
VanderBurg

### Select Special Ombudsman Search Committee

Chair: Mr. Mitzel  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Lund

Blakeman  
Hinman  
Lindsay  
Marz  
Notley  
Quest  
Rogers

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, April 11, 2011

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon and welcome back.

Let us pray. Life and health are precious. When they are lost, all of us are impacted. Let us remember those who are no longer among us with the most positive of thoughts, and let us reach out with compassion, understanding, and prayer to those who suffer. May blessings be upon them, and may they find eternal salvation in an eternity of peace.

**Micheline Gravel**

December 10, 1974, to April 8, 2011

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, it is with regret and deep sadness that I must advise members of the sudden passing on Friday last of Micheline Gravel, our manager of House proceedings. Micheline has been a valued professional member of the Legislative Assembly staff for over 12 years and a dear friend to many of us. She will be remembered for her cheerful demeanour and her dedication to serving the members of the Assembly. Our condolences go out to her family and friends at this very difficult time.

I would now like to invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of our national anthem, and I would invite all present to join in the language of one's choice.

### Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!  
True patriot love in all thy sons command.  
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,  
The True North strong and free!  
From far and wide, O Canada,  
We stand on guard for thee.  
God keep our land glorious and free!  
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.  
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

Hon. members, Mr. Paul Lorieau has now concluded a 30-year career singing the national anthem for the Edmonton Oilers. Mr. Lorieau had a very powerful, nationally televised send-off on April 8, 2011. I understand that one of the mementos that he received from the Edmonton Oilers Hockey Club is an opportunity to go to New York and sing at the Met, so he's now in training for this next big event. But I would like to advise all members that although Mr. Lorieau has concluded his career at Edmonton Northlands, he will continue to grace our House with his presence every Monday. [applause]

### Introduction of Visitors

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration.

**Mr. Lukaszuk:** Mr. Speaker, it's my honour and pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of our Legislative Assembly a fine guest that I and a few members of our Legislature had the pleasure of having lunch with, and that is Her Excellency the ambassador of Morocco to Canada. Her Excellency Nouzha Chekrouni has been the ambassador of Morocco to Canada for some two years; however, this is her first opportunity to visit the

province of Alberta. We have found that there are many similarities between the province of Alberta and Morocco, one of them being the fact that Morocco right now is getting into the business of oil and gas. I think we can develop many relationships on that front. Also our Faculté Saint-Jean is hosting a number of students from Morocco who are studying in our fine province of Alberta. I would ask Her Excellency to rise and accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Premier.

**Mr. Stelmach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to introduce to you and through you 34 very special guests. They are here from Ryley school. They are seated in the public gallery, and they are accompanied today by teachers Dan Gillis and Monique Tremblay and parent helper Lonnie Lauber. I would ask all of our students to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed an honour for me to rise on behalf of the hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne to introduce 18 energetic visitors from St. Joseph school. They are accompanied by teacher Mrs. Jennifer Jones Shaver and parent helpers Ms Manon Lanthier, Mrs. Zenovia Wiwchar-Crawford, and Mr. Gregory Michael Ian Evasiuk. I believe that they are in the members' gallery. They have travelled quite a distance. I would ask that they would rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to rise today and introduce to you and through you two groups of students from St. Clement Catholic elementary school in my constituency of Edmonton-Ellerslie. I had the privilege of meeting them in the rotunda just a few minutes ago. Joining them today are their teachers, Jason Geis and Miss Lyndsy Skilton. At this time I ask my guests to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly 35 parents, parent teachers, and students, home-schoolers, from Airdrie. They are seated in both the public and the members' galleries and are being chauffeured around here by their parents: Mr. Will Allen, Mrs. Rebekah Allen, Mrs. Carol Korsholm, Mrs. Julie Schroeder, Mr. Glenn Heslop, Mrs. Sue Heslop, Mr. Greg Lammiman, Mrs. Shauna Lammiman, and Mrs. Cheryl Roberts. A lot of these families are pillars in our community. They bring so much to our great city. I'd like all members to give them a warm, resounding welcome.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly 27 very bright and talented young people from St. Gerard school. They are accompanied by their teachers and group leaders: Ms Marcelle Labossiere, Mr. Adam Swap, Mrs. Rita Storti, and Mrs.

Edna Encinas. I would ask them now to please rise and receive the warm, traditional welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Culture and Community Spirit.

**Mr. Blackett:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you three constituents of mine from Calgary: Mrs. Kelli Taylor, Dylan Taylor, and Ryan Barrows. I'm fortunate to know these individuals and to have them as active members of the Calgary-North West Progressive Conservative Association board. In addition to her political work, Kelli is a businesswoman and active member of the community, whose efforts were instrumental in raising awareness for the much-needed schools in the Calgary community of Tuscany. Dylan is a focused young man who joined the board when he was 15. He is now a young adult, graduating this year with a bilingual diploma. Ryan Barrows is a business owner in new media and a design specialist, whose skills are greatly appreciated and utilized by the board. I'd like to ask Kelli, Dylan, and Ryan to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

**The Speaker:** The hon. Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security.

**Mr. Oberle:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is truly an honour today to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two members of the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee. You'll hear more about the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee shortly in a member's statement by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, but it's my honour now to introduce Mr. Stephen Camp, who is the co-chair of the committee, and Mr. Kris Wells from safe and caring schools and a member of the committee. Both of them do fantastic work on behalf of their communities and their province. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It my honour to rise today and introduce to you and through you a Calgary-Mackay constituent, James Rouse, Miss International Pride Electronica St. Asia B'Alone Dynasty. Miss International Pride was crowned in December 2010, and part of her title responsibility is to raise funds for local charities of her choice. She has chosen the Canadian Cancer Society and Kids Help Phone antibullying campaign. Over the past decade she has raised over \$45,000 for various charities like the Cancer Society, Pride Calgary, AIDS Calgary, and the Matthew Shepard Foundation. I ask Electronica to please rise and accept the traditional welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for St. Albert.

**Mr. Allred:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly a constituent of mine, Murray Barker, and his wife, Arlene. Murray Barker served as a detective with the Edmonton Police Service for many years until he was forced to resign because of the onset of multiple sclerosis 15 years ago. Despite his condition Murray is an amazing man on his motorized wheelchair, visiting me often in my constituency office to update me on the current science related to the treatment of MS. I would ask Murray to give us a wave and Arlene to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's great pleasure for me to stand and introduce to you and through you to all members a group of 20 representatives of CCSVI, the liberation therapy group, including their president, Debbie Golden of Grande Prairie. These individuals are among 11,000 Albertans with MS or whose immediate families suffer the debilitating effects of this disease. I'd also like to recognize Dr. Bill Code, who has been working tirelessly for the past 20 years to improve the lives of all who suffer from MS. Dr. Code is the author of several books on the topic of MS, including CCSVI, and recently experienced personal success with CCSVI treatment. I'd ask all our guests to stand in both galleries and accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

**Mr. Johnston:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly three students and their host from Rotary International. Each year Rotary International sends over 8,000 high school students to countries around the world for one year to experience and understand another culture and way of life. Clubs send and receive students to encourage international understanding and co-operation. This year Rotary clubs in Alberta are responsible for approximately 40 outbound and 40 inbound students. Today I had the pleasure of hosting three students for lunch, as well their host, and then we attended the Premier's office and exchanged gifts. It's my pleasure to introduce Mathilde Bézy from France, and she's being hosted in Innisfail; Phoebe Ho from Taiwan, and she's being hosted in Red Deer; Praew Soithongpong from Thailand, and she's being hosted in Red Deer, I believe; and Mr. Bryan Walton. He's the host from the Rotary Club of Calgary South. Please join me in giving our guests the traditional warm welcome of this House.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I cannot tell you how delighted I am to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the newest member of our staff. Joining us in the public gallery we have Karin Kellogg. Karin is trained as a lawyer and came to us from the Health Law Institute. We are very grateful to have her joining our caucus staff, as I'm sure the rest of the staff are as well; we've been quite short-handed. Karin, if I could ask you to please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Thank you.

## Members' Statements

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

## Hate Crime Awareness Day

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to recognize Monday, April 11, as Hate Crime Awareness Day. I congratulate the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee for organizing this day to mark the start of National Victims of Crime Awareness Week.

Hate crime is an important issue that must be addressed if Albertans are to continue to live in safety and security. By shining a light on what is being done to tackle hate crime, we send out a clear message that Albertans will not tolerate such behaviour. Hate Crime Awareness Day promotes mutual respect among Albertans. It helps them understand their role in ensuring that our communities are free from intolerance and that hate crimes have no place in today's society.

The committee has also chosen this day to launch a new website, [albertahatecrimes.ca](http://albertahatecrimes.ca), that promotes the message that our social and economic well-being is based on the premise that everyone is equal regardless of age, colour, nationality, sexual orientation, or physical abilities.

As Albertans we pride ourselves on our patience, politeness, and tolerance, but we must not be complacent. We must all, through initiatives like Hate Crime Awareness Day, continue to work together to rid our communities of ugly hate and prejudice. This partnership includes individual Albertans and organizations such as educators, law enforcement agencies, media, community groups, and all levels of government. Part of this process involves ensuring victims report hate crimes to the police. Only 1 in 10 hate crimes is ever reported. Clearly, that must be improved.

Alberta is a beautiful place to live, work, and raise your family, not least because of the diversity of people who call this province home. I applaud this initiative to help eradicate crimes of hatred and prejudice.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

### Calgary Airport Tunnel

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week's announcement regarding plans for a new Royal Alberta Museum was very welcome. Assuming the government follows through, these plans will help the ongoing revitalization of downtown Edmonton.

Plans to include a high-speed rail link show the kind of foresight Alberta needs, but while the Premier tries to improve his legacy by making plans to improve long-term transportation links to Edmonton, the more immediate needs of Calgary are still being ignored by this government. Barlow Trail is now closed because of the expansion of Calgary International Airport, but this government continues to drag its feet on the airport tunnel issue. Actually, it's worse than foot-dragging. This Premier and his ministers seem to have stubbornly dug in their heels so that they can wash their hands clean of all responsibility for this very vital transportation issue.

Mr. Speaker, the window of opportunity for this government to step forward and do the right thing is rapidly closing. The provincial government has a duty to the people of Alberta to do its part in making the Calgary airport tunnel a reality. This is critical transportation infrastructure that will serve the needs of the province for decades to come. If this government has the foresight to plan a high-speed rail link between Edmonton and Calgary, a policy Liberals have advocated for many years, by the way, then surely you must also see that the airport and northeast Calgary will form part of the rail line.

Doesn't it make sense for the transportation links in northeast Calgary to integrate harmoniously? Let's craft a better future for our transportation infrastructure and invest in the airport tunnel.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1:50

### Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** First Official Opposition main question. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

### Patient Advocacy by Physicians

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This Premier continues to hide behind the Health Quality Council by misrepresenting the legal protection it provides. It fails to provide. Today

prominent surgeon Dr. Ciaran McNamee is bravely stating that under a public inquiry, quote: I and other physicians who have left Alberta likely would be willing to help if invited to give our account and opinion, but the protection of law is needed to make the details public. End quote. To the Premier: why does the Premier continue to hide behind the Health Quality Council review when this government knows full well that only an independent judicial inquiry can provide real legal protection?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, I'm very comfortable that the Health Quality Council can review allegations around physician intimidation. And if this particular doctor wants to come forward and has ideas on how to improve the system, I'm sure that good ideas won't need any kind of legal protection.

**Dr. Swann:** That's disingenuous, Mr. Speaker. It's very clear that under the law only a public inquiry can subpoena people and force them to testify. Is the Premier that afraid of the skeletons in the closet that would be exposed if doctors like McNamee and Winton had real legal protection to make the damaging details of their dismissal public?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, once again the opposition is calling into question the reputation and the integrity of people like former Chief Justice Allan Wachowich and also former Deputy Prime Minister of Canada Anne McLellan, who are there as advisory members to the Health Quality Council. The review will be thorough, and obviously those providing evidence are protected by the Alberta Evidence Act.

**Dr. Swann:** Very misleading, Mr. Speaker.

Does the Premier have the courage to call an independent judicial inquiry that would allow doctors like McNamee to tell their stories of how government intimidated them, labelled them mentally unstable, and then pushed them out of the province?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, that's an absurd allegation. The Health Quality Council has established their own terms of reference. The terms of reference are very broad, they're robust, and I have every confidence in the ability of the Health Quality Council to do a thorough review. They will have three reports that will come forward to this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Second Official Opposition main question. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Government payouts, payoffs, whisper campaigns calling prominent doctors crazy all nicely packaged in legal agreements to silence critics forever. One would think this is the legacy of a foreign dictatorship, but sadly it's the legacy of this Premier and this government, their attempt to cover up their campaign of fear, intimidation, and corruption in the health system. Now they're trying to cover up the cover-up with the Health Quality Council review. This Premier is so afraid of Dr. McNamee that he's not willing to call an open, public hearing. What are you hiding, Mr. Premier?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, time and time again under the immunity of this House those that have made the allegations – they're also members of this House – have not brought any information forward. Now, if there is any information there with respect to two books or some other illegal activity, there are the police, and there's also the Auditor General. I don't know why, if people are sitting on such hard evidence, they would be sitting on top of it for months and not bringing it forward to the proper authorities.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, in direct contradiction to what the Premier has just said, the Alberta Medical Association is now advising its members that, quote: physicians subject to nondisclosure agreements will be at risk unless restrictions are lifted. End quote. How can the Premier continue to say with any credibility that doctors like Dr. McNamee can come forward to the Health Quality Council?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, the government was never a party to the agreements reached between those physicians and Alberta Health Services, so how can the government direct opening those disclosure documents? Those are agreements between those two parties. They have no relationship to the government of Alberta.

**Dr. Swann:** So why, then, Mr. Premier, will you not call a public inquiry?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Well, because the Health Quality Council has very robust terms of reference that will hear all the evidence coming forward and their ideas on how to improve the system. Why would somebody need some sort of legal protection?

**The Speaker:** Third Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

### Education Funding

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Education budget reads like an insurance agreement in that what the large print giveth, the small print taketh away. A 4.7 per cent increase in the top line looks impressive until cuts to the school board grants are factored in. To the Minister of Education. School boards have indicated the result of cuts. Teachers will have to be let go, and this will lead to higher student-to-teacher ratios in the classroom. Does the minister deny that this is the result of his budget?

**Mr. Hancock:** Well, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that this is a difficult budget. We're in tough fiscal times. There's been a 4.7 per cent increase to the Education budget, and almost all of that money goes directly out to school boards. Yes, school boards are going to have to look at what they're doing to determine what still has value and what can be done next year, how they can draw down operating surpluses. There are going to be challenges, and there is going to be an impact. But it's a fair budget, and it's applied fairly across the province.

**Mr. Hehr:** Given that Alberta's school-age population is expected to continue to rise and that this will no doubt be exacerbated by the high price of oil and the ramping up of our economy, experts indicate a need for more teachers, not fewer. To turn a phrase, are these cuts not the definition of penny-wise but pound-foolish given the future teaching needs of our children?

**Mr. Hancock:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it has to be said again that there haven't been any cuts to education budgets. Not the Calgary board of education, but some jurisdictions across the province will have a lower overall grant when you take out some of the targeted grants, but their per capita per-student grants have all gone up. If they have an increase in student population, we're funding the increase of that student population, so a 1.1 per cent increase that's projected for the Calgary board of education will be totally funded.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Hehr:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Despite what the minister just said, given the shortfalls in funding to this province's school

boards they're facing \$150 million in deficit. Given that these cuts could be restored with some minor tinkering to a \$45 billion budget, will the minister commit to meeting with the Premier and restoring this needed funding so the government does not balance their books on the backs of school-age children?

**Mr. Hancock:** Mr. Speaker, a couple of things. First of all, yes, there is an expected increase of student population of a hundred thousand students over the next 10 years, and, yes, we will be needing more teachers in this province. Secondly, I have met with the Premier, I've met with the President of the Treasury Board, and I'll meet with every person on this side of the House and on the other side of the House if it will help to get resources for education. That's my job, and I do it incessantly, and the President of the Treasury Board will tell you so. Nonetheless, we still have to put together a government budget, and I have to be part of that government budget, and we need to continue to look at the overall budget in the interest of all Albertans.

**The Speaker:** And it will become apparent to all that if they look at the Order Paper, on April 19 the estimates of the Department of Education will be debated in this Assembly.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

### Lower Athabasca Regional Plan

**Mr. Hinman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maintaining investor confidence, particularly for entrepreneurial businesses, should be of paramount importance for any government. To keep the economy growing, entrepreneurs must have full confidence that the investment climate is stable, predictable, and favourable to success. We also believe that government should be giving industry incentives to continually improve the technology that they are using. To the Premier: why has this government attacked the heart of our industry for the second time in five years by threatening to break contracts with the energy industry?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any contracts that have been broken. In fact, if he's referring to the previous accusation that they made a number of months ago with respect to royalties, those contracts were asked to be reopened by oil companies at least a dozen times beforehand. I assume – I assume – that this member is talking about the lower Athabasca regional plan. A number of investment firms out of Calgary have endorsed the plan and have said that it's good to ensure that we're always making sure we have a greener barrel of oil.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Hinman:** Yeah. That was just like the new royalty framework. They all agree. That culture of intimidation again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier: given the ongoing evolution of new extraction technology and given the industry's clear commitment to responsible resource development is the government suddenly slapping a ban on oil sands development to score political points with environmentalists, or is it because they do not believe these resources can be developed responsibly?

**Mr. Liepert:** Mr. Speaker, maybe I'll answer that absurd question. There is no ban on oil sands development. In fact, it's the exact opposite. What we have done under the leadership of the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development is lay out a plan, and within that plan there is a 20 per cent conservation area that we will uphold. I can table in this House, if you like, a number of documents that say exactly opposite to what those folks are say-



ing. Those are inaccurate statements that are being made, clearly, to score political points.

2:00

**Mr. Hinman:** He can put out all the documents he wants, but the economic facts are clear. They destroyed the industry once; they're doing it again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This one is to the Energy minister. Given that he has been very vocal in promoting new technologies, does he agree with the government's decision to restrict oil sands development in the lower Athabasca and rescind leases, or does he believe that companies with existing leases should be allowed to develop their resources responsibly, using new technologies, before the land is frozen? This is unprecedented. It's wrong.

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure where the member is coming from, but I assume it's from a position of not having read the document. Let me read and let me table in this House the research from Barclays Capital. What Barclays Capital is saying is that new leases will not be issued for the land in the protected areas. Then it goes on to state which companies have leases in those areas and what the impact of the assessment is on them. Officially, there is very little impact, according to Barclays, and I'll table it in the House.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

#### NHL Arena Funding

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is talking out of both sides of his mouth on the funding of a new arena for Edmonton. On April 2 the Premier said that Alberta will not provide public funding for an arena, but last week the Premier said that he's willing to consider public cash benefiting a billionaire owner. Will the Premier categorically and once and for all rule out any provincial funding for private NHL arenas in Alberta?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, I've been very clear on that particular topic, that there will be no direct funding to any private enterprise, especially a hockey team that is privately owned and a privately owned arena. What the member may be referring to is a plan that may be coming forward from the city of Edmonton mayor. I don't know what may be in that proposal. Our door is open, but in terms of direct money to a private enterprise, clearly, no.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I think that sharp lawyers can have a field day with the loopholes the Premier just left them.

Given that every NHL arena built in Canada in the last quarter-century has been entirely privately funded, can the Premier explain why he would even consider giving directly or indirectly taxpayers' dollars, which they pay to support services for themselves and their families, to billionaire hockey team owners?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, today, presently, we are contributing through agricultural society grants to the operations of Northlands. Northlands owns the coliseum, and the Edmonton Oilers play hockey in the coliseum. The team is privately owned, but the arena is owned by the public. It's really owned by an agricultural society.

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, given that handing tens of millions of dollars to benefit the Katz Group is irresponsible at a time when

schools are facing cuts and layoffs right across this province, why won't the Premier focus on the priorities of Albertans instead of helping billionaires and categorically decline here and now any request for provincial money, directly or indirectly, for NHL arenas in Edmonton and Calgary?

**Mr. Stelmach:** Mr. Speaker, we have legislation passed by this government that is very clear. There is no money going to any private enterprise. Period. That's an issue that they're trying to make hay with, but there's simply no money going to a private enterprise.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

#### Patient Advocacy by Physicians

(continued)

**Dr. Sherman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All government members know that no one presents to caucus pertaining to health issues without approval from the Health CPC chair, the health minister, the whip, and the Premier's office. After Dr. McNamee's presentation to caucus in 1999 and to Capital health, the government blew him off, questioned his competency and sanity, and then paved his way to Harvard. Now they all have collective amnesia. To the Premier: who opened the door for Dr. McNamee to present to caucus, and why did the caucus members, a few of whom subsequently became health ministers, ignore his concerns?

**Mr. Stelmach:** You know, I don't recall this Dr. McNamee making any presentation. I wasn't part of any kind of presentation or even listening to him, so I'm not quite sure where the question is going. In terms of the chair allowing and scheduling people to come forward, I would suspect that he made a presentation to the CPC at that particular time.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Dr. Sherman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government replaced Dr. McNamee and Dr. Winton, both highly respected and recruited thoracic surgeons, and then Dr. Winton's career mysteriously ended. To the Minister of Health and Wellness: what happened to Dr. Ciaran McNamee's and Dr. Timothy Winton's hundreds of patients who were waiting for cancer surgery, and how is the Health Quality Council going to get to the bottom of this if they can't testify?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, I would assume that those patients were looked after by very qualified doctors in the system.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Dr. Sherman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the former Auditor General, Fred Dunn, and the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark have shown proof of Capital health's accounting irregularities, will the Premier finally allow a full, open, and independent public inquiry to restore trust in the health system and in government and conduct a forensic audit of Capital health?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Premier, Mr. Speaker, if I could, I would like to take this question. In fact, what the hon. member should be doing is reviewing page 127 of the Auditor General's report, in which he says: "Had the financial statements not been corrected" by the health authority of the time, "they would have been presented to the Audit and Finance Committee with a material misstatement." However, they were corrected, and the Auditor General subsequently signed off.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

### CCSVI Observational Study

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I met this morning with one of our guests, the president of CCSVI Grande Prairie and district. On that group's behalf I have some questions regarding the government's position on CCSVI, or liberation treatment, for MS. To the minister: what is the current status of the three-year CCSVI observational study the government committed itself to last December?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, I too met with the group. I want to thank Dr. Bill Code and others who attended, and I want to say a special thank you to all of those who are here supporting MS research and/or are suffering from it for their attendance.

The short answer is that we'll be releasing the details of the observational study very shortly, hon. member. There's a comprehensive database that had to be put together first. That's almost completed, and as soon as it is, Mr. Speaker, we will have a full press conference in that respect.

**Dr. Swann:** Mr. Speaker, what assurance can the minister offer that those MS sufferers who are unwilling or unable to wait the three years will not be denied follow-up treatment here after liberation therapy?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, I'm sure people would probably want to know that some people still use the term "liberation" treatment, and others simply refer to it as the Zamboni treatment. There are medical reasons for that, which I won't get into right now.

However, people may not have to wait two or three years. We'll have to wait and see how quickly this evidence comes together. We are one of seven major international sites chosen by the MS societies of Canada and the U.S.A., the University of Calgary specifically, to further some research in this respect, and we, too, in Alberta are doing everything we can to help fill what the government of Canada called an information gap regarding safety and efficacy for this treatment.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, with respect, Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't answer the question. What reassurances can you give to those receiving that treatment that they will receive follow-up treatment in Alberta when they have any associated problems?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, the question about waiting two or three years is what I had addressed because 30 seconds doesn't allow me to address everything. However, the short answer to this question here is that we are already committed to the observational study. We're also committed to a clinical trial once the ethics approval has been given. In general we're doing everything we can to help MS sufferers, so we'll address it as we can as quickly as we can.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for St. Albert, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

### CCSVI Clinical Trials

**Mr. Allred:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, some multiple sclerosis patients have found relief from the so-called liberation treatment, which is more correctly termed venous angioplasty. Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, and now Manitoba have all agreed to go ahead with clinical trial research to study the efficacy of the Zamboni treatment. My questions are for the Minister of Health of

Wellness. Will the minister join these other provinces in conducting clinical trials?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that I'm not aware of any province that is proceeding *carte blanche* with a clinical trial regarding the Zamboni treatment. I think they all have certain conditions. Most of them tie in with something to do with ethics, safety, efficacy, and so on. The short answer is that I've indicated already that the government of Alberta through Health and Wellness will be there to help fund clinical trials. Probably \$6 million to \$7 million would be our commitment once these conditions have been met. We are all working very, very aggressively to help fill that information gap that I talked about in the previous question.

2:10

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Allred:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second question is to the same minister. What else is being done to advance the health of MS patients in Alberta and the use of the CCSVI interventional procedure?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, we're working very aggressively with Health Canada through the public health division on filling information in. We're also doing an observational study, which is about a \$1 million commitment. We also have the University of Calgary study by the Hotchkiss Brain Institute, led by Dr. Costello. We're also working with the community to establish an MS connector services group. In fact, we're pretty much done that process now. There are a few more people we'll be adding in very soon.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Allred:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question has been partially answered, but I'd like to give the minister an opportunity to add to his comments on what is being proposed on the observational study.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the update is with respect to our database, and that is moving along very expeditiously. However, I want to assure all MS sufferers, including those people who are advocating for them, that we are taking action. We've taken it almost immediately. I was meeting with other ministers of health from across Canada. They, too, are taking action. I want MS sufferers to know that if complications arise from their treatment when they come back to Alberta, we will help them through that.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

### Lower Athabasca Regional Plan

(continued)

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The draft lower Athabasca regional plan, the government's response to it, and the initial public reaction seem to leave no one happy, which the government claims as a success. Now, under this version 16 per cent of new area will be added to the existing 7 per cent conserved land. That's 77 per cent of Crown land wide open for development and 23 per cent that will allow slightly less development. To the Minister of SRD: why does the government's version of conservation permit conventional oil and gas exploration infractions?

**Mr. Knight:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the answer is that, in fact, when you take a look at the lower Athabasca regional plan – by the way,

it's out for consultation with Albertans. I don't know about these numbers. Everybody is chasing numbers. I don't know about the numbers, but what I will tell you is that the draft plan indicates that the region that would be set aside in the northeastern part of the province of Alberta is three times the size of Banff national park.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thanks very much. Back to the same minister. When even the big players in the oil sands industry say that land should be conserved with no subsurface activity, why has government not instituted a moratorium on land sales or lease of land for that purpose in this region until the plan is finalized?

**Mr. Knight:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we will be taking a look as we go forward, and during this consultation period, in fact, I believe that the ERCB won't post land now that is in these conservation areas.

You know, we do have to address the situation here where the economy of this province needs to continue to move forward. This is a driver of the Alberta and Canadian economy, very important in North America. We're reaching a very fine balance here, and I have to tell you that the majority of Albertans are in agreement.

**Ms Blakeman:** Well, back to the same minister. I think the majority of Albertans would argue that conservation was conservation.

Now, will in situ development be allowed in the new conservation areas, or is it included under the nonpermitted oil sands and mining category under the plan? Is it in or out?

**Mr. Knight:** Well, Mr. Speaker, that depends. Again, please read the plan and look at the matrix. It's all there. There's a matrix in the plan that indicates under which areas of conservation what would be allowed and what would be disallowed. It's there for consultation, for Albertans to look at. I believe they're going to take the opportunity to have a very good look at it, and in the 60 days I believe we'll get a lot more information and develop a proper final plan for Albertans in about 90 days.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

#### Safe and Secure Affordable Housing

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our Home Next Door, a facility for families fleeing domestic violence, is being built in my constituency of Edmonton-Ellerslie. My first question is to the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, the minister responsible for housing vulnerable Albertans. Why is there a perception that the city of Edmonton was left on its own to fund this vital project?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Denis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for this question. I'm not exactly sure why that is the perception because the province has actually spent 76 per cent, or 3 and a quarter million dollars, on this entire project. I'm not so much concerned about money because anybody can talk about money. Rather, I'm concerned about the 29 units that we have for women and children in need. We're helping break the cycle of domestic violence through our housing programs. That's something we all can be proud of.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My next question to the same minister: given that there's a need for these and many more spaces in Edmonton, what is the minister doing to assist more vulnerable families?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Denis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, thank you to the member for that question. Last year we spent \$188 million on our housing programs in this province. That's \$188 million. But it's not so much, again, how much we spend; it's the results. Over the last three years we've constructed 10,800 housing units across this province. We're making a serious dent in our homeless numbers and providing assistance to those who are specifically in need but also doing so on an open and competitive tendering basis in the best interests of the taxpayer.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My final question to the Minister of Children and Youth Services: given that funding continues to be identified as a need, can the minister tell all Albertans what is being done to ensure the safety and security of women and children fleeing family violence?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mrs. Fritz:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Family violence does have devastating consequences. What I'd like everyone to know is that if they are in an abusive situation, we do have resources available, as this member has mentioned here. We do provide \$26 million for 619 beds and 29 emergency shelters for the safety and protection of women and children; \$1.1 million of that is for programming and second-stage housing. That includes, hon. member, what you're interested in, the \$500,000 that is going to WINGS of Providence.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

#### Registry Service Fees for Municipalities

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 2011-12 budget dramatically increased registry fees. It also added new fees, including a fee as of April 1 for municipal law enforcement to search a motor vehicle registry for the name and address of the owner of a vehicle issued with a ticket. To the Minister of Service Alberta: what consultation did the minister undertake with the municipalities about the increase from zero to \$15 to get the information the municipalities need to collect fines?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mrs. Klimchuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's important to clarify these fees that came into effect on April 1. The police are able to continue to access and do roadside checks and all those timely things they do, and there's no charge for those services. This is strictly to do with municipalities accessing information for such things as delinquent parking tickets, photo radar, and red light cameras.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's not answering my question. What consultation did the minister undertake with the

Solicitor General on a way to cover any necessary costs through the budget for law enforcement?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mrs. Klimchuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As this was, indeed, part of the budget process, it was fees that we looked at across the province to see what was best. I think that with the fees we put in place – part of the challenge is that we have a technology system that runs 24/7. It's really critical to make sure the police have access to that information, that it's accurate, and that the system never goes down. So it's part of the technology services as well.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Kang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister again. It's costing the city of Calgary \$15 million. What consultation did the minister undertake with the Minister of Municipal Affairs about the impact this increase on short notice would have on the ability of municipalities to budget?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mrs. Klimchuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are approximately 800 searches for licence plates that take place every year. With respect to the budget increases in this area it was \$83 million in total for all the fees. The \$12 million is a portion of that \$83 million. So during this transition phase you want to make sure that municipalities access the information for duplicate plates as well as looking for plates with missing information. So at the end of the day it's making it better for the police to use the service.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, followed by the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

#### Royal Alberta Museum Development

**Mr. Horne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, after many years of discussions and plans for redeveloping the Royal Alberta Museum, last week my constituents and Edmontonians and, indeed, Albertans were thrilled to hear the Premier's announcement for building a new museum in downtown Edmonton. To the Minister of Infrastructure: what is the rationale for moving the museum out of Old Glenora and into this new location and for redeveloping on a single site?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Danyluk:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is an ideal location. It's close to LRT and transit. It's close to other galleries and libraries and theatres and concert halls. It's also close to where thousands of people live. The previous land created challenges, and this plan solves them. It really enables us to move forward.

2:20

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Horne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Culture and Community Spirit: how can Albertans expect the telling of the Alberta story and the portrayal of our history to be improved and expanded as a result of this very important project?

**Mr. Blackett:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we have 36,000 square metres of exhibition space will allow us to showcase a lot of the artifacts that we were holding in boxes and in storage. Also, because we are going to be more connected using the SuperNet to

connect to our other museums, historic sites, and interpretive centres, Albertans from all across the province, irrespective of geography or socioeconomic incomes, will be able to have access to our museum through distance learning and virtual tours.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Horne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Finally, to the Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation: what impact on the Alberta economy through tourism can Albertans expect this new project to enable?

**Mrs. Ady:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this is exciting news for the tourism industry. Obviously, this museum is going to be able to host even more important exhibits. People that might not have come might now visit and be able to go to the Winspear and other things that are critically being aligned with this. I think it's very, very good news for Edmonton's tourism industry, and I really look forward to the day it opens.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

#### Registry Service Fees for Municipalities (continued)

**Mr. Boutilier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again this government has shown its mismanagement of finances. Last week they suddenly started charging municipalities an extra \$15 every time Service Alberta gives cities a name and address. Cities and police forces are now scrambling because their budgets have been passed. To the minister of finance: can you explain why you didn't at the very least warn municipalities in advance, both urban and rural, in terms of what was coming? I've heard there's been no consultation.

**Mr. Snelgrove:** Mr. Speaker, we have not only an obligation; we have a responsibility to make sure that services we provide are provided on a cost-recovery basis. Most people or organizations that access this information were paying a fee of \$11. This was still below cost. The municipalities are a user of this system. They have an opportunity, if they want, of raising the ticket prices to people, so it really will become a user-pay system that balances its cost.

**Mr. Boutilier:** Well, Mr. Speaker, you can send an e-mail for a cent.

Given that the Calgary police force chief, Rick Hanson, spoke out for many saying that he was blindsided and that Calgary aldermen estimated it could cost about 40 police officers, will the Solicitor General please explain how he let this happen and why he wasn't standing up for Alberta's police forces?

**Mr. Oberle:** Mr. Speaker, let me make it perfectly clear. The fine revenue that is generated in municipalities is transferred back to those municipalities, and we're doing so in this instance on a cost-recovery basis. If those municipalities choose to transfer the cost impact onto their police forces, that's their decision, not mine, and I can't interject in that decision.

**Mr. Boutilier:** Mr. Speaker, a follow-up to the Solicitor General. He purports to support police chiefs and police officers across Alberta. Would he please explain to Albertans why he remains silent as his government continues to gouge, hurting police forces across Alberta and the safety of Albertans with this?

**Mr. Oberle:** Mr. Speaker, I have not at all remained silent. I've responded to every interview request as I've just responded to the member's question. The fact of the matter is that the government

is recovering costs of doing a service for the municipalities. Although they have talked about transferring that impact onto their police departments, I'm not aware that any have actually done it. But I stand here every day in defence of our police departments in this province.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

### PDD Administrative Review

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In June last year the minister of seniors announced an administrative review of the PDD program. The report by the consultants at KPMG was due on September 15, and my understanding is that it was delivered on time. To the minister of seniors. People in the disabled community are very anxious about this report since the department has said that savings may be diverted to other areas. When will the minister provide some clarity on that issue?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Seniors and Community Supports.

**Mrs. Jablonski:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We did ask for an administrative review of the PDD program. We have received that review with its recommendations. We're going through the process right now, and when we are ready to make our recommendations from the report, that report will be released to the public.

**Ms Pastoor:** Basically, it's the same question. KPMG wrote it in three months, and it's been almost six and a half months. When will the minister release it?

**Mrs. Jablonski:** Mr. Speaker, I would say that we'll release the report in due course, as soon as it goes through the process. Everyone is aware that we are dealing with a population that is frail and vulnerable, so we have to make sure that when we look at the report and the recommendations, which is strictly an administrative review, not for the program itself, we're doing the right things.

**Ms Pastoor:** This really is a legitimate public interest in a report that will inform decision-making and really affect a lot of people who are worried. Will the minister commit to releasing the full report by June 10, 2011, which is a year from the date that she announced at a press conference this initiative of this review?

**Mrs. Jablonski:** Mr. Speaker, this is a very important report. It is important that we do things right with this report, and we will be releasing it in due course.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

### Royal Alberta Museum Development (continued)

**Mrs. Sarich:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to the earlier questions about the Royal Alberta Museum, Albertans and, specifically, Edmontonians would like to know from the Minister of Culture and Community Spirit: does the announcement of the new museum in downtown Edmonton end the discussions of two museums or any other museums to be considered in the future?

**Mr. Blackett:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I just want to be clear. There will now be one Royal Alberta Museum on one site. It will house

both Alberta's natural and human history. As I mentioned, it is about 36,000 square metres of space. The museum will have the space to better profile more than 10 million pieces of natural history, specimens, and cultural artifacts, most of which are now in storage, as I mentioned before. We will move forward into this new space over the next four years and look forward to the results.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mrs. Sarich:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental to the Minister of Infrastructure: what planning considerations will be structured into the building construction to ensure that the new museum will be able to accommodate all of Alberta's history now and into the future, for years to come?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Danyluk:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The new museum is designed and built for today's and tomorrow's history. It is also flexible. It has flexible and adaptable space for new technologies. It also has shelled-in space for growth and, really, the ability to expand into the future of the building if needed. This museum will be a building that works now and also into the future.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mrs. Sarich:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question to the Minister of Infrastructure: many Albertans, and Edmontonians in particular, are asking what will happen to the Glenora site and the current museum once the new museum is open?

**Mr. Danyluk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Glenora site will continue to be a public site. In fact, the museum on the site will continue to be active until the new one is completed. Government House will continue its functions there. Also, a new Lieutenant Governor's residence will be constructed on the grounds. There's a lot of potential for the existing museum, and the decision will be made in the very near future.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

### Mental Illness Treatment Services for Children

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. I met this morning with the father of a 15-year-old girl who has not only seen her share of hell but has made life hellish recently for those around her. Despite the best intentions and cross-ministerial efforts of Alberta Health, Children and Youth, and Justice, she has never remained in a secure treatment facility long enough to receive the psychological assessment and support she needs. To the minister of health: why is it that this girl and many other troubled children she represents do not receive the prompt and thorough assessment and support they need?

2:30

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the children that he has just alluded to are receiving that treatment and support. In the particular case of the young lady that has just been referenced, I know that my staff followed up with that family. I'm hoping that they will not only identify her but that they will be able to help her and her family resolve the issues and that the young lady will receive the treatment and care she requires.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. To the minister. I very much appreciate the efforts of Fern Miller in your department in terms of explaining what can potentially be done, but the girl remains on the run.

Will the minister indicate when this government will produce a comprehensive plan for the improved treatment of mental illness in children?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Very soon, Mr. Speaker. As one of the undertakings of our five-year health action plan we've committed to developing a province-wide mental health strategy. It's moving along very briskly. Alberta Health Services has committed to creating an advisory council at that level. We've added about 65 additional staff to deal with the addictions and mental health issues, and we've added an additional 35 of these spaces across the province. Thirty-four new spaces were just added in terms of residential treatment type beds in Medicine Hat and in Fort McMurray. We'll continue to . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, this young lady doesn't have a whole lot of time left. She's out there. She's 15 years old. She needs the government's protection. When will the department fulfill the outstanding recommendation it received from the Auditor General in 2008 and provide a complete accountability framework for the provincial mental health plan and mental health services in Alberta?

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Well, again, Mr. Speaker, we are working on that right now, and we're also working very aggressively with the \$500 million to \$600 million that we spend in this area each year. Nineteen million dollars of that over the next three years is a partnership with Alberta Education, where we're dealing with children or youth in that exact age range. We're adding more counsellors. We're adding more support staff. We're adding more spaces. So there's quite a bit going on. If there are people who need help and if they want it, they can come forward. We'll be glad to do our best to help them out.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

#### Water Quality Monitoring in the Oil Sands

**Mrs. Leskiw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government recently released a report on water monitoring in the Alberta oil sands. Meanwhile, the Minister of Environment is waiting for recommendations in June from the provincial monitoring panel on how to build a better monitoring, reporting, and evaluation system for our great province. To the Minister of Environment. The federal report adds to a considerable collection of work related to monitoring. What does this particular report accomplish?

**The Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Environment, this is not a provincial matter. This is a federal matter.

**Mr. Renner:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, it is a provincial matter. The federal government initiated a panel that made recommendations that are of a very technical nature but are limited to data collection. We need to really understand better the impacts and the sources of emissions throughout this region, and that's why we have a provincial panel in place that will incorporate both the collaborative recommendations of the federal report as well as other information into a comprehensive system that will serve the needs here in Alberta.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mrs. Leskiw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplementary is to the same minister. Since the federal report was produced in 90 days, why do Albertans, including my constituents of Bonnyville-Cold Lake, have to wait until June for the provincial monitoring panel to report?

**Mr. Renner:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, the federal report was very narrow in scope and is limited to technical information gathering. We're developing a much more robust province-wide system that takes in all of the various media: air, land, water, and biodiversity. We'll be making recommendations for technical and scientific governance as well as the funding aspects. So it's a much broader responsibility that the provincial panel has.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mrs. Leskiw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question is to the same minister. Who has ultimate authority when it comes to environmental monitoring in the oil sands, the province or the federal government?

**Mr. Renner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a very good question. The fact of the matter is that there is joint responsibility. It has always been the case. However, I need to point out that ultimately the resource belongs to the people of Alberta, and it is Alberta that is responsible for developing that resource. Therefore, we believe and have shown by evidence that we have a responsibility for the environmental aspects of the development of that resource. We'll continue to work and co-ordinate with our federal counterparts, but at the end of the day it's likely that most . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview, followed by the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

#### Exemption from Municipal Zoning

**Dr. Taft:** Mr. Speaker, in the last question period the minister of advanced education said of the universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge: "If there is any commercial activity or any commercial development happening on that campus, it must go through all the processes within the municipality for approval." I must tell this Assembly that that is simply not true. Most commercial developments on campuses never go for municipal approval. To the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology: will he withdraw his statement, or will he correct it?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Weadick:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is true that all commercial development in buildings where they're primarily for commercial purposes or separate commercial facilities have to go through the planning processes. Where a commercial thing, such as a Tim Hortons incidental, is inside of another facility, that will not go through the same development processes as those other facilities.

**Dr. Taft:** Mr. Speaker, the minister is mistaken. The minister needs to review his own regulations and consult with them. Will he do that and return tomorrow to answer my first question more correctly?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Weadick:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have reviewed that. I'd be happy to answer that question again tomorrow and talk about the potential for development on university sites.

**Dr. Taft:** To the same minister: is this minister aware that universities are now allowing their exemption from municipal zoning to flow through to privately financed, privately owned, and privately operated buildings constructed on university land?

**Mr. Weadick:** No, Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of that.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay.

#### Gull Lake Water Level Stabilization Project

**Mr. Prins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of my constituents have expressed concern over the proposed elimination of funding for the continued pumping of water from the Blindman River into Gull Lake in order to stabilize and supplement water levels in the lake. Gull Lake is the home of Aspen Beach provincial park, the oldest and one of the largest provincial parks in the province. My first question to the Minister of Environment: why has the government stopped funding for this project?

**Mr. Renner:** Mr. Speaker, we haven't ended funding for this project. We have committed to continue to fund the capital cost of this project. What we're asking the municipalities to contribute is the ongoing cost of utilities. This is a long-standing agreement that has been in place for some time. I understand that the original intent of the agreement was that the utility costs would be covered by the municipalities. For whatever reason, that has not taken place up until now.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Prins:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question is to the same minister. What is the actual next step for these municipalities to ensure that the funding continues for this project?

**Mr. Renner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the province is committed to continue to provide for the upkeep of the equipment itself. We've asked for a letter of commitment from the municipalities indicating that they are prepared to cover the cost of the utilities. We've asked for a demonstration of good faith that is needed to engage in these negotiations. Once that letter is in place, the pumping on this site will continue.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Prins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question to the Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation: given that recreation is the primary driver for the pumping, will the minister commit to sharing part of the cost to fund this project?

**Mrs. Ady:** Well, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, low water levels are true across several of the lakes across the province. I would be really reluctant to make that kind of commitment as it would perhaps destabilize the funding that we have in parks across the province. So I could not make that commitment, hon. member.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay.

#### Infrastructure Costs

**Ms Woo-Paw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ensuring that Alberta has sufficient infrastructure to accommodate future growth is an important goal of this government. The government has stated that building infrastructure now rather than waiting will save money in the long term. My questions are to the Minister of Infrastructure.

Can he tell us why it is prudent to spend money on infrastructure now rather than waiting until, say, we have a budget surplus?

**The Speaker:** Well, okay. We've got the budget for Infrastructure coming up on April 20. That really sounds like an opinion, but if you can put it into policy, go ahead.

2:40

**Mr. Danyluk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that it's not an opinion. It's fact that this is a good time to build infrastructure. Prices are lower, skilled workers are available, and investing in projects today ensures that Alberta is ready for the next boom, not to touch on budget at all.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** These questions are from a constituent. Can he put a dollar figure on the amount that would be saved by completing projects now when the construction costs are low?

**The Speaker:** As I already pointed out, hon. member, a few days ago, before the break, questions from constituents are not the purview of question period.

Go ahead.

**Mr. Danyluk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I can say to you that presently, right now, our tendering process is very open – right? – and transparent. We advertise publicly and are open to bidders from across the province and other provinces, and this ensures a competitive process. Just to speak about the finance end of it, I'm just going to say that Albertans get good value for their investment.

**Ms Woo-Paw:** My last question has been answered. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Twenty members were recognized today, 118 questions and responses.

In a few seconds from now we'll continue with Members' Statements.

#### Members' Statements

(continued)

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

#### Cold Lake Ice Junior B Hockey Team

**Mrs. Leskiw:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As spring has finally arrived, it may seem odd that I take this opportunity to talk about hockey, but as we all know, hockey is a 12-month sport around here. It is with great pride that I congratulate the Cold Lake Ice junior B hockey team on a great season.

The Ice came very close to not icing a team at all this year, Mr. Speaker, but the dedication of the team's board, management, coaches, players, and fans persevered. This perseverance resulted in a northeast Alberta junior B championship for the Ice and the team's first-ever appearance at the provincial championship held in Leduc earlier this month. Though they were not victorious, the boys represented our area with dignity, class, and the utmost sportsmanship.

Mr. Speaker, the Cold Lake Ice is a team made up of players from all over my area. In fact, three of the players were former students of mine. The neighbouring communities of Bonnyville, St. Paul, Glendon, Lac La Biche, and even Brandon, Manitoba, were all represented in this year's edition of the Cold Lake Ice. I would like to acknowledge not just the success on the ice but also the contribution to the spirit and pride of the community that the team helps to foster.

In all our communities, large or small, urban or rural, sports teams, clubs, and all organizations make up the life breath of our hometowns. I urge all Albertans to support teams like the Ice, whose season went a long way to bringing the communities around my constituency closer together, and they did so by exemplifying the character, class, and determination that made us all proud to cheer them on.

Again, congratulations on a fabulous year. Wouldn't you know it, the title defence begins again in five short months.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** I'm sure we'll now hear from a real hockey team.  
The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

#### **Stony Plain Habitat for Humanity Project**

**Mr. Lindsay:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recently had the privilege to attend a dedication ceremony for an extraordinary affordable housing project in Stony Plain. It didn't involve hockey, but there was some being played in the background.

This build was a first of its kind partnership between Habitat for Humanity, the Good Samaritan Society, the town of Stony Plain, and Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs. This project provided 12 new homes for deserving and needy families. These homes are a new concept, Mr. Speaker, as they integrate young families and seniors in one complex. Built entirely through volunteerism and donors, Habitat for Humanity projects reflect the compassion and community spirit that is characteristic of Albertans.

For 35 years, Mr. Speaker, Habitat for Humanity has been making dreams come true by providing homes for the needy. I commend all who are involved in this project, especially the new homeowners, who invested a great deal of sweat equity during the build. These 12 homes are more than bricks and mortar. They are evidence of community pride and people helping people. As these grateful families accepted the keys to their new homes, they expressed gratitude to all who made their dreams a reality. They are indeed proud Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Sorry, hon. member. I anticipated that the hon. member was going to talk about the very prolific Spruce Grove Saints.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar.

**Mrs. McQueen:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would talk about the Drayton Valley Thunder, but I'm not going to.

#### **Tomorrow Project for Cancer Research**

**Mrs. McQueen:** I rise today to share about a very important and cutting-edge project called the Tomorrow Project. I had the privilege of participating in the launch of the Tomorrow Project in Drayton Valley in my constituency of Drayton Valley-Calmar on March 28. I was joined by Councillor Dean Schuler of the Drayton Valley town council, town staff, the Legion, and 157 Drayton Valley and area participants for the kickoff of this great project.

Most Albertans have been touched by cancer, be it a close family member, a work colleague, or a close friend. Shockingly, almost 1 in 2 Albertans will develop cancer in their lifetime, and approximately 1 in 4 will die of cancer. That is why researchers got together to try and understand more about why some people develop cancer and why others do not.

The current campaign is called Count Me in 4 Tomorrow, with the goal of enrolling 50,000 participants by 2012. Each participant must be an Alberta resident aged 35 to 69 and have never had

cancer. Once a participant signs on for the project, they will be asked to answer questions about their health and lifestyle, to give simple physical measurements, and to give small amounts of urine and blood samples.

The whole process only takes about two hours, but that time commitment can mean a great deal to future generations of Albertans. The Tomorrow Project has a mobile unit that was used in Drayton Valley and can be brought to any location. This mobile unit ensures that the Tomorrow Project can reach all corners of this province to make it as simple as possible for Albertans to participate. The organizers hope to bring the mobile unit to the Legislature so that all members can see how easy it is to participate and help spread the word to their constituents.

I encourage and challenge all MLAs and indeed all Albertans to get involved with this worthy project because the commitment you make today can save lives tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Okay. I have to make another interjection as well about that hockey team that basically settles in the constituency of Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert. I don't know if they have won so far. They're not finished yet. They're going to Vernon, British Columbia, in the next number of days as well. We'll get them in here yet.

The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont-Devon.

**Mr. Rogers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud to say that the Leduc Recreation Centre hosted the junior B provincial championships exceptionally well and that the Beaumont Chiefs finished second. I congratulate them.

#### **Child Care Awards of Excellence**

**Mr. Rogers:** I did want to talk about an event last Friday evening, the Alberta child care professional awards of excellence. This was cohosted by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Mr. Speaker, 12 individuals were recognized for their outstanding service to Alberta children and families.

Mr. Speaker, our government introduced the child care awards in 2006 as a way of recognizing the tremendous talents and dedication of people caring for children while their parents attend school or work. Their care and skill have an essential role in supporting parents to successfully raise the next generation of Albertans. They offer a safe and caring place where children feel welcome and can develop their young minds. This year the child care awards were expanded to include the skilled professionals working in our network of 46 parent link centres, who serve parents in 160 different Alberta communities. These centres are instrumental in supporting Alberta's parents, who are their children's first and most influential teachers.

The recipients of this year's awards, Mr. Speaker, are shining examples of people who are making a positive difference in the lives of children each and every day in every corner of this province. I'm proud to say that child care professionals from my constituency of Leduc-Beaumont-Devon have been recognized with an award every year since 2007. I would like to congratulate Laura Grenning from Beaumont, who received an award this year in the licensed daycare category.

I would ask all members of this Assembly to show their great appreciation for all 12 of these outstanding professionals and their commitment to the children and families of Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

2:50

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



**Mr. Dallas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin, I could mention that perhaps our Red Deer Rebels are planning a comeback as we speak.

#### **Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board Awards**

**Mr. Dallas:** Today about 60,000 apprentices are learning and working in Alberta. They are part of Alberta's very successful apprenticeship and industry training system. The growth and success of the system and our apprentices would not be possible without the employers, individuals, and other organizations that work tirelessly to make our trades community the best in the country.

Every year the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board presents awards to apprentices, employers, and instructors who have demonstrated excellence in their field. This annual recognition helps foster strong role models and helps enhance best practices in over 50 designated trades and occupations in our province. It's a chance for apprentices, employers, and instructors to honour one another, to highlight their skills and talents, and shine a positive light on careers in the trades. Sixty-eight recipients received the 2010 awards in the top apprentice, top employer, top employer of aboriginal apprentices, top instructor, and chairman's awards of excellence categories.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to paying tribute to all of the recipients, I have the pleasure today of recognizing one of my own constituents. Mr. Tom Olson is the 2010 Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board's top instructor for southern Alberta. Tom received this award based on his motivational skills and his own best practices of identifying the best teaching methods and bringing out the best in his students. I'm proud of the amazing contributions Tom and his fellow recipients made to ensure the high quality of our apprenticeship and industry training system.

I would request that all members join me, please, in congratulating the 2010 Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board award recipients.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Tabling Returns and Reports**

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Liepert:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to table five copies of the document I referred to in question period today.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to provide the requisite number of copies of the following reports: the 2009-2010 annual report from the Alberta College of Pharmacists, titled *Healthy Albertans through Excellence in Pharmacy Practice*; secondly, the 2010 annual report from the College and Association of Respiratory Therapists; thirdly, the 2009 annual report from the Health Disciplines Board; and finally, the 2010 annual report from the Alberta Dental Association and College.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. minister, earlier today during the question period I was unsure completely if you did a quote from a document concerning the Capital health authority prepared by the Auditor General. If you did use such a quote, would you be kind enough to table that document tomorrow.

**Mr. Zwozdesky:** Mr. Speaker, I can certainly table the excerpt that I quoted. It's actually part of his annual report for the year in question, so it's already filed with the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** All right. That's fine. Then it's not required. The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Goudreau:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table with the Assembly five copies of the 2010 annual report for the Alberta Boilers Safety Association, or ABSA. ABSA is a delegated administrative organization that reports to Alberta Municipal Affairs, and Alberta's pressure equipment safety programs are administered by ABSA under the Safety Codes Act. I'd like to thank them for their continued dedication to pressure equipment safety in Alberta.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security.

**Mr. Oberle:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my sad duty, I suppose, to rise today and table three documents with respect to the release of the Mayerthorpe inquiry report last week. On March 30 Mr. Lorne Gunter wrote an editorial in the *National Post*, and despite the preponderance of evidence to the contrary Mr. Gunter suggested, against the committee's findings, that this "could have been prevented from turning so deadly if officers and commanders had approached it with a more professional and less cavalier attitude." This is an affront to the police force, to the memory of those officers that died on that tragic day, and to the families of those officers. I table that for the information of members of the House.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I table a letter that I myself wrote to the *National Post* in response to that editorial, in which I pointed out how serious I feel about this and insisted that it was a dark day for our province and our country and that we need to move on. "We would like to do so with accurate understandings of what happened, and accurate memories of the honourable service of Constables Peter Schiemann, Leo Johnston, Brock Myrol and Anthony Gordon." I table the appropriate number of copies of that.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the *National Post* chose to publish my letter in an abridged version, as they always do. I'll table five copies of that as well.

I just want to say a thank you to all those who have been injured or perished in the line of duty in our province and our country. Thanks to all of them.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The impending clear-cutting crisis in the Castle-Crown continues to concern Albertans, including Mary Reid, Marion Walls, Mary Louise Campbell, Terry Galvon, David Parbery, Crystal Schatz, Al Coats, Shelley Robinson, Stephen Fairley, Laurie Loro, Kata Jhukoutaiy, Tomas Ersson, Cayley Orton, Deborah Jasinoski, Linda McFarlane, Diane Volkers, Annika Nicholson, Catherine Chevalier, Rick Moses, Margaret Vrielink, Albert Russon, Angeles Mendoza Sammet, Alistair Des Moulins, Angela Stemmer, and Scott Green.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I table on behalf of the Leader of the Official Opposition the reference to the Alberta Medical Association concern that physicians under nondisclosure agreement will be at legal risk under the Health Quality Council review.

My second tabling is five copies of my letter and cheque to the Vulcan food bank, as promised in April 2007, to help AISH payments be indexed the same as MLAs' salaries. It's only fair.

My last tabling is from people concerned about the clear-cutting that is going to go on in the Castle special management area, probably a crime in itself. The names are Vanessa Vallis from Calgary; Teresa Rocheleau, Ron Chambers – if I don't mention outside of it, it's assumed they come from Lethbridge – Brittney Durston from Bradford, Ontario; Mary-Anne McTrowe from Lethbridge; Helen Henderson from Coaldale; Cordula Wenske from Dresden, Germany; Andrew Hurly from Monarch; Linda Stromsmoe from Lethbridge; Kevin Roll from Hays, Alberta; Tom Moffatt and Doug Saunders, both from Lethbridge. These people are very upset. Clearly, it isn't just an Alberta problem. These are people that have come from other places in the world to appreciate our tourism and our wonderful wild scenery and life that we have here in Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

**Dr. Sherman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table five copies of the members of the Legislature who were present when Dr. McNamee presented to the caucus in 1999 cases about lung cancer surgery wait times.

I'd like to table five copies of an excellent piece of investigative journalism, done by Charles Rusnell in 2007, about the financial irregularities and Auditor General Fred Dunn's critique of Capital health's accounting practices.

Thank you.

### Tablings to the Clerk

**The Clerk:** I wish to advise the House that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the hon. Mrs. Klimchuk, Minister of Service Alberta, responses to questions raised by Mrs. Forsyth, the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, and Mr. Mason, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, on March 7, 2011, Department of Service Alberta main estimates debate.

On behalf of the hon. Mr. Renner, Minister of Environment, responses to questions raised by Ms. Blakeman, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, and Mr. Boutilier, the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, on March 22, 2011, Department of Environment main estimates debate.

3:00

### Orders of the Day

### Written Questions

[The Clerk read the following written questions, which had been accepted]

#### Alberta Health Services RN Turnover Rate

- Q3. Dr. Swann:  
What was the average turnover rate for registered nurses within Alberta Health Services for the years 2008, 2009, and 2010?

#### Foreign-trained Physician Recruitment

- Q4. Dr. Swann:  
How many foreign-trained physicians have been recruited to Alberta in the last five years?

#### Foreign-trained RN Recruitment

- Q5. Dr. Swann:  
How many foreign-trained registered nurses have been recruited to Alberta in the last five years?

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

#### Drilling Royalty Credit Program

- Q8. Mr. Hehr asked that the following question be accepted.  
What was the total value of all tax credits expended pursuant to the drilling royalty credit program and the average value of tax credits claimed per company for the period April 1, 2009, to February 20, 2011?

**Mr. Hehr:** At this time I believe this information is pertinent for us, Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, to have. We are in the midst of what could be considered on the cusp of another boom in Alberta. We have many projects up in the oil sands and in other areas of this province, much drilling activity going on all over the place. Obviously, that is spurred by world demand as well as some other things going on here in Alberta but also the price of oil. I guess the debate is, as always, that we need a stable operating ground for companies who do business while at the same time trying to balance what is a reasonable return to the taxpayer.

I know these are difficult things to balance, but having this information allows us to maybe try to get there and stay on top of that balance. For instance, I know in our budget debates with the hon. minister we were discussing, you know, the ups and downs of pricing of, in fact, the oil and gas industry and how it's very difficult to peg things at \$120 oil or that sort of stuff. We were discussing, I remember, how maybe we could develop a system where if prices were stable for the period of a year, well, then, maybe you could factor some of these things in and out and possibly give companies stability while at the same time allowing for the province to get its fair rate of return.

Nevertheless, I think this information would go some way in providing us with some information we need to do our jobs on behalf of the Alberta people to continue to challenge our government to do the best they can and to provide both stability for the industry as well as value to Joe and Jane Albertan, who are the owners of the resource, which, we all know, is a very delicate balance and a fine balance that we have to adjust here in Alberta.

Those are my submissions, and I wait for the hon. minister's response.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Liepert:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like the member mentioned, the government is always ready, able, and willing to help this member with his understanding and research, but there are a couple of problems with the way the particular question is worded. I have sent to the hon. member a proposed amendment because in the question it talks about tax credits in Alberta under the drilling royalty credit regulation. There are no tax credits but, rather, royalty credits.

In addition to that, due to corporate structuring of some of the companies – some of them may be subsidiary groups branched from parent organizations – we do not collect the data with respect to the average value of credits per company. That being said, I would propose to amend the question.

What was the total value of all royalty credits expended pursuant to the drilling royalty credit program for the period April 1, 2009, to February 20, 2011?

If the hon. member agrees with that amendment, I'm more than happy to supply that information.

**The Speaker:** All members have received a copy of the amendment. Discussion on the amendment?

**Mr. Hehr:** I think this is a wonderful amendment proposed by the hon. minister. You know, it reminds me of how some people think he gets a reputation as such a cranky man. This is really an example of how he helps sometimes and how he gets us the information we need. I would thank the hon. minister for his assistance in this matter. When I hear someone besmirching his good name, I will be sure to speak up on his behalf.

**The Speaker:** Shall I call the question?

**Hon. Members:** Question.

[Motion on amendment carried]

**The Speaker:** Shall I call the question, then, on the motion as amended?

**Hon. Members:** Question.

[Written Question 8 as amended carried]

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

#### **Crown Land Sold for Agricultural Use**

Q13. Ms Pastoor asked that the following question be accepted.  
What are the locations of Crown land sold for agricultural use between 2005 and 2010?

**Ms Pastoor:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My intent, of course, is to see exactly how much Crown land is actually being saved for agricultural land.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Sustainable Resource Development.

**Mr. Knight:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the hon. member has asked a question that's important to many Albertans, most particularly Albertans that are now directly involved or may want to be involved in the agricultural industry.

Mr. Speaker, the issue, of course, is that the question as it's posed is not something that we'd have a ready answer for, so I would like to propose that we amend Question 13 to read:

What are the legal descriptions and acreages of all public land managed by Sustainable Resource Development sold between April 1, 2005, and March 31, 2010?

Mr. Speaker, the amendment is based on the following reasons. Sustainable Resource Development sells public land that's considered surplus to government requirement. Municipalities regulate the use of land within their boundaries. We could sell pieces of surplus public land and not know at the end of the day whether or not they may end up being used for agricultural purposes. The Department of Sustainable Resource Development's records regarding the sale of public land are kept on a fiscal year basis, so that's the reason for the adjustments relative to the dates.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose that amendment.

**The Speaker:** Have all members received a copy of this amendment? If you haven't, raise your hand. Okay.

Hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, do you want the floor?

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for having this amendment out on time. Unfortunately, I just saw it this morning because we were away for two weeks, and it was sitting on my desk here. Thank you, at least, for that.

I was going to not accept it because I'm not exactly sure that what I'm trying to get at is what you're going to give me. But after your explanation it's a little bit closer to what I thought I was getting, so I will accept this amendment.

Thank you.

[Motion on amendment carried]

**The Speaker:** Hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, do you want to say anything further to close the debate, or should I just call the question as amended?

**Ms Pastoor:** Question.

[Written Question 13 as amended carried]

**The Speaker:** You did not tell us, Lethbridge-East, where you went for two weeks.

**Ms Pastoor:** I worked my tail off in Lethbridge-East.

**The Speaker:** Aw. It catches my heart. That's so good to hear.

#### **Motions for Returns**

3:10

##### **Bitumen Valuation**

M6. Mr. Chase moved on behalf of Mr. MacDonald that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all financial forecasts, economic trend reporting, and any recommendations that were prepared by Alberta Finance and Enterprise regarding bitumen valuation for the fiscal years 2011-2012 to 2021-2022.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Energy.

**Mr. Liepert:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to move an amendment to Motion for a Return 6. The amendment would strike out "financial forecasts, economic trend reporting, and any recommendations that were prepared by Alberta Finance and Enterprise" and substitute "publicly available, nonproprietary information given by Alberta Energy to Alberta Finance and Enterprise" and, secondly, strike out "2011-2012 to 2021-2022" and substitute "2011-2012." So this motion would read:

A copy of all publicly available, nonproprietary information given by Alberta Energy to Alberta Finance and Enterprise regarding bitumen valuation for the fiscal year 2011-12.

I'm proposing this amendment for a couple of reasons, Mr. Speaker. First, our department can only answer with respect to information prepared by our ministry and provided to Alberta Finance and Enterprise. Secondly, as the member proposing this motion is aware, the information we provide comes from a number of financial forecasts and reports, much of which is confidential due to the copyright terms of our subscriptions or because the information is considered proprietary. Any material we provide to Alberta Finance and Enterprise, which is actually publicly available, we'll be happy to give to the member.

Also, the data from all of the forecasts and reports we receive are amalgamated and made publicly available in the budget, as are many of the identities of the analysts and forecasters that we use. If the member wants to see specific reports from, say, a bank or an investment service, he's certainly free to subscribe to those respective services.

Regarding the later time frames mentioned in the motion, we do not provide long-term projections for use in the budget, but long-term valuation projections are publicly available via the Energy Resources Conservation Board.

Just as a final aside, Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that our forecasting models are reviewed and are endorsed annually by the Auditor General.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. I understand the minister's cautions or limitations with regard to proprietary information. We understand that. Whether it's ministers' notes or any other private information, we understand the FOIP regulations that cover that information. On the (a) part, obviously we're operating within the information that should be publicly available and asking for that information to be collected and accumulated and passed along to us.

On the second part of the amendment, by striking out "fiscal years 2011-2012 to 2021-2022" and substituting "fiscal year 2011-2012," what Alberta investors, the industry, and regular Alberta taxpayers are looking for is the idea that the government has some kind of a plan or a rough idea of where they would like to go given certain conditions heading into the next decade. Now, by this request we're giving the government credit for forward thinking, and that was why that extended evaluation and the direction the government would like to at least head towards are extremely important to us.

Again, we understand the nature of what's private and what's public, but we would like to get a sense of what the government's plan is as well, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

[Motion on amendment carried]

**The Speaker:** Shall I call the question with respect to the motion as amended?

**Hon. Members:** Question.

[Motion for a Return 6 as amended carried]

#### Conventional Oil Valuation

M7. Mr. Chase moved on behalf of Mr. MacDonald that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all financial forecasts, economic trend reporting, and any recommendations that were prepared by Alberta Finance and Enterprise regarding conventional oil valuation for the fiscal years 2011-2012 to 2021-2022.

**Mr. Liepert:** Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move an amendment to this motion very similar to the last one, striking out "financial forecasts, economic trend reporting, and any recommendations that were prepared by Alberta Finance and Enterprise" and substituting "publicly available, nonproprietary information given by Alberta Energy to Alberta Finance and Enterprise," and, secondly, striking out "fiscal years 2011-2012 to 2021-2022" and substituting "fiscal year 2011-2012." This motion would then read: "A copy of all publicly available, nonproprietary information given by Alberta Energy to Alberta Finance and Enterprise regarding conventional oil valuation for the fiscal year 2011-2012."

The reasons for these amendments are identical to the ones mentioned with respect to the previous motion that we just addressed in this House.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very much. I don't want to take up time from this Assembly. Obviously, we're not asking for private information. What we're asking for are recommendations that were prepared by Alberta Finance and Enterprise regarding convention-

al oil valuation. We're looking for the minister's and Alberta Finance and Enterprise's projections. We're not looking for proprietary information. We're looking for the information that has been shared between the ministries that will give, hopefully – and then I'll argue the second part of the amendment – some idea of where the government is headed not only now but into the next decade.

The conventional oil opportunities are potentially tremendously enhanced if the sequestration works. If we can pump carbon dioxide into old conventional sites and receive the increased value from formerly nonproductive wells all of a sudden being brought to life, then this is important information. I realize, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. Minister of Energy doesn't have a crystal ball, but I would think that between Finance and Enterprise and Energy they would have a desired outcome, and based on that desired outcome, the information and the studies on carbon sequestration, the fact that we're no longer using potable water, that we're using saline, given all that information, which is not proprietary but actually belongs and is well known to Alberta Finance and Enterprise and Energy, it would be very helpful to have not only that information but the forecast for how conventional extraction can potentially be improved over the next decade. That's why we're projecting 10 years ahead. The Alberta Liberals are well known for thinking ahead, and we'd like the government to catch up to us.

Thank you.

[Motion on amendment carried]

**The Speaker:** Shall I call the question?

[Motion for a Return 7 as amended carried]

3:20

#### Natural Gas Valuation

M8. Mr. Chase moved on behalf of Mr. MacDonald that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing a copy of all financial forecasts, economic trend reporting, and any recommendations that were prepared by Alberta Finance and Enterprise regarding natural gas valuation for the fiscal years 2011-2012 to 2021-2022.

**Mr. Liepert:** Again, Mr. Speaker, what we're going to propose is that we amend this motion by striking out "financial forecasts, economic trend reporting, and any recommendations that were prepared by Alberta Finance and Enterprise" and substituting "publicly available, nonproprietary information given by Alberta Energy to Alberta Finance and Enterprise" and by striking out "fiscal years 2011-12 to 2021-22" and substituting "fiscal year 2011-2012." This would then read: "A copy of all publicly available, nonproprietary information given by Alberta Energy to Alberta Finance and Enterprise regarding natural gas valuation for the fiscal year 2011-2012."

Again, the reasoning remains consistent with the last two motions, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. Again, I don't want to sound like an echo, but what we're asking for is not what we're receiving. We've asked for a copy of all financial forecasts, economic trend reporting, and any recommendations that were prepared by Alberta Finance and Enterprise. I don't know whether it would have made it simpler if we'd said all Alberta Finance and Enterprise financial forecasts, economic trend reporting, and recommendations. If we'd possibly put the producer of the information first, maybe it would have caused less confusion.

What we're getting from the minister is publicly available. In other words, he's willing to collect information he's already, I'm assuming, put out, which is not what we're asking for. We're asking him to give us an indication of the advice that he is recommending going forward based on, obviously, nonproprietary information. The government, I am sure, beyond the very hard-working researchers and bureaucrats within the organization also goes out to other individuals seeking advice, especially, I would hope, experts in the field. It's that kind of direction that we're looking for so that everyone understands the direction the government is going.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again with reference to 2021-2022 we know it's a historical fact that conventional gas for years has produced the highest royalties and the best return for Albertans. Well, now with the advent of shale gas and nonconventional gas our gas marketing basically has bottomed out, and we're hoping that the minister, in replying to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, could provide us with a sense of where we're going from here. Is there a hope that with certain planning or direction we'll be able to re-evaluate, regenerate the former conventional gas market? When the minister restricts the information to "publicly available" and for a single year, there is no forward prognosis. We don't know where the ministry is hoping to head or the information that would take them in that particular direction. If we don't know, then the Alberta public doesn't know, and industry is uncertain about the government's support for both conventional and new types of gas exploration involving shale, et cetera.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion on amendment carried]

**The Speaker:** Shall I call the question, then?

**Hon. Members:** Question.

[Motion for a Return 8 as amended carried]

### Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

**The Deputy Chair:** I'd like to call the committee to order.

#### Bill 201 Health Insurance Premiums (Health Card Donor Declaration) Amendment Act, 2011

**The Deputy Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you very, very much, Mr. Chair. In previous discussions I've brought forward the concerns about the potential punitive action of sort of two classes of individuals: those that have indicated a yes, no, or possibly at some time in the future they would consider organ donations, and then there's the group who, if they don't respond immediately, may get the second mail-out of their Alberta health care cards. I wanted to bring up that concern, which was not addressed in previous amendments.

As I've indicated twice before in speaking to Bill 201, Health Insurance Premiums (Health Card Donor Declaration) Amendment Act, 2011, I am very supportive of not only organ donation but tissue donation, blood, et cetera. I indicated that I thought that

a potentially better method for achieving this was an electronic health card complete with a chip, which offered greater privacy protection and was capable of being presented either by a person, for example, giving blood – their record would be part of that card – or in the unfortunate event of someone dying, there would be a go-to place which would clearly indicate an individual's wishes in addition to their health information.

Recently, Mr. Chairman, with regard to having a health card that would facilitate improved service delivery as well as declared donor information, it was pointed out to me by both a psychiatrist and a medical physician who came to my office this past Friday their concern about the government potentially pulling back the approximately \$35,000 that helped their offices maintain their electronic data and record keeping.

Mr. Chair, in order to facilitate the information collection and the appropriate sharing between medical individuals of private, protected information, I believe that something beyond our simple paper card has to be devised so that physicians, regardless of where they are in the province, have appropriate access to the information that in the case of an injured person would facilitate their treatment and in the case of a person who has indicated that upon their death their organs could be harvested, that information would be available in a secure situation.

Mr. Chair, without going into a whole lot of repeat, I also mention the fact that Alberta Health, while improving on the number of Alberta health cards out, has not the tracking necessary to ensure that only Albertans are receiving these Alberta health cards. So the tracking of the card, to whom it goes and for what purpose, I would suggest needs to be improved in order for the wishes of Bill 201 to be taken into account.

3:30

I thank the hon. chair for allowing me to participate again in the debate on Bill 201. Donation I'm very much in favour of. Facilitating and improving the process, I think, requires further work than Bill 201 presents at this time.

**The Deputy Chair:** Any other members wish to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

**Mr. Bhardwaj:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to rise today in Committee of the Whole to speak to Bill 201, the Health Insurance Premiums (Health Card Donor Declaration) Amendment Act, 2011, as amended. The intent of this bill is to increase organ and tissue donation in Alberta, and I believe that various sections of this bill achieve that aim. I would like to focus my comments today on one section in particular, section 22.1(1). For the record this section states:

A certificate of registration shall include a declaration form concerning organ and tissue donation that specifies the following 3 options:

- (a) yes;
- (b) no;
- (c) undecided.

Mr. Chairman, the subject of organ and tissue donation can be a sensitive one. Many people find merely thinking about such matters extremely uncomfortable. While Bill 201 does propose to compel Albertans to make a choice as to whether or not they would like to be organ donors, it would not force anyone to become a donor if they do not wish to be one.

Section 22.1(1) stipulates that the options given in the certificate of declaration, which in this case will be the Alberta health care card, will be yes, no, and undecided. As such, should an individual not wish to become an organ donor, he or she has two options from which to choose. This individual can choose no or

undecided, and then those choices will ensure that he or she will not become an organ donor. The undecided option is there to make sure that Albertans who are not yet ready to make a decision regarding organ and tissue donation are not rushed into doing so. Further, should an individual know whether or not they want to become a donor but do not wish to make that decision public, he or she can choose the undecided option to ensure that their privacy remains intact.

Mr. Chairman, it is not the intent of the bill to force Albertans into doing something they do not want to do, whether that is becoming an organ and tissue donor or simply disclosing their decision on the matter. Rather, the intent of this bill is to prompt some thought and discussion on the issue of organ donation.

The fact is that Canada's organ donation rates are some of the lowest in the western world. While there are no statistics available that are specific to Alberta, only 13 Canadians for every million actually become organ donors. This lack of donation means the difference between life and death for many across the country, including right here in the province of Alberta. With the requirement to make a specific declaration regarding organ donation, as outlined in section 22.1(1), we could ensure that, at the very least, Albertans think long and hard about this issue and their feelings towards it.

What's more, Mr. Chairman, it is my hope that Albertans will also have this discussion with their families so that everyone's wishes are known should the worst happen. It is important to ensure that our families are aware of our feelings towards organ and tissue donation because, ultimately, their permission will be required in order for us to actually become donors.

If passed, Bill 201 will help to raise awareness in our province regarding organ and tissue donation. Subsequently this could help to increase the number of donations which could in turn save lives. Mr. Chairman, it is remarkable how many lives can be saved or drastically improved by just one organ donor. According to Alberta Health Services one donor can save the lives of eight people and enhance the lives of as many as 75. For the thousands of people who are currently waiting, an increase in donors could mean the difference between life and death.

I believe that it is incumbent upon us as legislators to try to increase the number of organ and tissue donations in our province, and Bill 201 could be an effective tool to achieve this goal. However, the provisions in section 22.1(1) clearly provide Albertans with options should they not want to become organ donors. Because organ and tissue donation is an extremely personal decision and because, ultimately, Albertans should have the final say over what becomes of their bodies after they pass on, it would be unacceptable to not provide some alternatives. Rather, by requiring that all Albertans make an explicit choice between yes, no, and undecided, we can ensure that health care professionals know who agrees to be a donor while protecting the rights of Albertans to refuse.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that section 22.1(1) has created a win-win situation for organ donation in our province. We have an opportunity to know for certain who among us are potential donors, and there is also a possibility that by asking people to make the choice, they will choose yes. But for those who are uncomfortable with the idea of organ and tissue donation, there are two alternative choices available. Therefore, we have nothing to lose and everything to gain by passing this legislation. We owe it to those Albertans who patiently await a life-altering donation, and we owe it to those who may not be aware that they can help save lives. By being careful to leave the choice formally in the hands of Albertans, those who do not wish to become donors will not have to.

I believe that all sections of this legislation, including section 22.1(1), work together to ensure that the intent of the bill is fully realized, this intent being to hopefully increase the number of organ donations in Alberta and, by extension, to save lives. Section 22.1(1) specifically ensures that Albertans are not forced into becoming organ donors by providing other options to choose from. This section also ensures that Albertans are not forced into making decisions if they're not ready to do so by providing the undecided option. With these provisions, I cannot see a reason why this legislation should not be passed. Albertans could stand to benefit from this once it is implemented.

I would like to thank the Member for Edmonton-Manning for the thorough input into drafting this legislation, particularly the care that went into drafting section 22.1(1).

With that, I would conclude my comments, and I look forward to the rest of the Committee of the Whole debate. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to stand up and speak to the Alberta Health Insurance Premiums (Health Card Donor Declaration) Amendment Act, 2011, and I'm particularly pleased to stand up and speak to the amendments that were tabled in the Legislature I guess a couple of Mondays ago. I have spoken in this House on many occasions in regard to my support for organ donation and have made it very, very clear that I'm a huge supporter of organ donation. I think what we have to do is educate the public as much as we can, as I indicated the last time I spoke, and I ended my speaking notes with a comment that was brought to me when I had brought my original bill forward several years ago.

3:40

I want to state that the original bill stated it would try to increase the pool of organ donors by making it mandatory for people to answer their organ donor card when they register with Alberta Health and Wellness. I indicated just briefly that I do like the amendments to Bill 201 put forward by the member. I was concerned that vital medical care might be delayed or denied because of not answering the organ donor question.

I must make it clear that I have been a strong, strong supporter of organ donation since the 1970s. At that time, Mr. Chair, I underwent testing for blood and tissue type because that's how strongly I believed in it. I still carry the same card. I'm not even sure they even have them anymore. At that particular time when you signed up to be an organ donor, I went through the procedure. So I'm ready to go. If anything happens, they can have any organs they want. Some they might not want, but they certainly are more than welcome to have anything.

In 1998 I put forward the Human Tissue Donation Procedures Statutes Amendment Act. At that time I had collaborated with the kidney and liver foundations and the Red Cross as well as the human organ procurement and exchange program. The reason I put that bill forward then is the same reason we're having this discussion today. When you look at 1998 to 2011, that's 13 years, and here we are back in the Legislature talking about the same bill, talking about the same importance it has.

Quite frankly, the government hasn't done anything. They've had the opportunity since that bill came forward in 1998. I know the hon. Member for Calgary-West brought forward another private member's bill on organ donation, and it passed in the Legislature. Here we are again on April 11, 2011, talking about organ donation and yet again another private member's bill that is

so important to everybody. The government hasn't acted on the bill that I brought forward in 1998, and I don't imagine they did anything on the bill that had been brought forward by the Member for Calgary-West. As far as I'm concerned, the situation is tragic. I can't even imagine how many organs have been lost as we've dicked around. We've talked the talk, but we certainly haven't walked the walk.

In my research I studied many jurisdictions in the world and was amazed at the progress that countries like Spain have made. In three short years their donation rates increased 75 per cent. Their reforms were a model around Europe and the world. While my Bill 206, which is the one I talked about earlier, the Human Tissue Donation Procedures Statutes Amendment Act, didn't make the consent reforms that they did, they have made incredible progress.

While I understand what Bill 201 is trying to accomplish – and it's a worthy goal – I can't help but feel that this is not enough to improve organ donation in Alberta, and I speak from other experiences. As I've said, I had the privilege to chair the Advisory Committee on Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation a decade ago, and I find it – I repeat this, and I think it's important to repeat – ironic that we're talking about this again in this Legislature. It just saddens me to no end that we're having this conversation again. Maybe this time the government will decide that they are finally really going to do something about this.

The committee that I chaired way back called for comprehensive legislation to improve organ and tissue donation in Alberta. Sadly, at no fault of the committee and the people that worked so hard on that particular committee – and I have to give them tons and tons of credit – the progress has been slow and uneven. I know that when I had the privilege of working with these people, the dedication that they showed when we were working on this committee was nothing but stellar. I have to even give once again credit to the member who brought this forward to maybe try and get the government to move on it.

The heartbreak for me is that time is critical for those on organ donation lists. I've been advocating for improved organ donation processes for most of my political career, almost 15 years, yet it just seems like we're moving in what I would consider slow motion or, if I can say even more bluntly, no motion.

The challenges of organ donation are similar to those of blood donation. They are necessary for saving lives, but people often have a belief that they won't ever need the service. We need to think ahead because in the middle of a catastrophe the last thing people think about is donation. The pain and tragedy of losing a loved one is overwhelming, especially when you're still in shock. Donations can't rely on grieving, vulnerable family members. It's simply just asking too much of them. The shock of earth-shattering news from a doctor is not the most appropriate time for the family to be asked for a donation. This is something that people should plan ahead for.

Over 400 people in Alberta wait for organ donation. While half of them will receive the needed transplants, many do not receive theirs on time. As the organs shut down, they must endure the pain, along with the family, of watching their lives slip away.

Canada has one of the lowest donation rates in the world. One dying person can have a huge, life-saving impact on others. A single donor can help as many as 80 people. Most people don't realize just how long people wait for donations. Albertans have a shorter wait time for kidney transplants, but the wait is still two and a half years. To get dialysis while they wait, people usually need to come in to the hospital for hours every day or two. Not only is there a human cost, but there is also a financial cost of waiting. Kidney dialysis costs \$60,000 a year. The cost of the

transplant, including the medication, is \$130,000. When patients are on dialysis for years, the best option is obvious. Getting patients the best care they can get saves everyone pain and suffering, and quite frankly it saves them money.

A very simple but overlooked step to improve donation rates is education. Ontario and British Columbia have taken a leadership role by creating donor registration. Government agencies actively promote organ donation, and their results are worth examining. The committee I chaired called for a provincial organ and tissue donation and transplant system. While we have the workings of something great, we're just not quite there yet. The committee also called for a province-wide approach to public and professional education.

Our donation system relies on the goodwill of others. A living donation is a serious decision and needs greater support from the government. Alberta took a small step by allowing compensation for living donors so that their travel expenses and income loss could be covered up to \$5,000. At the federal level caregivers are entitled to compassionate leave benefits for up to 15 weeks.

While sick patients wait for life-saving donations, our government is waiting for someone else to take the lead. Canadian Blood Services was directed to create a national strategy in 2007, and we're still waiting for the bold leadership on a vital issue. National organ and tissue awareness week is next week. I had hoped debate on this bill would inspire this government to be able to report to this House that they have taken concrete actions before another donor awareness week passed us by. I'm disappointed that it doesn't seem to be the case in front of us.

Ultimately, I say that I'm going to be supporting this bill because we all share the goals of increasing organ donation. If this is what this bill will take, once again – and, as I said before, I think this is probably, from what I remember, the third time – this is a good-news story for Albertans.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East because the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung isn't in his chair.

**Ms Pastoor:** Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I will be brief because I think that most of the salient points have already been pointed out. Certainly, I believe in this bill. I think that we are way behind in Canada, as has already been pointed out, in terms of the acceptance of the idea of being able to help our fellow human beings when, in fact, we can share things that we have absolutely no use for anymore.

However, having said that, I know of a number of families who were fortunate enough to be able to share kidneys between daughters and sons and certainly amongst siblings. It's a very, very important ability to be able to do that. I have never spoken with anyone who has regretted having done that for one second. Both parties have recovered very well and have certainly gone on to productive lives.

3:50

I think another important thing that's slowly catching on and is in the same vein as this is using umbilical cord tissue and blood for research on stem cells. We've certainly seen the effect of stem cell treatment, in fact with a former member of this House, and it's been very successful. He, needless to say, was very pleased to have had that donor from somewhere else.

I think that education has been mentioned, and perhaps we should start doing a little bit more in the schools so that as the kids grow up, it's almost a given and is not something that people have to think about. I can understand that perhaps there may be some religious reasons, which I would have all the respect in the world

for, but often people just haven't thought about it because the discussions aren't there. I believe that we should have those discussions, and I believe they have to start in school.

I think we can talk to children at this point in time in kindergarten, who actually can talk to us about good, nutritional food, where it comes from, and why we should be actually eating the hundred-mile diet. These children are quite knowledgeable about this, and certainly it's children I think that have helped their parents quit smoking because they've come home with the idea and the knowledge that it's not good for you. Again, I believe that the education towards this kind of thinking could happen in the schools.

The other thing is that I would like to see Canada, of course, be the leader in terms of free donation of organs. I so fear that at some time bits and pieces would be sold and that these bits and pieces would become commodities. That is a very, very dangerous precedent that is a possibility. The more we are generous and the more we understand, I think the better off all Canadians will be and certainly humanity as a whole.

With that, Mr. Chair, thank you for allowing me to speak to this very important bill.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

**Ms Calahasen:** Mr. Chairman, first of all, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on Bill 201. I'm really pleased to support Bill 201, the Health Insurance Premiums (Health Card Donor Declaration) Amendment Act, 2011. The intent of this bill as amended is to increase organ donation in Alberta, and like my colleague from Edmonton-Manning I believe this bill as amended will achieve that aim.

I trust that, in particular, section 22.1(1) will contribute significantly to reaching that goal. Section 22.1(1) focuses on one specific aspect of the human organ and tissue donation process; that is, the declaration form that a potential donor must fill out before the rest of the process unfolds and, more specifically, its wording and design.

In fact, subsection (1) reads as follows:

22.1(1) A certificate of registration shall include a declaration form concerning organ and tissue donation that specifies the following 3 options:

- (a) yes;
- (b) no;
- (c) undecided.

This is a substantive change from the declaration form's current wording. As many Albertans are aware, this form is currently located on the back of the Alberta personal health card. Entitled Alberta's Universal Donor Card, it states, "In the hope that I may help others, I hereby make this anatomical gift, if medically acceptable, to take effect upon my death."

Then two options are displayed: (a) any needed organs and tissues for transplantation and (b) only the following organs and tissues for transplantation. This is followed by an opportunity for the donor to specify his or her anatomical gift. A signature is also required, both from the donor and a witness. This witness is preferably a family member. Potential donors are also encouraged to discuss this topic with their family members or next of kin.

Finally, transplantable organs and tissues are listed. These organs are heart, liver, lungs, kidneys, pancreas, and small bowel. Tissues listed are eyes, skin, bone, heart for valves, and veins.

Mr. Chairman, as you can see, there is a fair amount of information already available on the declaration card. Some would argue that it is too much information while others may see the benefit in adding further details, and others still prefer the status quo. But perhaps the amount of content is not as much a topic for discus-

sion as the wording itself. At the moment nowhere can an Alberta citizen formally state that he or she is not interested in becoming a donor. Instead, this is implied by simply leaving the form blank and perhaps by letting their family members know. Also, the undecided cannot state anywhere that they are indeed undecided. This option is not currently available.

Mr. Chairman, in other words, if one wishes to become an organ or tissue donor, they must fill out the said form, and as an individual who believes in the value of individual initiative and personal responsibility, I am proud that individuals will take on that task of determining their own wishes and what happens to their bodies. By making that personal determination, I believe it makes it easier on family members as well as it may be very timely. We all know that donating organs or tissues needs to be done in a timely manner, and that's important because every minute counts, especially for those who need those organs or that tissue.

Perhaps the biggest problem with the way the current form is worded is that it does not help to further alleviate the organ and tissue demand by those Albertans in need. Indecision is okay, too. In fact, it is a sign that one has put some thought into the matter, but as of now on this issue there's nothing that separates undecided persons from those who have already made the firm decision not to become an organ or tissue donor.

Section 22.1(1) would likely help remedy that situation. It is also entirely possible that an increasing number of individuals will take the time to fill it out. These individuals alone may increase the pool of organ and tissue donors potentially available. That in itself would prove to be a great success for the donor program and, more importantly, for Albertans waiting for a second chance at life.

Mr. Chairman, I'm not opposed to a partial change on the declaration form as proposed in the amended bill. I believe those changes would be improvements, but no matter what the final format might be, it will be designed to inform Albertans of the importance of organ or tissue donations in this province.

To the Member for Edmonton-Manning: congratulations in bringing forward individual initiative and, especially, personal responsibility because I believe that that value should be taken seriously in whatever decisions we make for our lives. I for one appreciate that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

**Mr. Xiao:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to rise today and join Committee of the Whole debate on Bill 201 as amended. Before I begin, I would like to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning for all the hard work and effort he has put into this piece of legislation.

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of sections to this proposed legislation. However, today I would like to focus my remarks on section 1, (c.1) of the bill. This section outlines the meaning of a certificate of registration, and for the sake of clarity under section 1 part (c.1) of the bill as amended reads as follows:

"Certificate of registration" means

- (a) a certificate of registration issued under this Act, or
- (b) any other document prescribed by the regulations as being a certificate of registration for the purposes of this Act or the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act.

Mr. Chairman, part (c.1)(a) makes it clear that a certificate of registration could be issued under this act specifically for the purpose of organ and tissue donation declaration while, on the other hand, part (c.1)(b) would allow pre-existing documents to be used for the same purpose. These subsections leave all options open to be considered for the purposes of this bill.



4:00

Mr. Chairman, I realize that there were some concerns brought up during second reading of this proposed legislation, and some of those concerns focused on what exactly would be used as the certificate of registration in Alberta regarding organ and tissue donation. Initially it was proposed that the Alberta personal health care insurance card be the certificate used for the purposes of this act. However, the question was raised: why not use drivers' licences? This bill as amended has left that option open so long as the individual's driver's licence could be classified as a certificate of registration under the act. To ensure that the most appropriate certificate of registration is chosen, all options must be considered, including drivers' licences.

Mr. Chairman, one of the benefits of using drivers' licences as the certificate of registration regarding organ and tissue donation is the fact that they must be renewed on a regular basis. This would afford Albertans the opportunity to reconsider and change their decisions with regard to organ and tissue donation every time their driver's licence came up for renewal. In fact, there are many jurisdictions in the United States that use drivers' licences as the certificate of registration for organ and tissue donation, and from what I understand, it is a system that works quite well. That is why under section 1 (c.1) does not serve to limit what can be used as a certificate of registration.

However, other legislation would need to be amended in order to utilize drivers' licences as the certificate of registration for organ and tissue donation in Alberta. That, Mr. Chairman, falls outside the scope of this private member's bill. Nevertheless, the way in which the bill as amended has been worded allows for such an option, making sure that all opportunities are left available in case other legislation was to be amended.

Bill 201 as amended is a good first step towards encouraging increased awareness regarding donation of organs and tissue in Alberta. Furthermore, mandatory declaration with regard to donation could result in an increase in donors within our province. After all, that is one of the goals this bill aims to achieve. Under section 1 part (c.1) of this proposed legislation leaves the certificate of registration to be determined without restrictions, and it makes sure to allow for full consideration and flexibility of options.

Yet, Mr. Chairman, I still feel that the best and most practical way to introduce a certificate of registration for organ donation would be through the use of our personal health care cards. One of the most significant reasons for this is because personal health care cards are issued to everyone living in Alberta whereas not all Albertans possess a driver's licence.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to point out that individuals who are under 18 years of age would not be included under the provisions of this bill. I think this is an important consideration as many young Albertans are unsure about their wishes regarding donation. Because of their uncertainty on the issue, using a personal health care card would afford young Albertans the opportunity to take their time to come to a decision. All they would be required to do once they reach legal age is indicate their wishes regarding donation on the back of their health care card.

This system would keep the entire process quite simple as there would be no need to issue any additional certificate of registration whereas if drivers' licences were to be used, individual choice regarding donation would need to be indicated somewhere on Albertans' licences. Thus, either a new card would have to be issued at an Alberta motor vehicle registry, or some kind of alteration would need to be made available to place on the licences.

Although the use of a driver's licence to declare one's donation intentions would be beneficial due to the frequency of its renewal,

amendments would need to be made to other legislation, which is again beyond the scope of this bill. Further, not every Albertan has a driver's licence. So as you can see, Mr. Chairman, under section 1 part (c.1) of this bill would allow for a number of options to be considered with regard to the certificate of registration for organ and tissue donation. I believe this is important and, therefore, feel that this is a valuable section of Bill 201 as amended.

I would again like to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning for bringing this bill before the House. It is an important issue that merits careful consideration with regard to organ and tissue donation in Alberta. I hope that my remarks brought some clarity to this debate.

At this time I will conclude my comments on Bill 201 as amended. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Hehr:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. It is an honour and privilege to rise and discuss this bill at this time. I would like to congratulate the hon. member for bringing forward this bill, which has the intent of not only encouraging but increasing the number of organ and tissue donors here in Alberta. It was mentioned earlier that, really, we have rather low rates of participation here in Alberta, and that's something we should look towards correcting. We should educate the public and, if possible, make it easier for them to take part in this life-giving process.

I did listen intently to much of the debate that was going on, and it did bring me some sort of dismay that the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek reiterated that this bill is now in its third – third – sort of revision before this House. It seems to me that it would behoove the government if that is true – and I assume, because she has been here for much of that time, that it is the third reincarnation of this bill – that, hopefully, we would see it sometime shortly in the future. Maybe you can go back and look at the best benefits of all three of these bills. I'm assuming that many people put a lot of work into it, and since this Legislature has passed it on all three occasions, the government has enough information to go ahead and put together a pretty good bill that would go forward to both educate the public as well as to increase the amount of people contributing to donations.

I can personally attest to some of the education tactics that people sometimes sort of need. As you may or may not be aware, I lived in my father's house for much of my life, in fact until I was 30. My sister and I went to university during much of our 20s, and I remember one day coming home from university – I happened to be 25 and my sister approximately 23 – and my father had beaten us home from work. He was a schoolteacher, and he proclaimed to us when we rolled in through the door that he had filled out our organ donation cards and enthusiastically said to us: by the way, Kent and Kristie, you are donating your organs to the betterment of humankind upon your leaving to your eternal reward.

4:10

I, being somewhat more accepting of my father's good wishes, merely rolled into my bedroom and said: well, dad made a decision. My sister, on the other hand, challenged my father on this point. She said: "How did you in fact do this? Was the letter not sent to me?" Yes, it was. My dad said: "Well, I made a judgment decision. I signed the form on your behalf, and I sent it in." Well, then a row ensued. Needless to say, my sister and my father disagreed on her giving her organs to donation after the fact. I really don't know whether my sister was uninformed or educated about the importance of donating her organs or whether she was just disagreeing about the fact that my father had arbitrarily made a

decision for her at the age she was, but it's something we discuss from time to time, about how my father likes to still try to make decisions in our lives.

Needless to say, that brings up the education factor of this bill, that it could go a long way to informing individuals who may be reluctant to donate their organs that there is a true need out there, that people do value the contributions, that much of this could go to life-saving activities which go a long way to helping individuals and families who are faced with a difficult situation.

As this has been through this House before, I'm hopeful that this time we will pass it and that it will come into law sometime in the future in front of this House. I look forward to seeing that very soon.

I'd like to close by thanking the hon. member for putting forward this bill. I'd like to thank my father for actually doing that very entertaining stunt, filling out those forms for us, because it still brings a lot of joy when we discuss his actions of some 20 years ago regarding the filling in of those forms. It could bring an education process to Alberta's future generations who may wish to donate their organs to people in need.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for the wide latitude you gave me in making a point on this much-needed bill. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Dallas:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to rise today in Committee of the Whole to speak to Bill 201, the Health Insurance Premiums (Health Card Donor Declaration) Amendment Act, 2011. The intent, of course, of this bill is obviously a noble one, to facilitate Albertans in becoming organ donors should they wish to be. As amended, this bill works to accomplish that by explicitly requesting that Albertans upon becoming legal age declare their intent to either become an organ donor, to not become an organ donor, or to state that they are undecided in the matter.

Mr. Chairman, an important part of ensuring that the intent of this bill is fully realized is including provisions for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations. Bill 201 as amended provides this through section 21(h), which states that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations "providing for any matter relating to the completion of declaration forms under section 22.1."

Mr. Chairman, in order to discuss the significance of amending section 21 to include subsection (h), it is important to first acknowledge the goal of section 21 as it stands in the Health Insurance Premiums Act. This section currently provides our province's Lieutenant Governor in Council the provisions to make necessary regulations pertaining to the other sections of this act. Essentially, section 21 currently includes subsections (a) through (g), which are tailored to support directives of the bill, including registration of residents under the act and circumstances where individuals are exempt from this registration, for example. However, due to the fact that Bill 201 as amended would establish a change in section 1 of the act so as to include a certificate of registration and a definition of this type of document, the current subsections under section 21 need to be updated accordingly. Further, the bill as amended stipulates that the certificate of registration include in its contents a declaration form regarding organ donation where a person may select "yes," "no," or "undecided."

Mr. Chairman, these provisions are important and perhaps are the crux of this bill as they embody its purpose. However, it is imperative that these provisions are supported by the necessary regulations to ensure there is a protocol in place stipulating how the goal of this bill can ultimately be achieved. Section 21(h) of Bill 201 accomplishes that.

As I said earlier, section 21(h) states that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations "providing for any matter relating to the completion of declaration forms under section 22.1." Section 22.1(1) of the bill as amended reads:

A certificate of registration shall include a declaration form concerning organ and tissue donation that specifies the following 3 options:

- (a) yes;
- (b) no;
- (c) undecided.

Mr. Chairman, the wording of Bill 201 presently makes it clear that the Lieutenant Governor in Council can make regulations pertaining to the certificate of registration form for organ and tissue donation. This would ensure that a process and the necessary administrative support can be put in place if this bill comes into force. These regulations could include, for example, how the form looks, how it is presented to residents, and how the declarations are filed.

Mr. Chairman, to elaborate on these points, the regulations could stipulate that the declaration form include the individual's signature so as to demonstrate their signed authorization regarding their intentions. Often documents such as this require the signature of a witness. The regulations could stipulate that, of course, as well. These details are not currently part of the amended bill. However, they may be established through regulation.

Mr. Chairman, for clarity, I'm not promoting any of these policies over another. I'm simply attempting to demonstrate that there are other factors to consider when moving forward with a piece of legislation such as Bill 201. Section 21(h) is appropriately worded to ensure that this bill, if passed, could be supplemented by regulation.

On another point, section 21(h) would allow the Lieutenant Governor to make regulations on the way in which the declaration form is presented to individuals. For example, a form could include a preamble about organ donation that serves to educate individuals on the purpose of the form itself. That would ensure that when Albertans go to fill it out, they are provided with some background information that can help them make a decision. Or the declaration form could be presented to an individual in front of an objective health care worker, who can support an individual in their decision-making. Alternatively, it may be desirable to have declaration forms mailed out to Albertans. In any case, these details are important, and it may be appropriate for them to appear in regulations. As such, I believe that section 21(h) is a vital part of Bill 201 as amended.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, it may be important for an individual's declaration to be filed or recorded. Section 21(h) ensures that should a filing or recording system be needed to support Bill 201 as amended, it can be outlined in the regulations if necessary.

Mr. Chairman, I want to stress that I'm not saying that these particular details should be included in regulations. Instead, I'm exploring the importance of section 21(h), which allows for these details to be addressed through regulations should it be necessary. Ultimately, I believe that this section is an integral part of Bill 201 as amended, and I believe that as it is worded, it ensures that the bill can be fully supported.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I look forward to hearing the remainder of my colleagues' comments.

Thank you.

4:20

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

**Mr. Rodney:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to rise today in Committee of the Whole and share my comments on Bill

201 as amended, but before I begin, I would like to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning for all the hard work he did in drafting this piece of legislation.

Mr. Chairman, the amendments to this bill provide an excellent opportunity to rethink attitudes and approaches surrounding a very important issue, that of organ and tissue donation. Today I'd like to focus the majority of my comments on section 21(h). For the record section 21 is amended by adding clause (h) following clause (g), and it reads: "providing for any matter relating to the completion of declaration forms under section 22.1." I feel that the proposed amendments to the original Health Insurance Premiums Act will strengthen the overall intent of Bill 201.

More than 4,300 people are currently in need of an organ in Canada. As many as 6 per cent, or some 250 people, will die while on waiting lists. Bill 201 as amended seeks to address this reality and save lives. It takes a very noble and special person to donate an organ. It is a commendable goal. The objective of Bill 201 as amended is to encourage Albertans to make a clear yes, no, or undecided declaration regarding their organ donor status on the back of their Alberta health care card by presenting them with the question. This could see the supply of organs increase and help save the lives of those waiting.

The context of adding clause (h) relates to the regulations. Specifically, it outlines what regulations can be made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. This will be the eighth such regulation the Lieutenant Governor in Council can make. Such regulations already include prescribing the classes of dependants that a resident is required to register and governing the registration of residents with the minister generally. Others state that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make decisions with respect to the imposing of penalties on those who have not registered within the times prescribed under the regulations. Another prescribes the classes of persons exempted from registration.

Mr. Chairman, it's important to recognize the exemptions that these sections refer to. After all, virtually nothing is without exemptions. A resident is not required to register with the minister in two instances. The first is if the resident is exempted from registering by the regulations, as has been previously alluded to. Secondly, a resident is also not required to register with the minister if the duty to register is imposed by the regulation of some other person.

In general, exemptions are necessary to observe since there rarely is a one-size-fits-all approach. Seldom can something like an act or a law be universally imposed or applied without recognition of some exceptions. For example, with respect to those wishing to become a living organ donor, one must pass stringent guidelines set by Health Canada, and they must also sufficiently pass the donor suitability process. Donor suitability can be measured on a number of different levels, often including specific exclusionary criteria. Such exclusionary criteria may include persons who have used intravenous, intramuscular, or subcutaneous drugs in recent years or persons with hemophilia. Further exclusionary conditions include anyone who has HIV-, HBV-, or HCV-infected blood.

Additionally, Mr. Chairman, not everyone can become an organ donor even if they have declared the answer to be yes. Those who have declared their yes with regard to being a cadaveric organ donor are not automatically assumed to be an apt donor. This is because they may not have organs suitable for transplant due to the health of the organs or the nature of their death. There are a myriad of other reasons as well. After all, the safety of those who are to receive an organ transplant is of crucial importance. It is the reality of cases like these that makes exemptions necessary in the first place.

Regardless of exemption cases, if the purpose of Bill 201 proves successful, we could see a reasonable increase in organ donation rates throughout Alberta. If section 21(h) were not in place, we could potentially see a scenario whose ambiguity would cause a misinterpretation of the different regulations. Also, if section 21(h) were not in place, we would be missing an important link between exemptions and the regulations specifying different means by which every resident shall register with the minister.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, I would again like to stress the importance of section 21(h). Essentially, the section provides a necessary connection of the regulations subject to the power of the Lieutenant Governor with the exemption criteria. Without this section we could have a scenario where the bill was misinterpreted due to an inappropriate system being in place, and the effectiveness of the legislation could suffer as a result. However, with this amendment Bill 201 seeks to address the issue of organ donation and, ultimately, to save lives. It's important to recognize that certain exemptions may come into play. After all, exemptions are often necessary because there are rarely one-size-fits-all methods.

Once again, thank you to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning for the hard work that went into the drafting of this bill, especially the necessary addition of section 21(h).

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security.

**Mr. Oberle:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to join the debate on this bill. I want to thank the Member for Edmonton-Manning for bringing it forward. The Member for Calgary-Fish Creek is correct that we've debated this issue before; here we are again.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to ask my colleagues to imagine two scenarios, the first of which is a trade show that happens in so many communities across our province. In fact, it's spring, and they're happening now. Peace River's is next weekend, and I'll be very pleased to be home and attend the trade fair. The trade fairs are not just for businesses. Very often community service organizations attend these trade fairs.

Imagine, if you will, that the local organ donation information group has a booth in the trade fair. As happens in all trade fairs, everybody has got a little glass jar on the counter, and you put your business card in there or write your name in there and you'll be entered into a draw at the end of the day for a prize, typically a T-shirt or balloons, those sorts of things, very minor gifts. But the kids flock to it and put their names in, and most parents walk around and put their names in all the jars. At the booth where the organ donation organization is working, the glass jar on the counter is absolutely empty despite the fact they have a prominently displayed prize for a draw. It's empty; not a single person put their name in it.

Now I'm going to ask you to imagine a second scenario, a darker one. Mr. Chairman, imagine a mother in a hospital at 1 o'clock in the morning, and she's been informed by the doctor on call that her daughter has been killed in a car accident, and she is asked to authorize organ donation. Despite the fact that she knows for certain that her daughter had intended to donate her organs, the mother refuses permission for organ donation until she can attend the body, until she can touch the wounds to convince herself that her daughter is dead.

Both of those scenarios are true, Mr. Chairman. Those are not made up. That is the deeply personal and often irrational nature of organ donation. It is not for us to sit in this Legislature and tell people, "You should sign your donation card" or "You shouldn't

sign” or “You should declare” or “You shouldn’t declare.” This does not come from me. This comes from organ donation people that I have talked to every year since I was elected to this Chamber. This is the absolute reality. It’s not rational; it doesn’t need to be. That’s not the point.

The point is that this is deeply personal, and people actually believe that by signing their cards, the doctors will kill them to harvest their organs. Whether it’s rational or not really doesn’t matter. If you believe that, it’s going to shape your behaviour, and it’s going to shape your mistrust of people that tell you to do otherwise. Imagine a mother needing to feel the wounds of her daughter before she can convince herself her daughter is actually dead before she’ll sign the form. I can’t imagine that situation, but thank God I wasn’t in it. Maybe I would be the same way; I don’t know.

What I can tell you is that I am not going to participate in furthering this cause. I’m going to vote against this bill simply because for the people in my constituency that are very active in organ donation – in fact, I believe my corner of the province has the highest donation rate in the province – it’s about education, and it’s not about legislation. They want us to stay away from legislation. I’ve been told that time and time again, and that’s where I’m going to go with my vote on this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4:30

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

**Mr. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’m also pleased to rise today in Committee of the Whole and share my comments on Bill 201 as amended. However, before I begin, I’d also like to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning for all the hard work he’s put into drafting this piece of legislation. I know he’s put a tremendous amount of work into this and talked to many people around the province and to many colleagues.

I know it is a sensitive issue, and I know it does become potentially at times irrational. As a family member who has sat on the end of the bed of a dying 16-year-old boy waiting for an organ, when you’re begging and pleading and praying that someone out there has donated that organ and you’re waiting minute by minute in the middle of the night, which happened to me and my family, I can only say that I’m glad we’re having this discussion.

I think that education is the key, and I don’t think that with this legislation the hon. member is mandating that Albertans do anything but for us to encourage people to make a decision, ask them to make a decision, raise the awareness, have the discussion with your family. I think that’s a good idea.

While there are many sections of this bill that warrant time and consideration, I’d like to focus the majority of my comments today on section 6. This section is very straightforward. It’s found in many bills brought before the House, especially private members’ bills. The section reads, “This Act comes into force on Proclamation.” I believe that the importance of this section lies in the fact that its inclusion gives government the time they need to implement the changes proposed through the legislation.

After all, with a government bill departments have often been working towards the changes long before they see the House, Mr. Chairman, and that’s not necessarily the case with private members’ bills. Therefore, the government is better prepared to implement the bill as soon as the debate concludes and the bill is passed by the Assembly.

However, with a private member’s bill, like the one before us today, the departments affected have not had time to adjust their processes to seamlessly transition in the changes proposed by the

legislation or to potentially tweak it, to work out any kinks that we may become aware of through deeper consultation with Albertans and stakeholders. As such, they need time to get things in order, so to speak.

Mr. Chairman, that’s where section 6 comes into play. With this section government can delay the passage of this bill until a point where they’re equipped to both implement it and enforce it. As I understand it, there really is no enforcement. There really are no consequences if you decide not to tick off a box or if you decide to tick off an undecided. That’s quite acceptable.

In order to understand why we need section 6 in place, we need to first look at the intention and goals of the amended bill. As stressed in second reading, the intent of Bill 201 is to increase the rate of organ donation in Alberta. Of course, this could save lives and reduce the costs in our health care system. However, it is the process that this bill proposes that truly warrants the need for section 6.

Mr. Chairman, Bill 201 proposes to increase organ donation rates by altering the way we are asked about organ donation. Under our current systems Albertans are not asked directly, and I think that would be a good change. I think it would be great to have a direct question asked to Albertans about their intent on organ donation and to encourage them to have that discussion with their families.

Conversely, the changes proposed by Bill 201 would make it so that a person would need to choose either yes, no, or undecided on the back of their Alberta health card. Seeing that there is no system in place to ask people this question today, there needs to be time to implement these changes.

As it stands right now, your health care card can be mailed to you, to your place of residence, when you turn 18, and there is no need to physically make a trip to apply for the card, which is good. But with the changes proposed by Bill 201, it may require that an individual pay a visit to a health-related facility and fill out some paperwork before receiving the health care card, and that maybe wouldn’t be such a great idea.

Mr. Chairman, this procedural change may require the organization of resources and staff, which cannot be done overnight. Therefore, the time allotment present in section 6 is clearly needed. Without this in place, this bill could come into effect before the resources to effectively administer the proposed changes are established.

Alternatively, this section could have been an arbitrary date, but I’m pleased to see the hon. member recognized the challenges that could be brought about by his proposed changes and has wisely opted to have this bill come into force upon proclamation and a little bit more due diligence.

Mr. Chairman, in addition to providing time to get the administration of a new health card in order, section 6 also allows time for our health care system to prepare for a possible increase in organ donation. If the intent of Bill 201 is successful, we could see a reasonable increase in organ donation rates throughout the province. Again, section 6 provides this time.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I’d like to point out that section 6 additionally is important because from the time a bill is passed to the time it is proclaimed, a great many things can change. Some things can transpire. New technologies, new treatments can come about. In essence, this section ensures sufficient time for implementation of the changes proposed by the hon. member and allows for the necessary system to be established to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the legislation.

I’m pleased to see section 6 included as part of the bill, I’m pleased to see the bill on the floor for discussion, and I’m pleased that the bill does not mandate that if you don’t respond, you are assumed to have responded yes. I’m encouraged that the bill is ask-

ing Albertans to make a decision and encouraging them to have that discussion with their family, which I think is a very positive step.

I'd like to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning for bringing that forward and for the hard work that he went to in drafting this bill.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill.

**Dr. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be quite brief. I've spoken twice already relating to the bill, and I won't reiterate what I have said. I am in support of the provisions of this bill because I think it would be a positive step to increasing the number of organs available for donation.

But I would like to clear up one thing. There seems to be a continuing misapprehension by some of the members in the House that in some way the directions given by a person antecedent to their death would be dispositive of the issue of what happens to their body. That is not the case. The next of kin always have control over the body of a deceased person. No organ donation could be made on the basis of one's wishes expressed on a donor card or a licence or an Alberta health card or any other form of indication.

What those are are expressions of one's wishes with respect to what would happen to one's body after the point of death. That's all they are. They are an expression of wishes. One would hope that the person attending to the body, the next of kin, would respect those wishes to some measure. I cannot see the difficulty in having one's wishes conveyed and communicated to those who are in actual legal control of the body after the point of death.

For those reasons, Mr. Chairman, I don't think that the oppositions that have been stated to the bill are well founded. I think that it's a positive measure, and it's one that we should support. I think it's a very, very positive thing for those who are waiting for organ donations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill.

**Mr. Fawcett:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is certainly an honour to rise today and share some of my thoughts about this particular bill, the Health Insurance Premiums (Health Card Donor Declaration) Amendment Act, 2011, brought forward by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning. I would like to thank the hon. member for his hard work on this bill and his dedication and passion to a subject that he along with many members of this House are very passionate about.

Of course, having effective policies in place for organ donation can increase donation rates, thereby saving lives, and that is something that I know every member of this House is very interested in. I know that I'll probably be cut off, Mr. Chairman, because of time, but I want to share my comments on this amendment bill, and that's in regard to section 1 of the health insurance premiums act, which states:

- (c.1) "certificate of registration" means
  - (a) a certificate of registration issued under this Act, or
  - (b) any other document prescribed by the regulations as being a certificate of registration for the purposes of this Act or the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act.

4:40

Mr. Chairman, this section is definitely not self-explanatory at first glance, so I'll try to explain this section piece by piece to provide clarity. As you look at what the definition of certificate of registration is, we have to look at the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act. According to section 4(5) of this act

a certificate of registration under the Health Insurance Premiums Act is proof, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that the person is a resident if the certificate was in effect at the time the service was provided to that person.

This proof of residence is, generally speaking, an Alberta health care insurance plan card.

In other words, what section 1, part (c.1) does is define a certificate of registration to be an Alberta health care card. This makes sense. After all, Mr. Chairman, Albertans are currently able to declare their wishes to donate organs by checking a box on the back of their Alberta health care card, so defining this certificate as an Alberta health care card is an obvious first step.

However, Mr. Chairman, this is not the end of the story. After all, under section 1 (c.1) has a clause which states that other documents can count as certificates of registration if prescribed in the regulations. This is an important provision. It's important because we're not familiar with mandatory declarations right here in Alberta, and as such we might find that there are better ways of implementing such a policy than requiring an individual's wishes to be filled out on the back of their Alberta health care card.

For example, Mr. Chairman, in New Jersey individuals are required to declare their organ donation wishes before applying for a driver's licence. While their policy is different than the one proposed in this Bill 201, as their policy only gives individuals a yes or a no option, it might be worth while to look into the efficacy of declaring organ donation on drivers' licences, which can be done in the regulations as a result of subsection (c.1) of this act.

Looking at even more jurisdictions, Mr. Chairman, one quickly discovers that there are a number of different ways whereby individuals can declare their donation wishes. Our neighbours just to the west of us, in British Columbia, for example, have an online and a by-mail registration system. For some of our provincial cousins to the east, in Prince Edward Island individuals can declare their wishes by placing a sticker on their health care card or having an engraving on their driver's licence. My point is that it's important that we are able to make changes to the definition of certificate of registration in the regulations so that we have flexibility to adopt the different policies to achieve the objectives of what the hon. member has put forward.

I think that with that, Mr. Chairman, in trying to provide some light on this particular section of the legislation, I'm going to conclude and allow the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning to conclude with some remarks on this bill in Committee of the Whole.

**The Deputy Chair:** Any other members wish to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

**Mr. Sandhu:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to rise today and close Committee of the Whole debate on Bill 201, the Health Insurance Premiums (Health Card Donor Declaration) Amendment Act, 2011.

Before I begin my comments today, I would first like to thank all the members that participated today and during the second reading debate. I would also like to thank all the members for supporting the amendment I introduced earlier.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the sections of this bill as amended work together effectively to address the intent of this bill. Section 22.1(1) clearly lays out that our health cards are to include three choices for organ donation: yes, no, and undecided. This three-choice approach does not compel people to choose their organ donation status if they are unprepared to do so, but it might encourage them to discuss their options with their loved ones.

In addition, section 21(h) states that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations “providing for any matter relating to the completion of declaration forms under section 22.1.” In my mind this section would be used to change the way we ask about donor status. So instead of mandating that everyone declare their organ donor status, we could through regulation require that we pose the question to every Albertan. After all, Mr. Chairman, asking the question is often enough to encourage people to choose to be an organ donor.

In closing, I would again like to thank all the members who have participated in this debate so far. I believe that the current wording of this bill accurately reflects my intention and the intention debated in second reading. This is a good bill, and I believe that it has the potential to save the lives of many people.

With that, I will conclude my comments and urge all members to support this bill as amended. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Deputy Chair:** Are you ready for the question on Bill 201, the Health Insurance Premiums (Health Card Donor Declaration) Amendment Act, 2011?

[The clauses of Bill 201 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair:** Opposed? That is carried.  
The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

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

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Mitzel in the chair]

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill.

**Mr. Fawcett:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports the following bill with some amendments: Bill 201.

**The Acting Speaker:** All those members of the Assembly who concur in the report, please say aye.

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

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

## Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

### Bill 203 Alberta Get Outdoors Weekend Act

**Mr. Rodney:** It is a beautiful day outside, and it seems spring has finally sprung. It's finally here. That's perfect timing to begin second reading debate on Bill 203, the Alberta Get Outdoors Weekend Act.

This legislation proposes that the second weekend of April, which has just passed, in every calendar year from this point forward would be known as Alberta get outdoors, or GO, weekend. The intent of the bill is to encourage Albertans to get outside to participate in their favourite outdoor activity or perhaps a new one

that would become a favourite outdoor activity while they are developing healthier lifestyles.

How do Albertans feel about this, Mr. Speaker? I'm very proud to tell you that I've received extremely positive feedback from Albertans all over the province who have given their full support to Bill 203. As a matter of fact, I've received over 100 letters of endorsement from across our fine province and across diverse demographics, including municipalities, recreation and sports clubs, seniors' councils, health organizations, and many other important groups. Obviously, they join me in the appreciation that this is a bill that would have a very positive impact on Albertans.

4:50

As we're all aware, Albertan winters can be brutally cold, and hibernating in our warm homes may seem more attractive than going outside a lot of the time. As a result of this, it can be very easy to slip into a routine of unhealthy lifestyle habits. Every day we hear about how things are getting worse and not better when it comes to excessive time on TVs, computers, video games, and the like, addictions, including workaholism, obesity, chronic disease, and all sorts of other health maladies at all ages. Of course, this results in unhealthy, unhappy Albertans as well as skyrocketing health care costs. We just can't ignore that.

We have a myriad of reasons to be very concerned about the level of inactivity of our friends and neighbours across the province, and that's why Bill 203 would be an effective instrument in getting Albertans outside to be active, especially after being cooped up for far too long over the winter months.

Mr. Speaker, living a balanced lifestyle, which includes being physically active, is in the best interest of all Albertans no matter what age they are. It's also in the best interest of every single one of us to continue to promote the value of increased outdoor and recreational activity. There is no doubt that active living leads to a longer life, reduced stress, and increased overall quality of life. Additionally, there is a direct link between active living and the reduction of a long list of preventable diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease. The list goes on, and it's a long one.

GO weekend would be a great educational tool in providing Albertans with another occasion to enhance their development in many different ways. According to research done at the University of Michigan, interacting with nature can help improve memory and attention by up to 20 per cent, and that's just one of the reasons that I like to walk to work whenever I can. Additionally, innumerable studies have proven that spending time outdoors can increase self-esteem and co-operation and leadership and conflict resolution as well as relationship-building skills. I'm sure we can all easily share personal stories along these lines. These benefits are critical for the physical, emotional, and mental fitness of children and adults.

For the record, Mr. Speaker – and I want to be clear on this to all my hon. colleagues – I know Bill 203 is not the final answer. It's not the only answer to the question as to how we ensure Albertans become more active, but that's not the intention of this bill. It's just one piece of the solution, and it complements other government initiatives that increase active living.

Mr. Speaker, when I was in the process of creating this bill years ago, I didn't see it simply as an opportunity for individuals to go outside and become active but, rather, as an opportunity for entire communities to get involved in the process and have some fun at the same time. It would encourage families and groups to work together to promote the value of increased outdoor and recreational activity, and this can be done easily through organizing neighbourhood events and activities.

These types of initiatives, which bring communities together, are not completely new to Alberta. For instance, Family Day in February and arts weekend in September have achieved great success in reaching their specific objectives. These dates have become an important part of creating community spirit throughout the province, and Bill 203 will do the same thing but in completely different ways.

Bill 203 has an additional advantage. It promotes our internal tourism sector while encouraging Albertans to go out and explore their pristine natural environment. With this weekend designated in April, it's the perfect start to acknowledging the kickoff of spring. It's the perfect time for Albertans to get outside and explore their beautiful province, including farms and forests and waterways, parklands, mountains, and so much more.

In the month of April people can be engaged in innumerable outdoor activities in Alberta. That's part of the reason it's this specific weekend. You can ski or snowboard. You can golf or hike and everything in between. Since Alberta offers these and countless other amazing outdoor opportunities, many who might have been thinking about leaving Alberta for the weekend or longer might just have the incentive to stay a little closer to home.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 203 fully supports government policies and programs already in place, including those currently promoting active living, balanced lifestyles, and our great outdoors. For example, the plan for parks and active Alberta policy frameworks contain elements that are complementary to Bill 203. The plan for parks introduces short- and long-term objectives that are structured to provide Albertans with healthy, sustainable, people-friendly recreational opportunities. Active Alberta, meanwhile, promotes a healthier standard of life for Albertans through recreation, active living, and sport.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, Bill 203 provides an invaluable opportunity for Albertans while positively impacting their lives and the lives of all their friends and neighbours on so many different levels. It's essential that we all continue to address the value that can be gained from living an outdoor and active lifestyle, spending time outside. Thankfully, we live in a province with a vast, beautiful backyard in which we can do exactly that.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that everyone here and everyone across the province must continue to inspire others to discover and value and enjoy our natural heritage as well as seek out the benefits that they provide for all generations. GO weekend is in the best interest of Albertans, and I strongly encourage all members, no matter where they sit in the House, to support Bill 203.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. I realize time is limited, but I'll get started on the record and look forward to continuing at the next opportunity. Bill 203, Alberta Get Outdoors Weekend Act, resonates with me to the same extent that the mushroom motion, that was passed years ago, had in terms of its relevance and importance. I do appreciate the hon. member emphasizing the importance for physical activity and getting out and going, but this piece of legislation also reminds me of the government mandating daily phys ed without supplying the equipment or the space for this daily phys ed to take place.

As a teacher of 34 years who coached a variety of sports – 25 years I spent coaching wrestling and numerous years coaching gymnastics, soccer, and a wide variety of other sports – I appreciate the getting-out-and-going circumstance. While I was an elementary teacher at Jerry Potts, one of my students' favourite get-out-and-go activities was running. Basically, as soon as the

weather got above the zero mark, I had the good fortune of easy-going Friday afternoons, when I could take any students who wished to run with me, primarily in grades 4, 5, and 6, on significantly long runs. One time we ran from Varsity to the zoo. Another time we ran from Varsity across Nose Hill to where I was living in Huntington Hills. We actually got out, as the bill is suggesting, for a particular weekend and enjoyed the outdoors.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also aware of the limitations of the time period that's being suggested for getting out and enjoying. The majority of Alberta's parks at this time of year are closed, so the getting-out-and-going opportunities are fairly limited. Yes, there is the potential, given this province's geography and climate, that some people may be out golfing. They may be using fluorescent orange balls on a frozen lake, or they could actually be out on a golf course if they're down in Medicine Hat and the floodwaters haven't risen to the point that you can no longer see the greens. These are concerns that I have, that simply saying so does not make it so.

Mr. Speaker, even the timing, in April, when the few parks are open: what I'm seeing is that Alberta's pristine wilderness is being gobbled up to a large extent. One of the parks that I thoroughly enjoyed camping at was Beaver Mines in the Castle-Crown, very close to Pincher Creek. I'm not looking forward to camping in a clear-cut. This lack of protection of our parks and protected areas: the erosion of the opportunity for individuals to get out and enjoy, as the hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed suggested, very much limits it. I've made the comment about not being able to roller skate in a buffalo herd. Well, you can't hike where there are quads. It's pretty hard to hike and enjoy the wilderness when it's being clear-cut logged or you've got noisy logging trucks at the same time as you've got camper trailers trying to use the same road to access the same wilderness. We can have the best laid plans in terms of getting out and going, but if your places are . . .

5:00

**The Acting Speaker:** I hesitate to interrupt the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, but the time limit for consideration of this item of business has concluded.

## Motions Other than Government Motions

### Child Exploitation Task Force

503. Mr. VanderBurg moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to consider establishing a task force to review legislation and programs related to child exploitation.

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne.

**Mr. VanderBurg:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and open the debate on Motion 503. I am proposing this motion because I believe that the safety of our children and communities is of the utmost importance.

Motion 503 simply urges the government to consider establishing a task force to review legislation and programs related to child exploitation. I believe that by doing this, the task force could identify areas in the legislation that could be strengthened and/or updated to ensure that all programs are as effective as possible. Not only could this task force increase the identification and apprehension of perpetrators, but it could also raise awareness about child exploitation and be educational for both parents and children. In this way this task force would help to ensure that children are protected from sexual exploitation, thereby helping to ensure safe communities.

Mr. Speaker, I know that this government has implemented many initiatives, legislation, and programs necessary to protect Alberta's children from exploitation. For instance, this government has created the Alberta integrated child exploitation units, or ICE, as some refer to it, that investigate child luring on the Internet, child pornography, child voyeurism, and child sex tourism.

In addition, Alberta has the Amber Alert program and the Alberta child and youth initiative. The Alberta child and youth initiative involves various ministries such as Children and Youth Services, Education, Health and Wellness, Justice and Attorney General, and the Solicitor General and Public Security. Together these ministries work to address the prevention of child and youth sexual exploitation, not to mention the Alberta Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, which is the legal authority for providing child intervention services in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, as the list goes on, it's evident that Alberta is a leader when it comes to protecting our children. I would like to commend and thank this government for its continued efforts in ensuring that our children and communities are safe. That being said, Motion 503 would only enhance and build upon the initiatives that this government has already brought forward.

Child exploitation is an ongoing issue that's increasingly becoming of more concern. Sharing child pornography and engaging in child luring and trafficking are social issues that have grown with access to the Internet. For example, a report from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection released in November of 2009 indicates that Canada is amongst the top five countries hosting websites depicting or selling materials involving child sexual abuse, ranking third behind the United States and Russia. This organization received 7,846 reports in 2008, 89.6 per cent of which were child pornography. Statistics Canada reports that in 2008 there were 1,408 child pornography violations under the Criminal Code across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a parent, and as well I'm a grandparent, and these statistics are both alarming and frightening and sometimes sickening. This task force would continue to consult with stakeholders, families, and community groups in order to do everything possible to protect the innocent. This task force could help bring together new and innovative ideas for tackling this growing problem.

As a new grandparent of two little girls I realize now more than ever the potential risks that are out there, especially when it comes to the Internet. As we all know, our lives have become heavily reliant on Internet use. The Internet is a medium in which we can all view information from anywhere in the world, and this is where the problem lies. Internet usage becomes a way of life and so does the potential risk for child exploitation. Children increasingly have access to the Internet, and the fact is that parents cannot be with their children 24/7 to ensure that they are using the Internet in a safe manner.

Mr. Speaker, this task force could provide an informative perspective for ensuring that government programs and legislation are effectively working the way they were intended. Further, it could help educate parents, children, and communities by providing invaluable information. The task force could also indirectly inform families and children of the programs and initiatives that are currently available to them and for them.

It's been difficult to obtain a complete picture of child abuse in Canada because it often remains hidden. I believe that this proposed task force could help identify the true magnitude of the problem as well as come up with additional solutions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to other comments on this motion.

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

**Mr. Chase:** Thank you. Obviously – well, I would hope it's obvious – I support any legislation designed to protect children and prevent them from exploitation.

I'd like to just go over a little bit of history and give credit where credit is due. In 2007 the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek sponsored an amendment act that changed the title and scope of an existing act to become the Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act. The act was previously the Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act. The stated purposes of the amendment act were to recognize that children involved in prostitution are victims of sexual abuse and to allow police and caseworkers to remove sexually exploited children from dangerous situations to ensure their safety and well-being.

Children and Youth Services, which administers the act, explains the provision as follows.

Under the legislation, sexually exploited children and youth involved in prostitution can access a variety of voluntary community services including medical assistance, drug and alcohol counseling, psychological services, educational programming, placement resources and life skills support.

A child who does not want to end his or her involvement in prostitution can be apprehended by police or a child protection worker. The police or child protection worker would then take the child to a safe, secured facility, where the child can be confined for up to five days.

It's PCHAD that allows that to happen.

At this safe, secured facility, the child receives emergency care, treatment and an assessment. The development of a long-term plan to assist the child to exit prostitution [occurs.]

Under the act, those who exploit children can be charged with child sexual abuse and fined up to \$25,000, jailed for up to two years, or both.

During the debate on the amendments all parties supported the legislation, and I raised concerns about the need to expand legislation to other forms of sexual exploitation in addition to prostitution.

Mr. Speaker, in my questions today I had spoken not only to a father of a 15-year-old girl this morning face to face, but I had spent quite a bit of time on Thursday and Friday dealing with the fact that this young lady, this young 15-year-old, was being exploited. My concerns were that although the police had seen this young lady in certain drug houses, they had no ability to pick her up and detain her. Even though she previously had PCHAD orders, this young lady was not in a secure facility long enough for any assessment to take place or any supportive programs to occur.

5:10

In this particular case there was sexual abuse in her birth family that went back three generations. The mother was addicted; she suffered from bipolar. The young lady's brother ended up in a mental institution in Britain. This young lady, who, as I say, went through a very difficult family circumstance, was taken into custody when she was just two years old, into the care of a foster family, and there was concern about the nature of the foster care. She was adopted by a loving family that moved from England to the Edmonton region. When she hit age 14, which is the age at which 40 per cent of mental illness shows up for those who succumb to degrees of mental illness, she had a series of problems. Her parents reached out to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, to the ministry of health, and to the Ministry of Justice, but despite the intentions of previous bills and to the extent that I see in this bill, there was no ability to apprehend this young lady and, once apprehended, keep her in a secured facility long enough for an assessment to take place.



In talking with a member of Alberta Health Services, who was very informative – and I thanked the woman in my responses to the questions to the minister of health – she indicated that probably the best shot a person had at getting a child apprehended who has been exploited or who basically is out there potentially doing drugs, potentially doing tricks is called a form 1. If a psychiatrist has sufficient time to do an assessment, they can create a form 1, which will then allow Children and Youth Services or the police services to apprehend the child.

But there's a catch, Mr. Speaker. Within the 24-hour period that that person is apprehended, another psychiatrist has to do a follow-up assessment to confirm that this individual is suffering from the mental illness or the exploitation that Motion 503 is talking about. If that is the case, then there can be a 30-day treatment period – assessment, treatment, support for families – in a lock-up, in a secured circumstance.

My concern, Mr. Speaker, is that whether it's sexual exploitation, whether it's drugs, regardless of the type of exploitation, our children are extremely vulnerable. I thank the Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne for putting this forward, but we have not exercised the degree of the law allowed to us in the previous legislation, and I am not convinced, despite all of the good intentions being put forward in this motion, that this is going to accomplish what we're trying to achieve.

There are far too many youth, Mr. Speaker, who are out there vulnerable. The idea that a justice can basically sentence a child to the street – that was the case with this 15-year old, where he didn't feel that it was necessary for her to receive secured treatment. In the case of a Canmore judge because there were no treatment facilities available, he had to let a young man in a similar circumstance go free.

Mr. Speaker, in order to avoid the sexual exploitation in a proactive way, I believe this motion will assist, but we have to deal with the fact that there are a number of homeless children wandering our streets, some who have pushed the limits to such an extent that they've exited from their homes, some based on abuse, others on an overwhelming number of circumstances. Addictions, hereditary circumstances such as the bipolar that I mentioned, prevent these young individuals from getting the help they need. Ideally, through education, through protection we would not find these children subject to the rules of the street.

Mr. Speaker, as I say, Children and Youth Services, Alberta Health, and Justice have all been involved in trying to prevent further exploitation of the young 15-year-old girl that I talked about before, and I do not see specific teeth in this motion that are going to change the current situation. While I support it and while I realize that a motion is just a suggestion, an intent, a direction that is being recommended to government, I believe that government legislation has to change.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

**Ms Redford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to join debate on Motion 503, which urges the government to establish a task force to review all legislation and programs related to child exploitation. This is a forward-thinking idea. It's what Legislatures should be doing, and I'm very pleased to support it today.

We know that child abuse and exploitation are serious problems in our society, problems which have only gotten worse with the advent of the Internet. Mr. Speaker, this government continues to do everything it possibly can to protect Alberta children from these heinous crimes. Over the years we've passed legislation like

the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, which helps us to fight child exploitation. Essentially, this act requires any person who has reasonable and probable grounds to suspect that a child is in need of protection to report the matter to the appropriate authorities. What's more, the act lays out a clear definition of what it considers to be child sexual abuse or exploitation, which is consistent with the Canadian Department of Justice. Therefore, it is indirectly mandated through that act that child pornography or any other form of exploitation be reported at once.

In addition, Alberta has several initiatives, all of which work together with existing legislation to help put an end to these crimes. One example is the Alberta integrated child exploitation unit, or ICE, which is a joint effort by the Alberta RCMP and the police services of Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat. The unit consists of a north team and a south team which address concerns with Crown prosecutors that are directly related to child exploitation. The ICE unit has been in place since 2006, and it works regularly with law enforcement agencies from across Canada. What's disappointing is that between January 2007 and December 2009 ICE investigated 917 files and, more importantly, laid 466 charges as a result.

Mr. Speaker, while the government is doing good work to address child exploitation and abuse in our province, this motion will take us further. This motion will help us to establish a task force that will conduct a comprehensive assessment of these initiatives in order to look for ways to further enhance and strengthen the measures that we have already put in place. It will seek to avoid duplication. It will be able to review how we currently are spending money with respect to programming. It will help us as Albertans to decide whether or not we are doing everything as effectively as we should to protect children in this province.

Albertans can rest assured that we have effective and efficient mechanisms in place, but the protection of children and youth here in Alberta is of highest priority to everyone. We can do more, and as Albertans we are asking our Legislature to explore how we can not only do more but how we can do it better. We can strive to do more because the fact remains that despite our best efforts to date children continue to be victimized. I know that each and every one of my hon. colleagues finds this unacceptable.

5:20

Establishing a task force to review current legislation and initiatives aimed at preventing child exploitation and bringing perpetrators to justice will ensure that government is doing everything it can to put an end to such terrible crimes. If nothing else, Mr. Speaker, this task force's findings could reaffirm that we are doing everything we can to protect children, but my expectation is that we will continue to find new ideas. We have to look to other jurisdictions. We have to look to other people that are stakeholders in this process. We have to continue to deal with the sorts of technology that are being used to exploit children today. We always need to be seeking new ideas. It is an ongoing and evolving issue. The task force that is proposed by Motion 503 is yet another tool that will better protect our children and our communities from harm.

I'd like to thank the hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne for bringing forward this important motion, and I'd ask everyone in the House to support it. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mrs. Forsyth:** Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I rise to give my support to Motion 503, put forward by the hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne. The motion calls for government to

consider establishing a task force to review legislation and programs related to child exploitation. I certainly appreciate the member's concerns for the welfare of children because I probably spent my entire working life working with children and the vulnerable, from being a drug and alcohol counsellor to the private member's bill I brought forward on the Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act, which was a first in North America and passed in this Legislature after the former Premier, from Calgary-Elbow, called me one day and told me that he was bringing it from a private member's bill to Bill 1 in this Legislature, which is probably one of the proudest moments I have had as a sitting MLA.

As it was indicated earlier, PCHIP, as it got to be known, recognizes that children in the sex trade are actually victims of sexual abuse and gives them the support that they need, establishing safe houses so that they can receive emergency care, treatment, and assessment for long-term changes in their lives. It's a bill that aggressively pursued the predators. Penalties for pimps and johns included fines up to \$25,000 and jail time.

In my time as the Solicitor General, Mr. Speaker, I was proud to guide two very important initiatives through the Legislature: the high-risk offender website and brought the Amber Alert to Canada, first to Alberta and then worked very diligently to bring it forward to the rest of the provinces in Canada. Now it's Canada-wide. The goal behind that is that knowledge is power to ensure community safety. When you have a high-risk offender leaving a correctional facility for the community, local residents can and will be notified. If a child is abducted, it doesn't necessarily have to be a high-risk offender. It could be a parent. Very, very strict criteria when we issue an Amber Alert – Alberta was proud to be the first province in Canada – when a child goes missing.

From there we went to Children's Services and brought forward another piece of legislation that was a first in the country, the Drug-endangered Children Act. This act made it clear that children exposed to serious drug activities are victims of child abuse and need to be taken out of houses where there are toxic chemicals that are endangering their health.

In 2009, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to have tabled and guided amendments to the Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act. These amendments were extending the time that a child could stay in treatment. I was very proud at that particular time as a Progressive Conservative to be able to bring these amendments forward.

What I can't understand, Mr. Speaker, is the lack of progress on child exploitation in the last few years. The former Justice minister, the Member for Calgary-Elbow, stood up and gave a very, very passionate speech about what she believes needs to be done in this province and how she envisions things. What I find ironic, to be very honest with you, is that it's the same minister that when we passed the mandatory reporting of child pornography in this Legislature – and it did pass in this Legislature under her guidance and leadership – did not proclaim the bill. The same minister was aware of the PCHIP legislation and the amendments that were passed in this Legislature. The same Minister of Justice has not guided that amendment or that piece of legislation through.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I find it quite unacceptable, some of the legislation that has been put in this House that hasn't been passed in recent times. I alluded to the PCHIP legislation. We all know that children who are abusing drugs are probably at highest risk and most vulnerable in regard to sexual exploitation. They need to be clean and they need to be sober so that they can get their life on track. To this day, two years later, it still hasn't been proclaimed. These are laws that are going to help our children who are very, very vulnerable. They need to get the help that we've promised.

I am very proud to be able to stand up and support the motion from the Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne because, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I know that his heart is in the right place. I know that of anybody in this particular Legislature he is one that will push to get the job done. I'm extremely proud to be able to say that because I've gotten to know him over the last several years, and I know that when he puts his mind to something, he gets it done.

It's important that this motion pass. As he alluded to, he's a dad; he's a granddad to two young girls. I think he realizes how quickly the world is changing and how quickly sexual exploitation is changing. We've got cellphone sex; we've got truck-stop sex. I have trouble even trying to keep up with some of the stuff that is currently going on in this world.

Like the Member for Calgary-Varsity, I can tell you that I get the calls. The police refer people to me; parents call. We're in a similar situation where we're dealing with a young lady that's 15, and we're dealing with a young man that's 12. Finding them is one thing. Getting them help is another, and trying to get them into a secure treatment facility – the wonderful, wonderful, wonderful people within the department of children and family services have tried all they can to get these children help. While they're able to get them some sort of help, like the hon. member mentioned, it's a form 1 in regard to dealing with some of their mental illness, whether it's from a psychiatrist or a psychologist. All of these things can be done to protect our children.

I hope that this motion passes. Quite frankly, I hope the Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne is given the task of chairing this particular task force. I know that he's one member in this Legislature that will research what's going on not only in this country but what's new, what's innovative, what the children need to do, what needs to be done to help the children. When I was working the streets – and I always hate to use this terminology because everybody all of a sudden thinks that, you know, you were involved in prostitution – I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I spent thousands of hours on the street meeting with kids, establishing relationships with the kids, being able to sit down and have coffee with them, share a smoke, have a pizza with them, and find out exactly what their thoughts were.

A compelling story for me is a young lady that we picked up under PCHIP for the 13th time. She was shooting coke between her toes. I thought that this was one that we were probably going to have to write off. Well, whatever clicked, the 13th time it worked. They tell you not to get involved in these particular situations because your heart gets torn away by these kids so often. Anyhow, I decided to follow this young lady, had her join children's services, because she was doing so well, so that she could bring her stories to other children that were dealing with the same situation.

5:30

Finally, we brought together a task force when we were reviewing the PCHIP legislation – what was right, what was wrong – and invited her to come. Then she asked me if she could speak. We'd never put any of the kids front and centre because our role was not to use them. I said: if that's what you want, you're more than welcome to be able to do that. With 350 people at this conference – and we're talking hard-core cops that have been around forever, people within Justice – she told her stories about how she got involved . . . [Mrs. Forsyth's speaking time expired]

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill.

**Dr. Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and make a few remarks on Motion 503. I would like to thank my colleague the hon. Member for Whitecourt-Ste. Anne

for bringing the idea forward. The motion calls upon the House to urge the government to review legislation and programs relating to child exploitation. I would suggest that if such a review were carried out, it might help to identify areas in the legislation that should be strengthened or updated in order to ensure that all of our programs are as effective as they possibly can be. The review might be conducted through a specific task force or a committee.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to addressing issues such as child exploitation, it behooves us as legislators to remain vigilant at all times about making sure that we're doing everything in our power to keep children safe and that they are protected from those who would exploit them and from sexual predators.

Mr. Speaker, one special area of growing concern, which has been the subject of a lot of attention in recent years, is the exploitation of children through the use of the Internet. We have learned a lot about how that exploitation is being carried out, things like sharing child pornography, luring children into abusive relationships and abuse, and child trafficking. All of these things are problems which may arise on the Internet, and they all are abhorrent, of course, to our society. We must fight them with increased vigilance and using increasingly sophisticated means of detecting them and increasing sophistication on the part of the law enforcement agencies in how they apprehend and pursue people that are doing this exploitation.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the public also has a huge role in stopping Internet-related child exploitation. According to cybertip.ca, which is a national tip line for reporting sexual predators or suspicious online communications, they receive somewhere over 600 reports per month relating to possible sexual exploitation of children on the Internet. According to one source 21 per cent of children report having met someone in person whom they first encountered online. Those are surprising and disturbing figures, and they demand our full attention and that of all Alberta parents and the public at large.

Mr. Speaker, there is widespread public concern over exploitation of children. One survey reported that over 92 per cent of Canadians are concerned about child pornography being distributed on the Internet and that 72 per cent of Canadians believe that if someone wanted to access child pornography online, it would be very easy to do so.

Child exploitation and abduction also ranks second in the top three concerns facing Canadian children as assessed by Canadian parents. Mr. Speaker, because of the difficulty in monitoring the Internet due to the very nature of the communications, it's difficult if not impossible to catch all of the graphic content that is out there on the web and all of the sites and communications which are attempting to lure children into abusive relationships and so on. That's why it's so important to raise awareness and to educate people and to seek the vigilance of the online community, all of us, so that we can track down the miscreants who are perpetrating these acts and get to them before the criminal acts occur.

Currently most Canadian parents are using outdated, ineffective information to teach their children about personal safety when they're on the Internet. Mr. Speaker, 74 per cent of children have reported that an adult is never present when they go online. In homes without rules about Internet use, it is so important to talk about these issues with children. I would suggest that if Motion 503 is passed, it would encourage us to have a very thorough discussion of what measures might be taken to reduce child exploitation, to look at the various measures that we might take that maybe aren't being pursued today.

For all of those reasons I would urge all of the members in the Assembly to support Motion 503.

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, do you wish to speak?

**Mr. Hehr:** Sure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege to speak to this Motion 503, a motion that urges this Assembly to put together a task force to explore ways to reduce child exploitation in this province. How can anyone really disagree with the intent of that motion? We've heard from many people, you know, on the abhorrent nature of the act and, of course, how we want to protect our youth and children from this type of exploitation. We've also heard how the Internet and modern technology make it, in my view, easier than ever for people to exploit children. This is a very difficult thing to stand for, so I again applaud him for bringing this motion forward.

I would hope, you know, whether it's a task force or whether we maybe could put to use our all-party committee on, I believe, crime and safety, this would be one of those things to get that committee to work to review legislation and see some best practices. I believe that that would be probably the place to send it instead of creating a new specific task force to actually do that work. I think that would be a great place to start.

You know, we have a Solicitor General and a Minister of Justice, who are deeply in tune with the police and the experts out there who bring this information to them on a regular basis. One would assume that they're getting a good briefing from the people who are out on the streets as to what's needed, so one might ask whether this is, for all intents and purposes, needed. Nevertheless, I do understand erring on the side of caution, and if this committee or a task force could bring in one good law or one good assessment that saved a child from exploitation, well, why not?

Again, just for the sake of cost savings, I would urge that this work be done by an existing all-party committee, not necessarily by a new task force set up. I believe they are already established, already being paid for their work, and ready and able and willing to do that work. It would be nice to see this motion maybe sent over in their direction.

Those are my comments. May we as a province remain vigilant against child exploitation, and this is a motion that goes to show that we remain on guard against that vile happening within this province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

5:40

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill.

**Mr. Fawcett:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise to speak to Motion 503, the motion that is being proposed by the hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne. It's also an honour to stand up and speak with the same voice as those of other passionate advocates in this Assembly like the hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow or the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek. My neighbour to the left here – and I mean that literally, not figuratively – is also very passionate about that. The intent behind this motion is to ensure that our legislation is up to date and that it is an effective tool in preventing the crime of child exploitation.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to go off on a little bit of a side note here as to why I think this motion is so important and something that we probably don't do enough of as a Legislature and as a government, and that is constantly reviewing some of the laws and some of the programs that we have put in place to deal with some of the challenges that we face. We've heard a number of speakers today already very eloquently articulate the fact that technology in this area has particularly made us much more aware of the challenges facing the area of child exploitation, and that technology is

always advancing and always moving forward. We need to make sure that our legislation and our programs as a government are keeping up with those changes. So that's something that I think is a very, very important aspect of the motion brought forward by the hon. member.

The motion does not propose to alter or create any legislation, rather to ensure that the legislation that we have currently in place is working the way that it was intended. Again, Mr. Speaker, it goes back to some old work that I used to do, and that's sort of program evaluation type work. Quite often we as a government bring in legislation and bring in programs that were intended to deal with a particular issue. In this case, the hon. member's motion focuses on legislation and programs related to child exploitation. It's very, very important in anything that you do in government to periodically go back and review those to make sure that they're actually doing the job that you had intended them to do. If not, then make the requisite changes. If so, celebrate some of the successes that you've had and maybe look to improve upon those or see if there are any gaps that are missing. Again, this is something that I believe this motion does intend to do and is something that I think is very worthy of supporting.

In my mind, a key to understanding this motion is first to understand the programs and the legislation that we currently have in place. After all, without this information in hand, it would be difficult to determine the need or effectiveness of the task force proposed in Motion 503. Mr. Speaker, upon quick review it's obvious that Alberta is a leader in this particular area when it comes to protecting our children.

We have several acts designed to both find and target child crime, most notable of which is the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act. The fundamental idea behind this particular act, Mr. Speaker, is that if a person has reasonable or probable grounds to suspect that a child is in need of protection, they are mandated and must report that to the appropriate authorities. In essence, if you see a child in need, you are required by law to tell somebody.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to this legislation we also have several programs in Alberta designed to address child exploitation. One such example are the Alberta ICE teams, or the Alberta integrated child exploitation teams. These teams are made up of police services from all around the province as well as members of the RCMP. They are broken up into two groups, one covering the north and one covering the south part of this province. These teams' role is to focus on and specifically target the crime of child exploitation. This includes the manufacturing and distribution of child pornography, child luring, and the child sex trade.

In addition to the ICE teams we also have the Prevention of Child and Youth Sexual Exploitation Committee. The committee is designed to co-ordinate the protection of children across ministries. They help ensure that programs and policies designed to prevent child exploitation are integrated and effective. Again I would assume that the task force that the hon. member is proposing will probably work very closely with this particular committee and review some of the work that it has done. To this end, that committee does pay close attention to four basic principles – education, prevention, enforcement, and training – again, stuff that needs to be integrated into the work of this particular task force that the hon. member is proposing.

Mr. Speaker, the final program I'd like to touch on today is the Alberta Amber Alert program. Obviously, members of this House are familiar with that as well. This program is used in cases of

child abduction or suspected child abduction. Under the Amber Alert program law enforcement, the media, and voluntary broadcasters are linked together to enact an emergency public warning system. This is basically a call to all Albertans to look for and report if they have witnessed the missing child in question. While this program is designed to help in all cases of child abduction, not just those related to exploitation, it has been effectively used to stop the particular crime that the hon. member is addressing through his motion.

Mr. Speaker, I've only touched briefly on some of the programs offered by this government to address these horrible crimes that are thrust onto our children, and that's just a sad, sad reality that we as legislators have to deal with. Much more could be done and spent investigating the work of these important groups and likely should for the reasons that I stated in the beginning. We must never rest on our laurels. We must always make sure that the legislation and programs that we deliver on behalf of our citizens, on behalf of our children are reaching the objectives that they were intended to do and that there are no loopholes or cracks for anybody to fall through. We must be diligent in that particular quest.

In my mind, Motion 503 is a continuation of that dedication towards helping our children, those most in need and those likely to be exploited by those with unsavory desires or ambitions when it comes to our children. Again I applaud the hon. member for his dedication to protecting the children of our province.

With that, I'll conclude my remarks and look forward to the remainder of the debate from other members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Any other members wish to speak?

Seeing none, I'd invite the hon. Member for Whitecourt-St. Anne to close debate.

**Mr. VanderBurg:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you all. The goal of the motion is to ensure that our children and communities are as safe as possible. I believe this motion could increase the identification and apprehension of perpetrators as well as raise the awareness about child exploitation. A child's innocence is a great virtue to have, and I want to do everything possible to make sure no one steals it away from them.

Mr. Speaker, this government has taken and continues to take a leadership role in ensuring that our communities are safe, which is one of the reasons why Alberta is an excellent place to live and raise a family. I value and respect my colleagues' comments regarding Motion 503, and I thank them all for it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion Other than Government Motion 503 carried]

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

**Mr. Renner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that that concludes the business for this afternoon, I would like to move that the House now stand adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

**The Acting Speaker:** The policy field committee will reconvene tonight at 6:30 for consideration of the main estimates of the Solicitor General and Public Safety. The meeting will be video streamed.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:50 p.m. to Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.]





## Table of Contents

Prayers .....	563
In Memoriam	
Micheline Gravel .....	563
Introduction of Visitors .....	563
Introduction of Guests .....	563
Members' Statements	
Hate Crime Awareness Day.....	564
Calgary Airport Tunnel .....	565
Cold Lake Ice Junior B Hockey Team.....	573
Stony Plain Habitat for Humanity Project .....	574
Tomorrow Project for Cancer Research .....	574
Child Care Awards of Excellence.....	574
Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board Awards .....	575
Oral Question Period	
Patient Advocacy by Physicians.....	565, 567
Education Funding.....	566
Lower Athabasca Regional Plan.....	566, 568
NHL Arena Funding.....	567
CCSVI Observational Study.....	568
CCSVI Clinical Trials .....	568
Safe and Secure Affordable Housing.....	569
Registry Service Fees for Municipalities.....	569, 570
Royal Alberta Museum Development .....	570, 571
PDD Administrative Review .....	571
Mental Illness Treatment Services for Children .....	571
Water Quality Monitoring in the Oil Sands.....	572
Exemption from Municipal Zoning.....	572
Gull Lake Water Level Stabilization Project.....	573
Infrastructure Costs .....	573
Tabling Returns and Reports .....	575
Tablings to the Clerk .....	576
Orders of the Day .....	576
Written Questions	
Alberta Health Services RN Turnover Rate.....	576
Foreign-trained Physician Recruitment .....	576
Foreign-trained RN Recruitment .....	576
Drilling Royalty Credit Program .....	576
Crown Land Sold for Agricultural Use.....	577
Motions for Returns	
Bitumen Valuation.....	577
Conventional Oil Valuation .....	578
Natural Gas Valuation .....	578
Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders	
Committee of the Whole	
Bill 201 Health Insurance Premiums (Health Card Donor Declaration) Amendment Act, 2011 .....	579
Second Reading	
Bill 203 Alberta Get Outdoors Weekend Act.....	588
Motions Other than Government Motions	
Child Exploitation Task Force.....	589

If your address is incorrect, please clip on the dotted line, make any changes, and return to the address listed below. To facilitate the update, please attach the last mailing label along with your account number.

Subscriptions  
Legislative Assembly Office  
1001 Legislature Annex  
9718 – 107 Street  
EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E4

.....

Last mailing label:

Account # \_\_\_\_\_

New information:

Name:

Address:

.....

Subscription information:

Annual subscriptions to the paper copy of *Alberta Hansard* (including annual index) are \$127.50 including GST if mailed once a week or \$94.92 including GST if picked up at the subscription address below or if mailed through the provincial government interdepartmental mail system. Bound volumes are \$121.70 including GST if mailed. Cheques should be made payable to the Minister of Finance.

Price per issue is \$0.75 including GST.

Online access to *Alberta Hansard* is available through the Internet at [www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca)

Subscription inquiries:

Subscriptions  
Legislative Assembly Office  
1001 Legislature Annex  
9718 – 107 St.  
EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E4  
Telephone: 780.427.1302

Other inquiries:

Managing Editor  
*Alberta Hansard*  
1001 Legislature Annex  
9718 – 107 St.  
EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E4  
Telephone: 780.427.1875