



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday morning, April 6, 2016

Day 10

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Second Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (ND), Speaker
Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (ND), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (ND), Deputy Chair of Committees

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| Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (W) | Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (ND) |
| Anderson, Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (ND) | MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W) |
| Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (W) | Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (ND) |
| Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (ND) | Mason, Hon. Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (ND), Government House Leader |
| Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W) | McCuaig-Boyd, Hon. Margaret, Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (ND) |
| Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (ND), Deputy Government House Leader | McIver, Ric, Calgary-Hays (PC), Leader of the Progressive Conservative Opposition |
| Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (ND), Deputy Government House Leader | McKittrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (ND) |
| Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (ND) | McLean, Hon. Stephanie V., Calgary-Varsity (ND) |
| Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (ND) | McPherson, Karen M., Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (ND) |
| Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP) | Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (ND) |
| Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (ND) | Miranda, Hon. Ricardo, Calgary-Cross (ND) |
| Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (ND) | Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (ND) |
| Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W), Official Opposition House Leader | Nixon, Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W), Official Opposition Whip |
| Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (ND), Government Whip | Notley, Hon. Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND), Premier |
| Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W), Official Opposition Deputy Whip | Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (W) |
| Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (ND) | Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (W) |
| Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (ND) | Payne, Hon. Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (ND) |
| Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (ND) | Phillips, Hon. Shannon, Lethbridge-West (ND) |
| Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC), Progressive Conservative Opposition Whip | Piquette, Colin, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (ND) |
| Eggen, Hon. David, Edmonton-Calder (ND) | Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (W) |
| Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (PC) | Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (ND) |
| Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (ND) | Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC) |
| Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (W) | Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (ND) |
| Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (ND) | Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (ND) |
| Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC) | Schmidt, Hon. Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (ND) |
| Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (ND) | Schneider, David A., Little Bow (W) |
| Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (ND) | Schreiner, Kim, Red Deer-North (ND) |
| Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (PC) | Shepherd, David, Edmonton-Centre (ND) |
| Gray, Hon. Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (ND) | Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (ND) |
| Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W), Official Opposition Deputy House Leader | Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (W) |
| Hinkley, Bruce, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (ND) | Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC), Progressive Conservative Opposition House Leader |
| Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (ND) | Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W) |
| Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (ND) | Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (W) |
| Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (W) | Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (ND) |
| Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (PC) | Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL) |
| Jean, Brian Michael, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (W), Leader of the Official Opposition | Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (W) |
| Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND) | Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND) |
| Kleinstauber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND) | van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W) |
| Larivee, Hon. Danielle, Lesser Slave Lake (ND) | Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND), Deputy Government Whip |
| Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (ND) | Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND) |
| Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W) | Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (W) |
| Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND) | Vacant, Calgary-Greenway |

Party standings:

New Democrat: 54 Wildrose: 22 Progressive Conservative: 8 Alberta Liberal: 1 Alberta Party: 1 Vacant: 1

Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

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| Robert H. Reynolds, QC, Clerk | Philip Massolin, Manager of Research Services | Chris Caughell, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms |
| Shannon Dean, Senior Parliamentary Counsel/Director of House Services | Nancy Robert, Research Officer | Gordon H. Munk, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms |
| Stephanie LeBlanc, Parliamentary Counsel and Legal Research Officer | Brian G. Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms | Janet Schwegel, Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i> |

Executive Council

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| Rachel Notley | Premier, President of Executive Council |
| Sarah Hoffman | Deputy Premier, Minister of Health |
| Deron Bilous | Minister of Economic Development and Trade |
| Oneil Carlier | Minister of Agriculture and Forestry |
| Joe Ceci | President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance |
| David Eggen | Minister of Education |
| Richard Feehan | Minister of Indigenous Relations |
| Kathleen T. Ganley | Minister of Justice and Solicitor General |
| Christina Gray | Minister of Labour, Minister Responsible for Democratic Renewal |
| Danielle Larivee | Minister of Municipal Affairs |
| Brian Mason | Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Transportation |
| Margaret McCuaig-Boyd | Minister of Energy |
| Stephanie V. McLean | Minister of Service Alberta, Minister of Status of Women |
| Ricardo Miranda | Minister of Culture and Tourism |
| Brandy Payne | Associate Minister of Health |
| Shannon Phillips | Minister of Environment and Parks, Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office |
| Irfan Sabir | Minister of Human Services |
| Marlin Schmidt | Minister of Advanced Education |
| Lori Sigurdson | Minister of Seniors and Housing |

STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Ms Miller
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Schreiner

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| Cyr | McKitrick |
| Dang | Taylor |
| Ellis | Turner |
| Horne | |

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. Sucha
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schneider

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| Anderson, S. | Hunter |
| Carson | Jansen |
| Connolly | Panda |
| Coolahan | Piquette |
| Dach | Schreiner |
| Fitzpatrick | Taylor |
| Gotfried | |

Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee

Chair: Mrs. Littlewood
Deputy Chair: Ms Miller

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| Anderson, W. | Nielsen |
| Clark | Nixon |
| Connolly | Renaud |
| Cortes-Vargas | Starke |
| Cyr | Sucha |
| Drever | Swann |
| Jansen | van Dijken |
| Loyola | |

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Goehring
Deputy Chair: Mr. Smith

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| Drever | Pitt |
| Hinkley | Rodney |
| Horne | Shepherd |
| Jansen | Swann |
| Luff | Westhead |
| McPherson | Yao |
| Orr | |

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Shepherd
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

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| Cooper | Littlewood |
| Ellis | Nixon |
| Horne | van Dijken |
| Jabbour | Woollard |
| Kleinsteuber | |

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Wanner
Deputy Chair: Cortes-Vargas

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| Cooper | McIver |
| Dang | Nixon |
| Fildebrandt | Piquette |
| Jabbour | Schreiner |
| Luff | |

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Ms McPherson
Deputy Chair: Mr. Connolly

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| Anderson, W. | Kleinsteuber |
| Babcock | McKitrick |
| Drever | Rosendahl |
| Drysdale | Stier |
| Fraser | Strankman |
| Hinkley | Sucha |
| Kazim | |

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Ms Fitzpatrick
Deputy Chair: Ms Babcock

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| Carson | Loyola |
| Coolahan | McPherson |
| Cooper | Nielsen |
| Ellis | Schneider |
| Goehring | Starke |
| Hanson | van Dijken |
| Kazim | |

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. Fildebrandt
Deputy Chair: Mr. S. Anderson

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| Barnes | Luff |
| Cyr | Malkinson |
| Dach | Miller |
| Fraser | Renaud |
| Goehring | Turner |
| Gotfried | Westhead |
| Hunter | |

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Loyola
Deputy Chair: Mr. Loewen

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| Aheer | Kleinsteuber |
| Babcock | MacIntyre |
| Clark | Malkinson |
| Dang | Nielsen |
| Drysdale | Rosendahl |
| Hanson | Woollard |
| Kazim | |

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

9 a.m.

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good morning.

Let us bow our heads, contemplate, and/or pray in the manner in which each of us chooses. Let us prioritize our duties in this Assembly in order that we can properly fulfill the requests of all Albertans, who are counting on us for assistance and for leadership. In times like these we must remember that we are here for each of them and for one another.

Please be seated.

Orders of the Day

Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Mrs. Littlewood moved, seconded by Mr. Westhead, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lois Mitchell, CM, AOE, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Debate adjourned April 5]

The Speaker: The Minister of Status of Women.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to reply to the Speech from the Throne and embark upon my maiden speech as a first-time elected member of the Assembly for the constituency of Calgary-Varsity.

Firstly, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Premier. I'd like to thank her for her leadership, passion, honesty, and care for this province. It is her strength and trustworthiness that Albertans voted for when they elected the NDP to form a majority government. I was elected in a historic sweep in which the people of Alberta voted en masse for dramatic change after 44 years of the same governing political party. I'm still so proud and amazed at what Albertans accomplished when they rallied together on May 5 to effect change. It proved to generations of Albertans that voting actually means something and democratic participation is worth while. I'm proud to be part of a dynamic and diverse caucus. I'm proud that our government was the first in the country to have a gender-balanced cabinet and near gender-balanced caucus. I'm also proud that Albertans elected the first openly homosexual MLAs in the province's history to our government.

Our caucus and government brought in a ministry responsible for the status of women, which had not existed for the past 20 years. As recently as 2009 a prior member of this Assembly and then governing party was recorded to have said that if women want equal, they can find it in little packages at Starbucks. Not on our watch, Mr. Speaker. On our watch women will be represented and will represent the people of this province.

I'd also like to thank the people of Calgary-Varsity, my neighbours, for electing me and trusting me to be their representative in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Being given

the trust of the electorate is perhaps one of the most humbling experiences any citizen can have.

I was born in Calgary at the Holy Cross hospital but raised in Edmonton when my parents, unfortunately, decided to move to the colder city to the north. When my parents divorced, my father returned to Calgary, so I came to know two homes and two cities. I obtained my first degree, a bachelor of arts, from Concordia University college of Alberta, in Edmonton, where I met my husband. We then moved to the fairer city to the south, Calgary. This was a more difficult transition for my husband, a self-identified Oilers fan, but easier for me, a Stamps fan.

It was in Calgary, at the University of Calgary, that I obtained my law degree. Through my studies I had the opportunity to learn much about our justice system. I worked in provincial prosecutions and then in criminal defence. I then began a career in family law, practising mostly in the area of high-conflict parenting litigation. Through my time in practice I helped many people at their worst, and this sparked a burgeoning desire to help folks on a much larger scale through the law and legislation.

Being an independent kind of person, I started my own law practice. I hung out my own shingle so that I could pursue the areas of law that I felt most passionate about and so that I could represent many clients pro bono and without the imposition of the billable hour. I experienced the trials of starting and running my own business in a profession that is still dominated by men. I grew this business into a partnership with another young female lawyer and two employees. Starting my own business gave me a keen understanding of small-business entrepreneurship. Starting and running this business was one of the most trying things I'd ever done yet one of the most rewarding.

After the floods of 2013, in which my own home was flooded, my husband and I sought higher ground. As two young professionals we were looking for a neighbourhood where we could grow roots. We wanted a home that was affordable but not on the outskirts of the city. No, we wanted a place where we could become involved in our community, where we could raise our family close to schools and off-leash dog parks yet still home to the many urban conveniences and amenities to which we had been accustomed while living downtown. We moved to Calgary-Varsity.

Calgary-Varsity encompasses the communities of Varsity, Dalhousie, Brentwood, Banff Trail, University Heights, Montgomery, and parts of Charleswood, which is part of the Triwood community: all communities with proud, active, long-standing, and successful community association representation. While Calgary-Varsity once represented the outskirts of the city, the suburban northwest, Calgary-Varsity is now very much an urban constituency which successfully retains its family and community-centred focus. How is it that in our fast-moving society an urban area can maintain its sense of community? I attribute Calgary-Varsity's ability to maintain its sense of neighbourhood, family, and community to its strong community associations, to its many public schools, its scenic parks where the community gathers, and the many community organizations that call Varsity home.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention the very families that inhabit Calgary-Varsity, new and young, and the many seniors who raised their families in Calgary's northwest. Our seniors in Varsity maintain our community and our sense of neighbourhood and family. Our seniors in Varsity are vibrant and active. They're strong advocates for our constituency and our province. Our seniors have witnessed where we have been, where we are and have a strong sense of what will take us boldly into the future. The bedrock of our province, the information keepers and wisdom givers, our seniors in Calgary-Varsity keep us a family and community-centred

constituency in the midst of whirlwind urbanization and development.

There is no avoiding development. The residents of Calgary-Varsity know this well. Varsity is being thrust into an ever-increasing urban future, but its community-minded residents have created an environment that attracts new families and makes Varsity the kind of place where people grow their roots well into their golden years.

Calgary-Varsity is truly blessed to be named in recognition of such a world-class postsecondary institution, the University of Calgary. The University of Calgary celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. A young university that punches well above its weight, it is the heart of my constituency. Many of Varsity's residents work at, go to school at, or have a degree from the University of Calgary.

Varsity constituents, I believe, are unique from all others. Rarely do they arrive at our constituency office looking for assistance but, rather, to assist. Passionate about the environment, disability issues, education, and seniors' concerns, Varsity constituents will take the time from their busy workdays to educate my staff and me and advocate for positive change in our province and our community. I am increasingly thankful to represent the constituency of Calgary-Varsity and, above all, to call it home. I know that my family, including my husband, Shane, my newborn son, Patrick, and our two dogs, Mokie and Shakespeare, couldn't agree more.

Thank you.

9:10

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. Are there any questions for the hon. Minister of Status of Women under 29(2)(a)?

Hearing none, I would recognize the Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the chance to rise and speak in this hallowed hall. I am humbled. I am honoured to speak to the Speech from the Throne. If you would have told me 10, 11 months ago that I would have been standing here in front of some of the brightest, most hard-working people in the province, with this Mace on my lapel, speaking about the constituency that I call home and the people and the businesses that keep that community running, I would have told you that it was a dream. If you would have told me 10 years ago that when I moved to Beaumont and started working in the community to help my wife support our growing family, I would have had the opportunity to run in a provincial election, talk to thousands of my neighbours and community members about what they hope for the future of this province, I would have told you to keep dreaming. But I am here, I am in front of you, and I do have the incredible honour of telling you about the unique, diverse, and interesting riding that I now call home.

First, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the amazing people of my riding, who have given me the privilege of representing them here, and I endeavour to work every day my hardest for the people of Leduc-Beaumont. I would also like to thank the incredible volunteers on my EDA, who worked tirelessly to get me elected. They were and are truly fantastic teammates, friends, and people. I'd also like to thank my CAs, Colleen Copley and Kim Slomnicki, who keep me organized and on the straight and narrow and who do incredible work serving and helping our constituents. They are the backbone of our constituency office and invaluable, to say the least.

But my biggest thanks go out to my beautiful wife, Kelly, and my two boys: Declan, who is seven, and Maddoc, who is five. They are my heart and my soul, and I would be nothing without their love and support. I am truly blessed to have them in my life, and I'm extremely grateful to them for always being there for me when I

need a hug, a smile, a kind word, or a good wrestling match. My five-year-old now thinks he's John Cena for some reason. My compatriot would love this right here.

Since being elected as the MLA for Leduc-Beaumont, I have had the distinct pleasure of working with three mayors, many councillors, and hard-working admin staff for the town of Beaumont, the county of Leduc, and the city of Leduc. Immediately after being elected, I was welcomed into my role with hearty handshakes and a sense of belonging. I am very grateful to have experienced municipal leaders like Mayor John Whaley from Leduc county, Mayor Greg Krischke of Leduc, and Mayor Camille Bérubé of Beaumont helping show me the ropes. Public service at all levels requires a special kind of commitment, and my community is lucky to have leaders who have been champions of prosperity and community-mindedness as well as co-operation. I am so glad to work as a team with these leaders to weather whatever may be.

Ours is a community of hard-working entrepreneurs and business owners that are hugely committed to giving back to their communities. Large corporations and organizations like the Edmonton International Airport are still supporting local initiatives and organizations there because this is where their employees live and where they are raising their families. The people of Leduc-Beaumont have strong ties there, ties to groups like the Knights of Columbus, who were recently present at the Franco-Albertan flag raising in Beaumont; the Optimist club in Leduc; Lions clubs; Rotary clubs; Kinsmen clubs; the Golden Pioneers in New Sarepta; Leduc & District Food Bank; Linx Connect; the community living association; the drug action coalition; the Boys' and Girls' Club of Leduc; St. Vital Seniors Centre in Beaumont; the 4-H clubs in and around Leduc county, Leduc, and Beaumont; the Riseup House; and Leduc and District Emergency Shelter. These are just a handful.

There are also the business associations like the Leduc chamber of commerce, the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce, and the Leduc-Nisku Economic Development Association, who have all helped me immensely in doing this job. We have the second-biggest industrial park in North America; some say first, but we don't want Texas to be mad, so we say second. With that title comes hard-working, skilled, and educated labour and business owners who know what it's like to roll up their sleeves and find solutions and a community of people who find strength in each other. There are all manner of businesses there, from oil and gas service operations to advanced manufacturing to green energy and renewable operations. The technology created and used in this industrial park is used all over this country and all over the world. They are creating technologies and processes that prove that economic sustainability and environmental sustainability are not mutually exclusive. Renewable energy and fossil fuels will supplement and complement each other and help us to build a more sustainable society and world for future generations. It's most definitely a partnership and not an us-versus-them scenario.

We will continue to be an economic driver in this province. The businesses in Leduc, Nisku, and Beaumont are finding ways to move forward, finding markets, manufacturing to the needs of industry, and finding solutions for businesses who need to adapt to the changes put in front of them, as they always have. Part of my job, I feel, is to listen to these entrepreneurs and innovators and to find out what roadblocks or hurdles are in the way of new and emerging technology and to remove them or tweak them if feasible and to help them have the ability to diversify and create new job markets whenever possible.

Mr. Speaker, I've said some general things about my constituency, but here are a few more specifics. The history of Leduc can be traced back to 1889, when Robert Taylor Telford

settled on a piece of land near a scenic lake, Telford Lake. This piece of land would become the cornerstone of the new town. During those earlier years Robert Telford was the first postmaster, general merchant, and justice of the peace of the settlement, that was informally known as Telford. He also served the community as mayor and as a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

In 1890 a government telegraph office was being set up by Mr. McKinley, a settler in the area. He needed a name for the place and said: we shall name it after the first person who comes in. And in through the door came Father Leduc. In 1899 Lieutenant Governor Dewdney of the Northwest Territories decreed that the settlement of Telford should be called Leduc in honour of the notable Roman Catholic missionary Father Hippolyte Leduc, who had served the area since 1867 and later went on to become the vicar-general of the diocese of Edmonton.

I was going to speak French here, but I don't see the translation. I'll give the English first, and then I will give you the French. Beautifully situated, known for its picturesque church on the hill, the town of Beaumont began as a French colony in 1895. Ten acres of land were purchased in 1894 from the Hudson's Bay Company, and a founding resident donated 20 more acres. These 30 acres were the foundation of what became the hamlet of Beaumont. St. Vital church was constructed and completed in the spring of 1895 on these 30 acres of land. In 1899 a group of 38 farmers formed an incorporated company called la Compagnie du Moulin de Beaumont Limitée, Harvest Company of Beaumont. Beaumont moved into the 20th century firmly established as a community with an active commercial base whose social and spiritual life revolved around the church.

Here we go. Située dans un lieu magnifique et reconnue pour son église au caractère pittoresque bâtie sur la colline, la ville de Beaumont fut établie en tant que colonie en 1895. En 1894 10 acres de terrain furent achetées de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson, et un résident fondateur fit le don de 20 autres acres. Le hameau de Beaumont fut donc fondé sur ces 30 acres de terrain, et au printemps de 1895 l'église Saint-Vital fut construite à cet endroit. En 1899 un groupe de 38 fermiers établirent une compagnie constituée en personne morale, la Compagnie du Moulin de Beaumont Limitée. Ainsi, c'est à titre de communauté bien établie que Beaumont fit son entrée dans le 20e siècle, jouissant d'une saine activité commerciale, ayant l'église au coeur de sa vie spirituelle et sociale.

Located 30 minutes from Edmonton on highway 21, the village of New Sarepta is just moments away from Joseph Lake centennial park and Miquelon Lake provincial park. This village derived its name from a group of German immigrant settlers from Russia. The railway, built in 1912, provided a nucleus for a town, and homesteaders were quick to make the area a farming community. This thriving village is striving to become the cartoon capital of Canada, which I'm sure most of you didn't know, and you can visit its famous fence of fame. Many of the walls in New Sarepta high school are adorned with original cartoon murals created by Yardley-Jones. It's pretty interesting to see.

Looma is a small hamlet of approximately 37 people east of Beaumont, and most I met on my election campaign. Kavanagh is a small hamlet of approximately 38 people south of Leduc. The hamlet was created and settled by workers of Kavanagh block of the CNR and was named for Charles Edmund Kavanagh, who was the railway superintendent.

9:20

There are many amazing places and attractions in my riding, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to highlight just a few of those for the House today. On February 13, 1947, on a farm just southwest of Edmonton news of a huge oil strike at Leduc No. 1 was transmitted around

Alberta, Canada, and the world. This famous discovery marked the birth of western Canada's modern oil industry and has been called one of the most important economic discoveries in Canada's history.

Today the grit, determination, and success of our early oil patch pioneers are preserved at the Canadian Petroleum Discovery Centre, with 13 acres and 23,000 square feet indoors of models, fossils, working rigs, antique equipment, machinery, murals, archives, classrooms, theatre, and more. It's a truly unique museum experience, and I was pleased this past summer to have some of my ministerial and MLA colleagues join me at Leduc No. 1 for the summer rib cook-off and to see the world's oldest drilling crew set to work on the working rig there. I hope you guys join me this summer because we're actually going to be cooking. I hope to have more of you visit this summer, and I also hope we can showcase some of the green and renewable energy sources that will illustrate how we can be an all-encompassing energy province.

The riding I have the honour of representing not only has deep roots in the energy sector, but long before there was Leduc No. 1, there was some of the best – and there still is – agricultural land in the province. In Leduc county we have about 1,250 farms – many are in my riding – with roughly 228 hectares of land used for farming, which is about 15 per cent of county residents who are employed in agriculture. A few years ago Leduc county, out of all the counties in the capital region, ranked first for total crop acreage; had the largest barley, oats, hay, and alfalfa acreages in the region; and also ranked first for the value of livestock and poultry and the largest number of cattle and calves, approximately 60,000 head, which are things to be very proud of.

We also have an amazing Food Processing Development Centre in Leduc. It's a modern, fully equipped pilot plant and product development laboratory facility. It's staffed with experienced food scientists, engineers, and technologists. The centre's services are designed to strengthen and expand the capability of Alberta's food processors to meet the challenges of the marketplace through application of new technology and the development of new or improved products and processes. I had the opportunity to tour this facility last summer and to welcome a Chinese delegation there to see it as well. They were so excited about the place that they inquired about how much it was to purchase within about 15 minutes of being there. I can tell you that we're very lucky to have such a facility in our riding and in our province.

I mentioned the Edmonton International Airport before. It is an integral and very important part of the riding. It provides a good tax base that the county of Leduc uses to invest into our communities, keeping smaller rural towns and villages alive. They also give back to our communities through many different charitable initiatives. Ever wonder where all those liquids and interesting things confiscated at security go? Many of those are donated to the Leduc food bank for families in need.

It is also Canada's largest major airport by total land area and the fifth busiest by passenger traffic and by aircraft movement and Canada's first, I'm proud to say, LEED gold certified airport. Over this past year we've had the pleasure of welcoming Icelandair, KLM airlines, and Air China Cargo, and these new flights in and out of EIA have helped boost our economy and have shown we have a first-class airport here serving the capital region and Alberta.

Speaking of boosting the economy of the capital region, with significant growth projections for this region and the ideal location presented by seamless air-to-ground-to rail connectivity at and around EIA, the city of Leduc, and Leduc county, they are currently embarking on an aerotropolis viability study. Aerotropolis is a land-use strategy that focuses on economic development around an airport. It also leverages the strengths of existing businesses on

airport lands and surrounding areas to encourage further economic diversification and job growth. We're very excited about the positive impacts this will have on our area and surrounding areas going forward.

But wait. There's more. We also have a thriving music and arts community in the riding. In Beaumont we have had since 2008 the Beaumont Blues and Roots Festival, that has been presenting the Alberta capital region with the best in live Canadian blues, roots, folk, rockabilly, and country music. I hope some of you get to come and experience it.

In Leduc we have the amazing Maclab Centre for the Performing Arts. It is a pre-eminent performing arts facility serving the whole county with music, theatre, dance, and more. It is also connected to the Leduc composite high school, giving the kids a wonderful opportunity to explore the arts.

Mr. Speaker, I'm Albertan by choice. I love living in the town of Beaumont and in my riding of Leduc-Beaumont. It has everything my family and I need. It is a beautiful place to live. We've chosen to raise our kids in the county of Leduc because it is an amazing place to raise a family. We love the communities, the people, and the land.

Like some other members of this Assembly and like a lot of Albertans, I moved here with my family for the opportunity that this province provides. I originally grew up in Duncan, B.C., on Vancouver Island, and I come from a long line of farmers and forestry workers. I have family in Saskatchewan, Alberta, B.C., and the U.S.

I am proud to come from a family of hard-working men and women, a family who has worked the land and continues to do so to provide for themselves and those around them. My twin brother – we're fraternal, not identical, and he certainly can't grow a beard like I can – my sister, who's four years younger, and I grew up on a small hobby farm of about five acres, and over the years we had cows, pigs, laying hens, and horses. We had apple trees, and Mom would say on the way to the bus: grab an apple for your lunch and . . . [Mr. Anderson's speaking time expired]

The Speaker: The Official Opposition member.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My pleasure to rise. I'm so enthralled by the comments from the Member for Leduc-Beaumont. I wondered if he just might like to take a few minutes to conclude his thoughts there.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member. You know, we had cherry trees, hazelnut trees, plum trees, blackberries, and grapes. We were a 10-minute bike ride from one of the best fly-fishing rivers in North America and about 15 minutes from the ocean. It was truly an incredible childhood.

I'm blessed to have the two most amazing parents a person could ask for. They are two of the most kind, honest, hard-working, selfless people you will ever meet. We weren't rich, but we never lacked for anything. The love that my parents showed to us and continue to show to us and to everyone who comes into contact with them continues to drive me today. My dad is a strong, stubborn, and honest man, sometimes to a fault. He is blue collar and hard working, and I don't say it enough, but I love you, Dad. I would put my dad's work ethic up against anyone's. Even at 62 that man works harder than anyone I've ever seen in my life. All of my life he has done what it takes to feed and clothe our family.

The forest industry was our main source of income, so, Mr. Speaker, I'm no stranger to the ups and downs of the economy and people losing their jobs and having to do whatever it takes to care for their families. When I have constituents who come in and have

lost their job, who are worried about losing their job, I get it. We've been there. I know they want to work hard and provide for their families, just like my dad did and does. I will always do my best to help those who need a hand up. My mom and dad taught me that you take care of the people around you, and maybe it's my Norwegian and Irish blood and the clan system ingrained in me, but I feel that if you aren't going to help those around you who need it when they most need it, then what are we here for?

My mom is probably the most caring and empathetic person you will ever meet. She consistently puts other people's needs above her own. From her I learned compassion, caring, empathy, and how to listen. I used to joke that we couldn't go anywhere without a random person stopping her to bend her ear and tell her their life story. She's always been there for anyone at any time. I used to joke about it, but not any more because it started happening to me day in and day out. I guess I love people, and they see past my exterior and realize that I am a big teddy bear and that I care deeply for people around me and will always lend an ear and help.

I am fiercely protective of those around me and those that I care for. I will always stick up for the little guy. I guess that's part of why I'm so pro labour. You know, to me, it doesn't matter if you're union or not; I'm going to stand up for you, and that's who I am. That being said, I am proud of my union roots and background and will not back down from them. I am a steelworker, and I am proud of that. My time as a shop steward, vice-president of my local, and delegate to convention gave me the push to run for MLA. My union brothers and sisters were and are behind me, and I will always be thankful for that.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let me say this. I hope my colleagues from all sides can see this about me: what you see is what you get. I'm honest. If I don't know the answer to something, I'll admit it, and I'll try to find it for you. I won't ever be purposely misleading or untruthful. I can agree to disagree, and I respect all sides of a conversation or debate, even though I'm mostly right. I don't like playing games unless it's fastball or rugby. I'm straight up and straightforward. I dislike conjecture, speculation, and will always try to base my opinions and judgments and decisions on facts, as I believe we all should. Being informed on a subject is a wonderful thing.

Thank you, everybody, for listening to me today. I appreciate it. It's a pleasure to be here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

9:30

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other questions under 29(2)(a) to the Member for Leduc-Beaumont?

Having heard none, the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues in the Legislature. It truly is an honour to rise to speak in response to the Speech from the Throne. I want to first of all express my appreciation to the Lieutenant Governor for the grace and dignity that she exhibits in all of her activities, particularly in presiding over this Legislature.

To you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Deputy Speaker, I offer my appreciation as well. The tenor of this House and the quality of the discourse is due to your influence. I know it's frustrating from time to time, but I certainly empathize and appreciate your activities.

I actually want to express appreciation to other members of the House. Like my colleague from Leduc-Beaumont, I really do appreciate the cut and thrust of debate and sometimes interjections across the floor. I'm hoping that my interjections are received in the

spirit in which they're given, which is with some humour and in an attempt to raise the quality of the debate.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank very much the Premier of this province and the other senior members of our caucus. A year ago there were four New Democrat members of this Legislature. They certainly hit above their weight, or whatever the analogy is there. Some of you will recall that my first foray into provincial politics was as a candidate in the by-election in Edmonton-Whitemud in October of 2014. That was a very positive experience for me. It was made much more positive by the support of the four sitting members, and I really do appreciate it. One of them is in the House at this time. I learned a lot from going door to door with the Minister of Education. I learned how to actually listen to people, to appreciate a variety of opinions, and to validate those opinions. I think that is something that all of us should take to heart as we're dealing with our constituents.

I had another experience which was very positive but has left me with some nightmares. I was actually door-knocking with the now Premier. It was getting towards evening, and the Premier in her inimitable way decided that she actually knew how to door knock and didn't need somebody like me hanging around and we could knock on twice as many doors. So I went off with another constituency person and really did do a good night of door-knocking, and then I realized that I'd lost her. I'd lost the Premier, and I wasn't sure where she was.

Any of you that know Edmonton-Whitemud realize that we don't live on the square in Edmonton-Whitemud. There are cul-de-sacs and curved roads, and there are not a lot of lights out and about, so it took a while. What I was most concerned about, actually, was that her husband was back at the constituency office and I was going to have to explain to him that I had misplaced his wife. Fortunately, she was smarter than me and actually tracked me down. Anyway, that was an interesting experience.

I had the now Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure as well as the Minister of Economic Development and Trade out helping me campaign. That was a very positive experience. I was taking on a formidable opponent in that election. Some of you may recall that the three-term mayor of this city was parachuted into that riding by the ex-Premier of this province. I ran because I thought that that was basically an insult to health care, which he was going to become the minister of, and probably an insult to the citizens of Edmonton-Whitemud.

Edmonton-Whitemud was a very fertile ground for the New Democrats. I actually was able to obtain the support of over 5,000 voters in Edmonton-Whitemud in the by-election. That was actually more votes than some of us in this House have obtained in a general election in our ridings. I'm very appreciative to the citizens of Edmonton-Whitemud for their support.

When it came to the general election last May, the results were actually turned right around. Fifty-seven per cent, the majority of the voters in Edmonton-Whitemud, voted for the New Democrat candidate. They voted for the vision, the compassion, the caring that our Premier had shown in that campaign. It was an easy campaign for me, a very easy campaign. Every day during that campaign I was at the doors bringing to the citizens of Edmonton-Whitemud the positive message that this party, the New Democratic Party of Alberta, has.

And it was well received. It was well received because a lot of my constituents are teachers, nurses, laboratory technicians, and, fortunately for me, doctors. The many doctors in Edmonton-Whitemud really appreciated the message that we were bringing funding back to health care, bringing funding back to education. And not just to the primary and secondary schools, we were bringing funding back to advanced education. So colleges,

apprenticeships, the universities knew that they were going to have a supporter in the New Democratic Party.

I want to turn back to the history of developing my interest in politics. Let there be no doubt that I am a democratic socialist. Like the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, I am proud of that designation. I'm proud to say that I am a socialist and dare say that all of you are socialists. You all care about the welfare of man, the social justice, the rights of people. That's what we're here for, so I am proud to say that I am a socialist.

My socialist background actually comes from my heritage. Like the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake – I'm guessing that he has a Scottish background from his dress today – and like the Member for Strathmore-Brooks, who admitted to having a Scottish grandmother, that he wasn't following the precepts of, I'm proud to say that all of my grandmothers are Scottish. And all of them were socialists.

My paternal ancestry goes back to the Highlands in Scotland. My ancestors immigrated from the Highlands to Ontario county in Ontario in about 1850. They were very successful farmers in that area, and then they immigrated to southwestern Manitoba in the late 19th century. My grandfather Andrew Turner, whom I'm named after, was the western Canadian plowing champion in about 1910. It was a real accomplishment. That was done with horses, a single-bladed plow. I have the trophy. It's one of my proudest possessions.

9:40

My father was a child of the Depression, and I certainly gained an appreciation for the nickel and the dollar through his influence. He had to leave school before he was completed because of the Depression, and he went on to work, buying grain in an elevator, and then going to war and spending several years overseas as a radar operator. Like other speakers here today, my father has been a massive influence on me, and I am disappointed that he's not here today for me to tell him.

My mother's parents immigrated from Glasgow to Winnipeg in the early 1900s. My grandfather was a painter. My mother was a product of what was called in those days normal schools, and normal schools basically taught you education. She went out to a one-room schoolhouse in Pipestone, Manitoba, and had to break the ice in the water supply before the kids got to the school, that sort of thing. She was a tremendous influence. She died when I was 20 years old, but again was a tremendous influence on me.

My political influence goes back to Grant MacEwan. Grant MacEwan was the dean of agriculture in Manitoba after the war, in the early '50s, and he ran in Brandon-Souris as a Liberal candidate. My father was a poll captain for him and was very disappointed when Grant MacEwan didn't win that election. It was actually a victory for Alberta since Grant MacEwan moved to Calgary and became dean of agriculture here and is the namesake of our great university in this city. Hearing about that really validated politics as a useful avocation.

My first connection to a political figure actually was with John Diefenbaker. When I was about 12 years old, I received a copy of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms from John Diefenbaker in school. I would recommend that everybody in this Legislature read that document, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We've been talking about rights for workers that are essential services. We've been talking about rights for people that are transgendered. We've been talking about rights for individuals to access physician-assisted dying. When you go back in history, look at that document. John George Diefenbaker, the prairie renegade, was the designer and the writer of that document, and he needs a lot of credit. I don't give him enough credit to ever vote Conservative, but I do see him as a model for my involvement in politics.

My next hero is Tommy Douglas, no doubt. I mean, everybody on this side of the House loves Tommy Douglas. But I have a different connection to Tommy Douglas. October 1970 is a date that should go down in everybody's memory bank. In October 1970 I was a medical student at McGill University, actually living not far from the Royal Victoria hospital, which happened to be right next door to where the British commissioner's office was – well, not next door but very close. The British commissioner was kidnapped, and we all know the story. What happened was that Pierre Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act. The War Measures Act didn't need to be invoked, in my opinion, but the upshot of it was that several hundred people like me, college students, just regular people walking around that area of the city, got put in jail, and they were kept in jail for several weeks without charges, without legal representation.

It was an abomination. It should never have happened. And, you know, the only person that stood up to Pierre Trudeau, the only person who said that this was wrong, this should not have happened in this country, this country which is democratic, was Tommy Douglas. I can tell you that I have voted New Democrat ever since. In every election I have voted New Democrat, no doubt about it, because Tommy Douglas and the people who have followed him in the national party as well as our party here, Grant Notley, when I first moved here, and all of the successive leaders, have had that same gumption, that same devotion to human rights, the same desire to make sure that all of us and all of our rights are protected. I am definitely a democratic socialist as a result.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was really engrossed by the comments of my fellow member here. I was wondering if he could finish his comments.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Well, thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity to finish. I apologize to the House for getting so wound up about the importance of human rights. We need to always remember that it is those human rights that are the basis of our democracy and our prosperity.

I do want to mention in response to the Speech from the Throne that there are many things in that Speech from the Throne that are very important; in particular, climate change. I'm a person that put solar panels on their roof several years ago because I am interested in reducing my carbon footprint. This is not a treasonous act. This is not an act that is going to subvert the oil and gas industry. It's my way to reduce greenhouse gas things.

I am very proud of our government's leadership on climate change. This will affect our ability to get our oil and gas accepted in the world's markets. This will improve our environment; this will improve health. I am particularly proud of the fact that we're going to phase out coal generation of electricity, particularly in this area, where this city is subject to the particulate emissions from coal plants to the west. We need to find an alternative, and I am confident that we can do that.

Just last night several of us were discussing advances in the energy field and diversification with members of the Building Trades council as well as the Alberta Construction Association, very positive discussions about how we're going to promote alternative energies and improve the climate of this area.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to make those remarks.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner under Standing Order 29(2)(a).

Mr. Hunter: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. I have appreciated the comments made by the hon. member. I have one question, though. As a Wildroser I've had the opportunity to be able to research solar panels and wind energy and have been very interested in it. You talked a lot about, you know, a person's rights and a person's ability to choose their own destiny. You say this is very important. So my question to you, hon. member, is: where do you find the balance between a buy-in from individuals versus legislation that dictates that everybody has to do something?

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Turner: I'm actually not sure what the question is there. Really, I'm positive that nobody is going to force anybody to do anything along the lines of putting solar panels on their roof. What we want to do is to create the economic situation for transitioning to alternative energies and also to do other things like retrofitting your house by putting more insulation in and, you know, having access to alternative energies like biomass or geothermal. All of these things, I think, are important in how we are facing this climate dilemma.

9:50

The Speaker: Are there any other questions under 29(2)(a)?

I would recognize the Minister of Human Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour and privilege to rise today to respond to the throne speech. I'm able to speak here today because of the constituents of Calgary-McCall who put their trust and confidence in me to represent them and shared their hopes with me for a better and more inclusive Alberta for everyone. I thank the people of Calgary-McCall for their support and assure them that I am committed to working hard on their behalf, having their best interests in mind, and earning the trust they have shown in me.

Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for Calgary-McCall, first and foremost, I speak for and on behalf of my constituents, and in view of that, I will start by talking about the constituency and the people of Calgary-McCall. Let me begin by saying that Calgary-McCall is the most beautiful constituency in this province. I understand that you and my colleagues in this House might have heard similar claims before, but I'm sure that by the time I finish describing my riding, you will be convinced.

I want to recognize that Calgary-McCall is on traditional Treaty 7 territory. It is located in the northeast quadrant of the city of Calgary. It includes the communities of Castleridge, Falconridge, Martindale, SkyView Ranch, Redstone, Cityscape, and my own neighbourhood of Saddle Ridge, where I have been living since 2007.

Calgary-McCall is one of the most ethnically diverse ridings in the province and, by extension, one of the most culturally vibrant. Calgary-McCall is home to people of aboriginal, European, Asian, Caribbean, African, and Central and South American origin. The people of Calgary-McCall get to experience this beauty and strength of cultural diversity and religion every day of their lives, whether it's through building relationships across ethnicity lines, within neighbourhoods, eating out at restaurants in the community with cuisines much different from their own, or learning a new language and culture through interacting with other parents at the park where their children play. This is what makes Calgary-McCall truly unique and most beautiful.

Mr. Speaker, Calgary-McCall is a riding that celebrates Christmas and Stampede with the same vigour as it does Eid festivals, Vaisakhi, Diwali, and many other religious and cultural events. It's a riding that hoists the Canadian flag with pride on Canada Day and builds a large human poppy to honour fallen soldiers on Remembrance Day. It's a riding that sees people play cricket and field hockey in its fields in summer and boasts of outdoor skating rinks in winter. It's a riding that truly reflects and upholds Canadian values of democracy and harmony in diversity.

Mr. Speaker, Calgary-McCall is home to people from all over the world who, like myself, came to Alberta with a dream of a better life, quality education for their children, reliable health care for their families, and opportunities to reach their full potential. I came to Canada in 2004, and I have been living in Calgary ever since. When I came to Canada, the challenges in front of me were the same ones facing every newcomer who comes to this country in search of a better life. I had to restart my career and my life from a new beginning, and all things considered, I would say that my journey has been exceptionally rewarding. I owe my success in a huge way to this country, to this province, and to the people of Calgary-McCall, who enabled me to be who I am today.

I'm a firm believer that no success ever belongs solely to the success holder. There is always more to it: families, friends, organizations, institutions. Therefore, I would take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank everyone who has helped me in any manner through the course of my journey. I'm also certainly indebted to everyone who stood up for the progressive values and NDP principles in this province that I identify myself with today.

Mr. Speaker, I have a rural and farming background, but the farm life that I witnessed growing up was much different than modern-day farming. It was more of a struggle for survival, and it required a lot of manual labour and hard work in the fields. Despite all of those struggles at home, I can't be more thankful that my family prioritized my education and that I was provided the opportunity to pursue and complete my education. Those values of hard work and sacrifice are the values that I will try to live by while serving my constituents, as I know many colleagues strive to do.

I came to Canada with a master's in economics, but as a newcomer to Canada I worked in all kinds of starter jobs to make ends meet. One common thread in all my jobs in those days was that they were all minimum-wage jobs, which helped me relate first-hand to and appreciate the financial hardships that minimum-wage earners go through. Based on that experience, Mr. Speaker, I can say with authority that an increase in the minimum wage does and will help. It will make a difference. It will make a difference in the lives of so many hard-working Albertans, including Albertans living in my constituency whose families depend on minimum wage. I know that, and I have lived that. That is why today I'm very proud to stand with a government that recognizes the struggle of families who live on limited income and means and has committed to improving their lives because in a healthy, productive, and inclusive society everyone matters.

Mr. Speaker, in 2007 I went to the University of Calgary to pursue further education, and I completed my master's in social work and a law degree. During my time at university I worked at a homeless shelter, but financially that wasn't enough to put me through school. I wouldn't have been able to finish my schooling without the support of my eldest sister, who also lives in Calgary, and the financial assistance that I received from the government in the form of student loans and scholarships. Given the trajectory in my life I am convinced that education has been the single most important investment that I have ever made, and I wouldn't be standing here today without it. As outlined in the throne speech, in this province what we wish for ourselves, we desire for all.

Mr. Speaker, I want every Albertan to have the same opportunity that I had, and this is why I fully support my government's priority and focus on children's education and advanced education, priorities clearly articulated by the government's decision to reverse funding cuts to education and to provide stable and predictable funding to school boards and universities and to freeze tuition fees for postsecondary students.

Mr. Speaker, while I was campaigning for my election and going from door to door, talking to my constituents, I repeatedly heard concerns respecting health care, education, and recreational facilities in the area. Many parents shared with me that they had to send their children to school in the northwest and southeast quadrants of the city. That was not just an inconvenience for the parents but also was unfair to the children, who spend a lot of time commuting.

Other concerns that have been shared by my constituents are the need for schools with an English as a second language focus and the need for more facilities such as funeral homes with culturally appropriate services and additional sports facilities. Although we do have an amazing recreational facility called the Genesis Centre in my riding, which welcomes over 1 million residents per year for a variety of programs and services, we do still need more such facilities. These issues reflect the social and infrastructure deficit that we inherited and that need to be dealt with. Mr. Speaker, it makes me proud that our government has committed to an investment of \$34 billion in much-needed infrastructure projects that Alberta currently lacks but crucially needs. I'm pleased that there are six new schools planned for Calgary-McCall, including the Nelson Mandela high school, which is due to open this fall. In the coming days and months I look forward to working with my colleagues on all issues that matter to my constituents and all Albertans.

10:00

Mr. Speaker, I also held two open houses, on January 9 and March 26, in my constituency to learn about the constituents' views on various issues and gather their feedback and input so that I am able to represent them better. The constituents shared their views and valuable feedback relating to many issues; however, the economy and job situation topped the discussion. Also, like many other Albertans they stressed the need to cut reliance on a single commodity, a single price, and a single market.

I also note that my constituency is home to many new Canadians and lower income Albertans, and based on available data, the average household income in this constituency compares lower than other constituencies in Calgary, and the unemployment rate in this constituency has remained higher than the provincial average.

I'm pleased that the throne speech prioritizes expanding access to workforce skill training and retraining for the unemployed. It articulates the government commitment to diversifying the economy and supporting small and medium-sized businesses with venture capital, investing in a green and more sustainable economy, and investing in necessary infrastructure. I'm confident that the initiatives and priorities identified in the throne speech will lead Alberta to emerge with an economy stronger than ever, thus benefiting my constituents and all Albertans.

I'm also very pleased that our government is standing up for Albertans who are facing immediate hardships. At times like this we must think of our children first. The new child benefit will provide \$340 million for up to 380,000 children in low-income families, and it certainly will go a long way to address child poverty in this province and help families make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, prior to getting elected, I was practising law in the field of aboriginal law, and I'm very pleased that the throne speech

indicated the repeal of Bill 22 and a commitment to engage indigenous communities on future consultation frameworks. I also note that the throne speech outlined the government's desire to consult on a new indigenous peoples' sacred ceremonial objects repatriation act. From my previous work experience and conversations with my colleagues from the legal profession I can appreciate how important these steps are for indigenous people, and I am very proud to be a part of the government that believes in and is taking steps towards renewing the relationship with indigenous communities in this province.

Also, it shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone that I have a background in the labour movement, and I'm very pleased to see the government taking steps to implement the Supreme Court of Canada ruling respecting workers' right to strike. I'm confident that the Act to Implement a Supreme Court Ruling Governing Essential Services will protect and strengthen the rights of hard-working Albertans who dedicate their lives to serving fellow Albertans.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and thank my constituents once again for putting their faith in me to speak for them. I would also like to thank my family and my friends, whose consistent encouragement gave me the strength to follow my passion and my dream. Also, I am indebted and thankful forever to everyone who supported me in my journey and inspired me to do my best and be my best. I know that I am here because of all of them and the people of Calgary-McCall, and I pledge to never let them down.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Under 29(2)(a), the Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Panda: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate the hon. minister for the great journey he had and for the great success he had. In fact, both of us moved to Canada at the same time. We took different paths to politics, but both of us are here today. He had the opportunity to actually make a difference, and he also represents the most diverse riding in Calgary, in the northeast part of Calgary. Very few have had the opportunity to serve in the cabinet being new Canadians, and he has the opportunity today to do a lot for other new Canadians, so I would like to know from him: what is he doing to help new Canadians with respect to recognition of overseas graduates, I mean, their educational accreditation in Canada? There are so many foreign medical graduates driving cabs in his part of town.

Also, Calgary was hit due to this low oil price economy. What is he doing to help all those jobless people looking for jobs? How is he advocating for them within his caucus, and how does he plan to help those new Canadians?

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the kind words. I think there were two questions. One was relating to education credentials for people coming from overseas. I indicated that I came here with a master of economics degree only to find out when I went to university that that was equivalent to a BA, and when I applied to the department of economics, I further found out that I didn't have math 30, so I'm not even eligible to go back into the master's program. Those are the differences between the education systems in various parts of the world. Where I was coming from, we have a bachelor's degree that we complete in two years while across Canada and all G-8 countries and even many developing countries it's four years.

Those things I believe that we can't change unilaterally here unless the systems in other parts of the world are on par with the

modern education system in the developed countries. For the most part those credentials are recognized within the framework of immigration, which is a federal matter, but I am willing to play my role if I can help in any way to change that and facilitate that for the newcomers.

The second thing: the member mentioned how I am helping Albertans during these tough times. As I indicated, the throne speech has outlined many initiatives and priorities that will help Albertans get back to work, and I'm certainly part of those discussions, and I fully support those initiatives. The first bill that was introduced in this House was focused on job creation and economic diversification, and that certainly indicates that that's the priority of our government, that's our priority as a caucus as a whole for us and to get Albertans back to work. There are many investments and initiatives that are listed in the throne speech, and I'm confident that those initiatives will help Albertans to get back to work, and I fully support those initiatives.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting to note the educational background of the hon. member. I have a particular interest in economics, of course, as you might have guessed, and I would be interested to know, based on the education you have in economics, your thoughts on governments taking limits off spending. From your educational background could you maybe explain to all of us your thoughts on borrowing money for operational expenditures by a government and the impact that might have?

Thank you. [The time limit for questions and comments expired]

The Speaker: I don't think you'll get the opportunity.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the last session of the Legislature I was able to stand and deliver my maiden speech. Those 15 minutes were easily filled because St. Albert is a remarkable community. I won't tell you that it's the most beautiful, but it is. [interjection] Thank you. St. Albert is remarkable in a lot of ways. It's remarkable for its history – it's one of the oldest communities in Alberta – for its growth, and for its people. There are a lot of famous people that come from St. Albert: Lois Hole, Jarome Iginla, and Mark Messier, to name a few.

St. Albert has been recognized nationally as one of the best places to raise a family. I could go on and on, but I won't. That's not what I'm going to focus on today.

10:10

Always the nerd, I used to watch question period on my computer while I was working, and I can remember saying so many times: I wish I could get all of those people trapped in a room for about an hour so I could let them know what I think about certain issues. Surprise.

I wanted to explain some of the issues about the sector that I worked in most of my adult life, so I'm going to give you a little history. Before being elected the MLA for St. Albert, I was the executive director of the Lo-Se-Ca Foundation. I managed an organization in St. Albert that was one of the largest employers in that community, and we offered community supports for people with developmental disabilities. We offered residential supports, which means we had staff go into people's homes so they could live independently in the community, as independently as possible, from living in their own apartment, their own condominium to having a roommate, having a couple of roommates. We also offered

employment supports and day program supports, all the way from supporting someone to do volunteer work in the community to helping someone find a job that they wanted and making sure that that job was doable for them.

The lens that I viewed St. Albert through was always focused on the people of St. Albert with disabilities, their families, and their friends, so I'd like to share some of those things, and I'd like to tell you about some remarkable St. Albertans that you probably have never heard of but were giants in my life.

Bryan Muntjewerff: he's no longer with us. He grew up in St. Albert. He lived his whole life in St. Albert. His family was instrumental in getting the Special Olympics started in St. Albert. It actually was his dream to have his own place, to live as independently as possible, and with staff support he did do that. For the last 15 years of his life, I believe, he had his own condominium. He participated in his community, and he volunteered.

Sonny Rochette was a young man, originally from Quebec, who also wanted to live as independently as possible: have a job, have a girlfriend, get married one day. That didn't turn out. He died at a very young age, but we were able to be part of his life and to support him.

Len Bambush, another fellow who's no longer here, spent the majority of his life in the Michener Centre. He was taken there as an infant, grew up there, but in his 40s actually managed to transition to the community. We were lucky enough to get him, so we were able to support him for about 15 years, I believe, and he was able to live out the end years of his life in the community with friends. He didn't have family anymore, but he had friends. He had a meaningful life.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I would encourage you to raise your voice.

Ms Renaud: Oh, sure.

Joanne Lewis, another woman, who was all of about four foot two, was the most powerful woman I've ever met. She had Down syndrome, and she always wanted to have her own life in the community, and she did. She lived her life that way. She lived her life exactly the way she wanted to.

Lastly, Gordon Opleta, another man who we supported to live in the community, to have a job. He was somebody that had the same job for 20 years. I don't think he ever had a sick day. I don't think he was ever late, and I don't think he ever had a mean word to say to anybody.

These were giants in St. Albert. These were people who shaped my life, but what I wanted to say about them is that none of them ever suffered from a disability. None of them were defined by the disability that they did have, and they were only the most vulnerable when their power was given away by a label. They were always people first.

Getting back to the point of having you locked in a room, I wanted to explain a little bit about this sector because I think it is very complex. It was very complex for me to learn when I first started out. Persons with developmental disabilities is a department of a very large ministry. What it supports are people with developmental disabilities right across Alberta, and it provides supports, staff supports, for them to live in the community and for them to work in the community.

AISH is a whole separate issue. It's assured income for the severely handicapped. It provides income to people who are unable to work, and it allows them to also live in the community. I think there are many times that people get those things confused. Housing is very much a separate issue in many ways from supports for people with disabilities.

I've said a number of times in this House that, you know, we use the word "inclusion" a great deal. I want to remind you that inclusion is a verb. It's not a buzzword. I think that we have to be careful when we use it because we have to back it up. There are approximately 10,000 people in Alberta that are supported by PDD. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of people who work in this sector. I'm pretty sure that in every single constituency right across this province there are people with disabilities and there are people that work in this sector.

In 2009 a woman with Down syndrome died in a flashover flame fire. At the time of the fire she was in a basement, and she tragically died of smoke inhalation. A couple of other very tragic incidents involved some scalding deaths. As a result, you may have heard that there were some safety standards that were drafted by the bureaucracy of PDD at that time. There were eight actually. They focused on safety inside and out of the home, furnishings, environmental requirements, medication administration, water temperature, compliance with the Safety Codes Act, zoning, and inspection by public health. There were some strange exceptions to those regulations, but I won't get into that.

What that was was an example of absolutely well-meaning regulations and work done by a group of people that were absolutely well-meaning, but they missed the mark. They missed the mark because they did not consult the people. They didn't consult the people whose lives were affected by these changes. As a result – and I'm sure you've heard recently – there was a lot of confusion, there was a lot of anger, and there was a lot of talk about these regulations really missing the point and, really, in a way, bubble-wrapping people with disabilities to the extent that it removed choice.

If we didn't already know this, I'm certain we've learned in the last 12 months, for sure since May 5, that active engagement by families and communities is at the heart of social and cultural reform. People with disabilities, their families, their friends, unpaid supports know that community living is essential. The alternative is segregation and congregation, and we all know those ugly stories. We know the ugly legacy of eugenics, forced sterilization. I was so thrilled to see us all stand in the House out of respect to Leilani O'Malley Muir, who died just a few weeks ago. This woman was a fierce advocate. She was sterilized for failing an IQ test, and she successfully sued the province of Alberta in 1995.

The reason that I was telling you a little bit about the PDD safety standards and the services that we as a government offer was that what was incredibly meaningful for me – and I never would have believed this over a year ago – is that we actually had the ability to go back and to consult where a consultation should have happened. I am thankful to the Minister of Human Services, who chose to strike a committee to look at these regulations. This was a very, very different consultation than what we were used to. During my time in the sector I can't even count the consultations that I had been to. I don't really know why sometimes they were called consultations; they were more of a lecture.

But these consultations were about sitting down and having conversations with people, and I think the first few were a bit odd. People walked in the room and didn't really know what to do. Where do I go? Who's speaking? When does it start? We had to let them know: no, we're just here to listen. Just sit down. We have some very general questions for you. Tell us what's working. Tell us what you'd like to see and what your ideas are. Again, it was very unusual to do a consultation like that, but it was so incredibly meaningful. I think we received over 1,200 online submissions, and I think we met with about 750 people across Alberta. We stopped in Westlock, Grande Prairie, Edmonton of course, Calgary, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and Fort McMurray. I understand

that people are busy – I get that – but I was really disappointed that there wasn't even one MLA from any of the opposition who showed up at these consultations.

10:20

One of the biggest questions that we asked people at those consultations is: what is safety? What makes your home safe, and what makes you safe? What we heard again and again and again is that what makes people safe is a real home in a real community, no different than ours, no different than people without disabilities. What makes people safe is a decent income, a job, access to qualified and consistent staff. Certainly, every Albertan deserves to live in the safest environment possible, but we can't legislate all aspects of people's lives. What we heard very loud and clear was that more than anything people with disabilities, their families, their friends, their biggest fear was of creating a home that looked like an institution. What keeps people safe is learning from tragedies and creating inclusive policies that don't create more complex barriers.

Our next steps are phase 2. You heard last week that the PDD safety standards were repealed. I am so incredibly thankful. The many, many people that I know in St. Albert, people with disabilities, their families, are overjoyed, and I don't think any of us ever imagined that this would happen.

These are very complex issues. I hope that my time here has created a little better understanding, and I hope that you'll remember at least some of what I've said when you face difficult choices that shape policy for people with disabilities, their families, and their friends. I hope that you're all better equipped to make informed decisions.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you so much to the member for her comments. I really do appreciate them.

I have been doing some significant work in the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills on this particular file and engaging with service providers and individuals that require assistance. On behalf of the people of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills and particularly individuals in this community that raised many of the concerns with me that you have raised in the House today, I appreciate the work that you're doing on that file in whatever way the work is getting done. I know that there are members of this caucus who are passionate about this particular issue, particularly my hon. colleague from Chestermere-Rocky View and some of her personal experiences in this region. There is so much important work that needs to be done in and around this file. There is a long way to go, and I appreciate the work that's been accomplished on the safety standards and an effort to try and get that right.

From the members of the PDD community that I represent, from myself, I appreciate that work and hope that in future – unfortunately I was unable to make it to the closest event, and the only one that I could have gotten to was in Fort McMurray, which was distance prohibitive. I do appreciate the work that has been done.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to respond quickly. At one of the consultations, actually in Red Deer, there were a number of people from the surrounding communities that did tell me how supported they felt by their MLA, who was actually

willing to listen and had gone out of their way to listen. So thank you.

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

Ms Fitzpatrick: First of all, thank you very much to the member for her speech. This is an area that touches me quite personally because I have a hearing impairment challenge. I was at the meeting in Lethbridge, and I got incredible feedback from those persons who attended that meeting.

Could you share a little bit some of the major issues that you heard about when you were doing your consultation?

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Renaud: Thank you. The biggest thing that we heard was that people wanted to be consulted. Before decisions were made, whether it was about funding or the structure of a system, people wanted to be heard and consulted. Safety was less about sprinklers and fire extinguishers and slow-burn drywall, and it was more about inclusion. It was about being accepted in the community, being part of the community, being employed in the community. That was what we heard again and again everywhere we went. You know, I wasn't totally surprised, but it was incredible to hear it from hundreds of people across the province.

Thank you.

Ms McKittrick: Mr. Speaker, I've been really touched by the fact that the MLA for St. Albert actually named people that she worked with in her speech because very often we don't recognize people that we have worked with. I wanted to really thank the member for that.

I also wanted to thank her for her work that she has done on the PDD review. I was really interested in what she and the minister thought would happen in the second phase of the PDD review.

Ms Renaud: Thank you. Well, the regulations that were created are repealed, but they do need to be replaced with something that will keep people safe. Although it sounds like a very simple question, I think the task ahead of us is huge. I don't think that at the very beginning we envisioned this process going as long or being as complex as it is, but I am quite thankful that we're going to be given the time to do this properly. I'm not entirely sure what phase 2 will look like, but it will look at crafting or designing some solutions based on what we heard and then testing them and then really listening to people.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today in reply to the Speech from the Throne for the 29th Legislative Assembly of this great province of Alberta. I'd like to begin by thanking the Hon. Lois Mitchell, who is doing Alberta proud in her work as Alberta's 18th Lieutenant Governor. I'd also like to take this moment to congratulate our Premier for leading us into a new government and for all of the advice and work that I have been able to accomplish with her. She's served as a role model in my involvement with politics.

I'd also like to take a moment to congratulate the new ministers of cabinet, but especially our minister responsible for the status of women. As you know, this minister is also a new mother, the first in Alberta to give birth while in office. Minister McLean's bright and steadfast spirit is not only something I deeply admire; her spirit

also reminds me of the strength and persistence in my constituency of Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Each time I enter a meeting with my constituency, I see a fierce love and dedication to their community reflected in their eyes. I see dedication to co-operation and knowledge of how to get things done. I have a deep respect and appreciation for this community, and it holds a special place in my heart, having been the first place I called home upon arriving in Canada.

See, I was born in Colombia, and my family immigrated to Alberta when I was five years old to pursue a better life. My brother and I and my parents, too, went through a huge culture shock. I was born blocks away from an ocean in a small town that barely had running water. We were to move to Sherwood Park. It was a vibrant community, but it's quite different from where I was used to. Often my brother and I were told we were being too rambunctious, and I struggled to learn English. When you live by an ocean, you talk louder. It serves me well here, but maybe it didn't back then.

10:30

The community of Sherwood Park was so welcoming that that's where we thrived. My dad taught me to step outside of my comfort zone and start public speaking from a very young age. I remember a lot of microphones being put in my hand with very little instruction as to what I was supposed to do next. He was a leader in the Spanish community in Sherwood Park and the surrounding areas, and a lot of new Canadians would have his phone number and would call him up as soon as they arrived in order to get help in getting employment and guidance in situating their new lives here without family. So I remember sitting under tables playing games as a young child, listening to a lot of stories of resilience, hardships, and new beginnings. A lot of these immigrants, from refugees to the newly immigrated, created a lot of sacrifices in order to get here, and from them I learned that I have the motivation to make sure that there are opportunities for everyone moving forward.

My mother worked with people with disabilities. I started helping her when I was 12, babysitting children with autism and learning more about behavioural strategies. I followed in her footsteps and became an educational assistant for children with disabilities before focusing on my social work studies. My mother also helped me figure out that resilience is one of our strongest qualities as humans.

You know, the MLA for St. Albert was discussing the importance of working with communities with disabilities, and I absolutely agree with that. I actually have a learning disability myself. I actually learned to read using some of my technical skills, and, luckily for me, my mother was a speech pathologist. I actually didn't know how to read very well until I was in junior high. I learned to read by programming the first iPod at that time, and I converted it into something that was visually something that I could actually read. What I know from that is that our ability to problem solve allows for the adaptations necessary for anyone to be successful.

You see, my parents always taught me the value of community spirit and the importance of helping to take care of others, and they always encouraged me to challenge myself and to step into leadership roles. It's an attitude that I see everywhere in my constituency. I want to express my deepest appreciation for the sacrifices my parents made in putting their children first and moving to Alberta to ensure a brighter future for us children. It requires a lot of sacrifices from immigrant parents in sacrificing their own future for us.

Being one of the first elected openly LGBTQ Hispanic MLAs – and I don't think it takes long to realize that I am also one of the youngest and definitely the youngest whip in Alberta's history – it

is clear that these sacrifices are not only worth while but that I am proud of this province and what this recent election has shown to a lot of minority groups, that this is a welcoming and inclusive province, abundant with opportunity. It's a message well received by those minority groups when I go to visit youth, when I go to visit LGBTQ communities and Spanish-speaking communities. Largely they've been left out of the mainstream conversation, and to be able to identify within the language and the community that they come from is a significant step forward.

I'd like to acknowledge my partner, Aleisha, who has been instrumental to my overall success. She is my sounding board and my calm in the storm, keeping me grounded, which allows me to be at my best and to focus on serving my constituents. As you might know, this job can be a little time consuming, and I am grateful that she is always there to bring some balance into my life. Aleisha has been an Edmontonian all of her life. She is coming to love Sherwood Park as she gets to know the community.

Strathcona-Sherwood Park is a community made of leaders. From business leaders to agricultural leaders to educational leaders, we are what it means to be rural, and we are deeply proud of our diversity. The advantages of rural-urban constituencies are apparent to many that visit our community. Our agricultural sector regularly works hand in hand with our business sector to find solutions to issues of our province and that our world is facing.

If any of you have had a chance to visit the Beaver Hills initiative, you'll know what I mean. The Beaver Hills initiative was recently designated as a UNESCO biosphere reserve to conserve the valuable cultural and ecological resources that exist within my community. This initiative will not only provide rural landowners with economic incentive to take advantage of their natural capital; it will also create new business opportunities for agriculture and rural tourism in a sustainable way. Much of our sense of pride comes from innovation like the Beaver Hills initiative and contributions we regularly make to the world around us.

Acreages, farms, and ranches make up a large part of my constituency, and on a smaller scale my constituents are proven stewards of the land. Many of my constituents work in the Industrial Heartland as well, whose contributions to Alberta's economy are remarkable.

Our innovations in refining have provided many of the building blocks necessary to capitalize on the province's new petrochemicals diversification program. Adding more value to our resources while creating economic activity and jobs is more important than ever. Our government made a commitment to support greater economic growth and diversification, and we're acting on that commitment. The new petrochemicals diversification program will help our province compete for new investment and job opportunities by turning our raw resources into foundations needed for plastics and other goods. My constituents are excited about this opportunity to strengthen our local economy and contribute to the economic success of Albertans and all Canadians.

I would be remiss not to mention one of the groups that drives economic activity in Strathcona county, the Strathcona and district chamber of commerce. They work tirelessly through luncheons, breakfasts, trade shows, and many more networking opportunities, and they play a vital role in supporting our business sector and are always willing participants in both government and community activities.

I've said it once, and I'll say it again: Strathcona-Sherwood Park is a community made of leaders. Leadership is cultivated in my constituency through a culture of empowerment. Residents are empowered and inspired to join community leagues and start businesses and join their condo boards. Many opt for all three

because they know that the opportunity to have your voice heard is endless. They believe in the power of consultation and advocacy.

One of the most vocal groups in my constituency is Seniors United Now. I had the pleasure of sitting down with about 40 seniors to discuss ideas for a better Alberta. One of their main concerns was affordable housing. Many of our seniors have been living in the constituency for decades and are intent on continuing to contribute to their communities for the years to come. We all know that Albertans deserve to live in a safe and secure home no matter what their income. Seniors built this province, and we need to do the best we can for the wisdom-givers of our community.

I was pleased to share with them the fact that our community, our government have made affordable housing a priority, and we are working with the federal and municipal governments to find a solution that will increase flexibility and sustainability in the current affordable housing system. We must take care of one another, and I know that on the municipal level, as previously mentioned, there has been a task force in our county that reflects the need for affordable housing and proposes some recommendations. That also reflects the mantra that we must take care of one another.

When it comes to walking the walk, our emergency response teams are a strong example of this. Our community, like many others, struggles with domestic violence. Many folks from our emergency response system have ties to women's shelters and serve our communities, and they make an effort to raise awareness and provide volunteer assistance to these members of our community that are in a vulnerable situation. This dedication to gender equity is important to the communities across this province and a priority for our government. Alberta's Ministry of Status of Women is focused on decreasing violence against women and girls, increasing leadership and democratic participation, and increasing women's economic security. We know that we cannot build a stronger, more prosperous province if we leave women behind. That is why our caucus is committed to including the voices of women in our policies, programs, and legislation, and Alberta will be better off for it.

10:40

Strathcona-Sherwood Park is an example in community collaboration. This is an expansive constituency spread through many communities, but they always find ways to connect with each other. Strathcona county came together to build a rec centre in Ardrossan, providing those rural communities with access to much-needed services. They have created a bookmobile, essentially a travelling library, that becomes a weekend hub of connection for the surrounding communities.

In December I had the privilege of visiting many community leagues in Strathcona-Sherwood Park, and I would encourage every member of the House to buy a ticket to the Christmas in the Country event, where you get on a bus in the morning and tour through my fantastic constituency. I won't get into a fight about who has the best community. This bus makes a stop at various community leagues, providing an opportunity for you to explore the diverse and beautiful parts of the province, meet interesting locals, and acquire all the gifts that you may need for the holiday season.

Albertans voted for a government that would begin investing in their future immediately. This means investing in their schools, roads, health care, and public services. Strathcona-Sherwood Park is filled with advocates, experts, and private citizens passionate about being engaged and involved in the democratic process, that is leading Alberta to more prosperity. I'm honoured to support and collaborate with these inspired people in a journey to a stronger and better Alberta.

My constituency elected me to be a fresh, young, new voice, and it is time for these new voices and new faces to create an opportunity for all Albertans to be reflected in the Legislature. I believe that our caucus has the energy, the tenacity, and the diversity of abilities and knowledge required to lead Albertans through this challenging time. I look forward to the coming opportunities to represent my constituency.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that, I move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

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

Bill 4 An Act to Implement a Supreme Court Ruling Governing Essential Services

The Chair: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm really pleased to rise and speak to Bill 4, An Act to Implement a Supreme Court Ruling Governing Essential Services, here in Committee of the Whole. During the debate at second reading there were a lot of really good questions asked about this legislation, and I'm really excited to get into more of a dialogue about this bill and what we're doing with it.

Just to frame the discussion, the purpose of this bill is to bring Alberta's public-sector labour relations legislation into alignment with the directions from the Supreme Court of Canada and the Court of Queen's Bench, making sure that workers have the right to join a union if they so choose, to collectively bargain, and the right to strike, that was deemed to be fundamental. What we've tried to do with this legislation is to strike the right balance between the right to strike and making sure we're protecting vital public services. With that, we have implemented a framework that puts the responsibility on the two parties to come together to negotiate an essential services agreement. Both parties need to come to the table in good faith, and it puts a lot of that negotiation and that determination of what is essential on the parties, who understand each work environment the best.

When looking at setting up this legislation and looking across the country at the types of essential services approaches, we found that across Canada there are generally two types, a co-operation centred approach, in which both parties work together to negotiate essentiality, or the mandate-centred approach, where the government makes a determination and says, "This is essential; that is essential," and names, perhaps, specific job titles or other specific determinations. It was a mandate-centred approach in Saskatchewan that was ruled inappropriate by the Supreme Court, so Alberta has chosen to use a co-operation centred approach and, in determining this legislation, has really focused on creating a system that is going to allow the parties to work together to come to an amenable conclusion.

With that – I won't go on at length at this point – I am looking forward to the discussion and working with all of my colleagues to get the best Bill 4 we can. Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's important that any legislation like this, which pertains to integral and often life-saving services that Albertans depend on, is carefully scrutinized. The legislation as presented lays out minimal requirements for the contents of an essential services agreement, but as worded it allows for the government to quietly expand upon those regulations at a later date. In fact, the way the legislation is laid out, those requirements that are in the legislation and those that can be quietly added on at a later date would be requirements of equal significance. This backdoor ability allows the government to make significant changes to essential services agreements without the oversight and transparency of the Legislative Assembly.

I wish to introduce an amendment to address this. Now, I have the requisite number of copies of the amendment. Just let me know when you would like me to continue reading.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Hunter: Madam Chair, I move that Bill 4, An Act to Implement a Supreme Court Ruling Governing Essential Services, be amended in section 8 in the proposed section 95.41: (a) in subsection (1) by striking out clause (g) and (b) by striking out subsection (4).

There's nothing in the Supreme Court decision that promoted this legislation requiring backdoor regulatory expansion of the mandatory contents of an essential services agreement. I want to be clear that this is not meant as an indictment of the current government or the minister. Frankly, it isn't helpful if any government of any political stripe is able to make significant alterations to what is required to be in an essential services agreement. Given the significance of essential services legislation any expansion of what needs to be in such an agreement should be given proper oversight through the Legislative Assembly. The requirements of what is to be in an essential services agreement between the two sides at the bargaining table is perhaps one of the most consequential parts of any legislation on essential services. Accordingly, it should be given due scrutiny and legislative oversight when changes are sought.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Albertans need to know that essential services agreements will be thorough and capture the unique aspects of each workplace in order to ensure vital public services are maintained during a strike or lockout. The section that is being amended, section 95.41(1), defines the contents of an essential services agreement, stating that "an essential services agreement must include at least" and then goes into some of those minimum requirements.

10:50

The intention of this section and the inclusion of (g) was to allow the government a little bit of flexibility in that definition of what's required in an ESA should it need to be expanded as the parties enter into essential services negotiations for the first time in Alberta. I do want to be clear that there was no intention here to pass the legislation and immediately add regulations, rather more the thought that this is something new and if we needed to add additional items, through regulation might be a way to do that.

That being said, I can understand the opposition's hesitancy to support this section. We do have other mechanisms. The legislation allows the parties themselves to add additional requirements to an essential services agreement, depending on the nature of the workplace. The commissioner will have the authority to send an

essential services agreement back to the parties if he or she feels that the requirements to meet essential services for a particular workplace have not been met.

Our government has committed to working with all parties. I know that I myself have enjoyed that privilege as chair of the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee and then through my role as minister, being able to reach out to opposition critics and have these discussions. So I really appreciate that this is a reasonable amendment. I know that I and my other government members are prepared to accept reasonable ideas and good suggestions regardless of where they may come from. That's not something that's always been the case in this House, but I think it makes sense.

With that, I am prepared to support this amendment. I am interested to hear what others in this House might think of this, but I think removing the referral to regulations would be reasonable and that the other mechanisms we have in the legislation will ensure that we still have good essential services agreements being negotiated by the parties.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Why, thank you, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to rise today and speak to the amendment. I'd like to begin by thanking the minister for her comments and just acknowledging that she is right when she says that good ideas can come from anywhere. I know that from time to time the government likes to say that we have no good ideas, but we can all circle the calendar today because the day has come where we had one.

Anyway, I think it's wonderful that we have the opportunity to have a conversation about this. I certainly would have preferred the ability to have this conversation at the committee level so that we could have had other voices, not just legislators' voices. But we're going to spend the rest of the morning and likely some of the afternoon talking about a number of amendments that the opposition is going to propose.

Our goal when we come to the Assembly isn't just to oppose the government. We will bring a number of amendments this afternoon, all with the same intent of strengthening a piece of legislation. There are many good things about this piece of legislation. Many of those things have been set out by the Supreme Court, and we need to ensure that we are respectful of that decision.

Certainly, I know that the government, when they were the fourth party, would have spoken out strongly against this particular provision, where it would have resulted in a consolidating of power into regulations, and those are often in the minister's office. So it's great to see them today being respectful of some of the things that they have said in the past and ensuring that these sorts of loopholes, where governments can change regulations on the fly without the proper scrutiny of the Assembly, are tidied up.

I hope that in the future we're going to be able to find other areas, perhaps even areas in other legislation that have been passed over the recent years. Not to harp on it, you know, but we've seen Bill 6 pass and now all the regulations coming after. I appreciate that the government perhaps has heeded some of the warnings when we pass legislation and do regulation after, and this amendment prevents that sort of action.

So I am also pleased to stand in support of this amendment that puts accountability, trust, transparency into the hands of the Assembly and works to reduce some of the consolidation of power in and around the minister's office.

The Chair: The hon. minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to rise to speak in support of this amendment. I think it needs to be outlined that our government is very committed to working with all parties in this House, and it is important to recognize that the purpose of Committee of the Whole is really to provide an opportunity for members to bring forward amendments in order to strengthen bills and act in the best interests of Albertans. Having reviewed this amendment, I do agree with my colleague the hon. Minister of Labour in her assessment that this one provision is not necessary in the bill and her support of the hon. member who moved this amendment in the first place. So I'm happy to support that.

I just wanted to make a note, Madam Chair, that in previous years, when I sat as one of four members of the fourth party, there were times where I approached the previous government with amendments that were quite reasonable and strengthened a bill, which again is the intention and purpose of Committee of the Whole and the reason for our democratic system having multiple parties and perspectives represented. Quite frankly, there were times where I was told that the previous government would not accept an amendment because it came from our party, which I think is quite disappointing for the fact of the matter that it shouldn't matter where an amendment comes from or who's putting it forward. We want the best ideas possible in order to bring forward the best quality of legislation. Again, if our goal is to serve in the best interests of all Albertans, then that's in fact what we should be doing.

With that, I will conclude my remarks and urge all members of the Assembly to support this amendment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any further speakers, questions, or comments with respect to amendment A1?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[Motion on amendment A1 carried]

The Chair: Moving back onto the bill, are there any further comments, questions, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's been a great day so far, and we'll see whether we can keep this going.

Now, we appreciate the government's recognition that illegal strikes and lockouts that violate essential services agreements should face monetary penalties. Regrettably, the monetary penalty proposed is a mere symbolic gesture. The legislation as presented only fines unions up to \$1,000 per day for an illegal strike, which is not an adequate penalty or deterrent for an illegal strike whatsoever. The same principle applies to employers who wage illegal lockouts.

I wish to amend the legislation to remedy this situation. I have the requisite number of copies, and I'd like to present them now.

The Chair: Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that Bill 4, An Act to Implement a Supreme Court Ruling Governing Essential Services, be amended in section 33: (a) in the proposed section 70(1) by striking out "\$1000" and substituting "\$ 750 000" and (b) in the proposed section 71(1) by striking out "\$1000" and substituting "\$ 750 000."

11:00

If we agree that essential services provide much-needed services and that anyone who willingly and deliberately seeks to interrupt

those services should be penalized, then it naturally follows that there should be real penalties, not symbolic ones. Further, if a big union can afford to easily wage illegal strikes or if a large employer, for that matter, can easily afford an illegal lockout, then not only does that negatively affect workers, but it cheapens the value of essential services for everyone. I think everyone here can be in agreement on this. If we are to recognize that something is illegal, that a certain act should be discouraged and penalized, then we had better make sure that any such response actually has the desired effect.

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. We brought this legislation forward because of the Supreme Court of Canada ruling, making sure that we are respecting the fundamental right to strike of our workers and balancing that right with the need to protect our vital public services, maintaining health, safety, and well-being as well as public security while we're doing that.

With the amendment that's been proposed,

in the proposed section ... by striking out "\$1000" and substituting "\$ 750 000",

we are treading into territory – the Supreme Court did not address these types of prohibitions. As well, it's my understanding that during the consultation process adjustments to the amounts were not part of that consultation, so this is something that we haven't had an opportunity to talk to the stakeholders involved about. I would want to do that to understand the implications. I would suggest that this is potentially a good conversation to have, but it might be better suited for a larger discussion around labour legislation in the future because I would want to engage all the necessary stakeholders.

Again, we are interested here in protecting workers' rights, protecting the public service, and making sure that we're putting forward solid legislation that does that, and I don't think that this change to the penalty amounts helps in that case. So I will not be supporting this amendment, but I look forward to hearing additional comments on this.

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Madam Chair. We had a good thing going there for eight minutes.

It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the amendment and to respond to some comments from the minister. Here we have a perfect example of the case that I made yesterday about this type of legislation going to a policy committee. It's highly technical, and clearly it's not perfect. We just heard the minister say that she didn't have an opportunity to consult all the stakeholders. Yesterday we were given the impression that the Sims report did everything that it needed to do, and now, less than 24 hours later, we see a part of the legislation that the minister acknowledges might be a good idea, but we haven't had the time to have the discussion on some of the implications that it may or may not have around the Supreme Court ruling.

It pains me to think that we're going to likely, because there's a lot of support in the House, pass a piece of legislation that we acknowledge on the second day of debate is flawed. Listen, Madam Chair, we're never going to get to a spot where it is absolutely one hundred per cent perfect, foolproof, is never going to need another change, but the fact is that we haven't even got it close to the finish line yet, and we've already acknowledged that it might need some more study, that we need to contact some stakeholders, that we need

to get some feedback around how it may or may not impact the Supreme Court ruling.

If it currently doesn't impact the Supreme Court ruling to say that it could be \$1,000 a day, what is inside the Supreme Court ruling that's preventing an actual deterrent? While we recognize that \$1,000 per day may be a significant amount for a small employer or a small union, \$1,000 a day for a massive employer or a massive union is pocket change to some. There is no deterrent in \$1,000 a day. We've taken these steps, recognized that there's a flaw in the legislation, proposed a solution. Our solution doesn't say that it will be \$750,000 a day, because that wouldn't be reasonable either, but that it could be up to that, so I think that it's very reasonable.

I think it's quite unfortunate that the government has chosen not to recognize that there are some unquities in the size of employers or unions. I think it's unfortunate that the government has recognized that this is a potential challenge in the legislation, one that we might have to come back as soon as the fall to fix, when this all could have been done and corrected by sending the legislation to committee and moving forward at that point. We would have been able to bring in experts on the Supreme Court ruling, experts around some of the other issues, and have this very discussion and then, when we pass the legislation, have the best piece of legislation that we could offer to Albertans.

So I'm disappointed on that hand, and I'm also disappointed that we haven't acknowledged the fact that up to \$1,000 per day for an illegal strike or lockout is, quite frankly, a little embarrassing. I would encourage members on the other side to support the legislation based on that information, and I hope that there's some continued debate.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much. I'm pleased to rise to respond to some of the comments that I just heard. The penalty amounts were not inside the scope of the Supreme Court ruling, and it really isn't the case that it was a flawed process or flawed legislation in this case. Rather, it's the case that we asked our experts as well as all of the stakeholders that we brought in to participate on this to take a look at how an essential services agreement could work in Alberta and to help us create that made-in-Alberta solution. It was an opportunity to potentially open up Alberta's labour legislation incredibly broadly and to make changes throughout, but this government very deliberately chose to take a narrowed focus, to look at the pieces that were key within the essential services agreement framework.

As well, it's my understanding that in many cases board-levied fines are largely irrelevant because the most common process is to file board orders in court and then ask for civil or criminal contempt penalties. Essentially, with what we're talking about now, these fine amounts are not likely to play in very often, and I think it will make sense to refer to a larger, more fulsome labour codes review process going forward, where we're looking at things beyond the scope of the Supreme Court ruling.

I look forward to the opposition engaging in that process when it's taking place as they had the opportunity to engage in this process because it was public. Over the year we used an expert, Andy Sims, a renowned labour lawyer. We had stakeholders from both sides. We engaged the public through surveys. We asked all Albertans what they were thinking on this piece and consulted fulsomely as well as provided technical briefings to all involved.

Again, I will continue to not support this amendment. I appreciate the comments, but certainly the references to flaws when we're talking about pieces that aren't necessary to be changed around the Supreme Court ruling – I just wanted to comment on that.

Thank you.

11:10

The Chair: The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a couple of questions for the hon. minister regarding what I perceive to be some contradictory statements. First of all, if this fine amount of \$750,000 in this amendment falls outside the purview of the Supreme Court, why do we have a fine amount of up to \$1,000 included in this document?

Furthermore, if a more fulsome consultation is required before we can consider this yet the hon minister just went through a great lengthy explanation of just how much consultation went into this already, we have some contradiction here. On the one hand she's suggesting that more consultation is needed before we can address this issue of \$750,000, but then there was this great long list of consultation that she claims did take place in regard to this bill. So we have some contradictions here.

If the fine amount is outside the purview of the Supreme Court, why is there even the \$1,000 figure in here? If it is within the purview, then why is it so small? And if there was all of this consultation that took place, why in the world was the \$1,000 figure even suggested? Just exactly who were the experts that were consulted in this? Might it be that they were all union people and that there were not very many people outside of that? These are contradictions this minister has made, and I would like her to answer, please.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much for the questions. I'm sensing a measure of distrust with those questions being asked, but I'm happy to discuss them quite clearly. The fine amount as it stands is the fine amount that was there before this consultation began. It has been the fine amount. I don't know if it's from the original drafting of this legislation in '88 or if it might have been adjusted throughout, but essentially this was the fine amount before we started the process. So we've not made any changes to that.

Section 70 read:

- (1) No person or trade union shall cause or attempt to cause a strike by the persons to whom this Act applies.
- (2) No person to whom this Act applies shall strike or consent to a strike.

It has the language that we explicitly need to remove to meet the Supreme Court ruling. This is a section that is touched because we need to adjust it so that it can say,

70(1) A trade union that causes a strike contrary to this Act is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding \$1000 for each day . . .

because the bill has changed the fundamental right to strike here in the province of Alberta.

So language throughout the Labour Relations Code as well as inside of PSERA needed to be adjusted. That's one of the reasons why Bill 4 is so lengthy. It's not because the essential services provisions are long – they're actually fairly condensed – but the ripple effect of those changes in the legislation needed to be handled carefully, and it involved touching many different sections. So that's why the fine amounts are there. They were there previously. That's why the section has changed, because the language needed to be changed, and if you read the old language, I think that is fairly clear.

Regarding the consultation that I am discussing, we had consultation regarding the implementation of the Supreme Court ruling to implement essential services here in Alberta very fulsomely with all members, not just with one side but all sides:

employers, employees, people impacted by the changes, people involved in the labour relations system as well as the public. The focus in that discussion was to talk about an essential services framework and how that system might look in Alberta going forward. The results of that conversation were incredibly detailed and included a lot of great information but did not include a recommendation around the fine amount and whether that should be changed.

Again, I refer to the fact that we could have looked at this as a very broad opportunity to make changes all across the Labour Relations Code, PSERA, to make major, sweeping changes, potentially. We've chosen to take a very narrow focus, to look at the essential services pieces, in this case changing sections – I'll refer to them as sections 70 to 73 although I'm certain that that's not the longer name of them – to accommodate essential services but not to change the fine amounts.

I hope that might clarify that we consulted extensively with all stakeholders. But there are things in the labour code that various stakeholders would like changed or looked at differently. The Official Opposition as a stakeholder may have things that you'd like us to review more thoroughly. A larger labour code review is appropriate and needed and long overdue because one hasn't been done in decades, and I look forward to considering how we might do that and to bringing a plan forward. In the meantime I'm very, very pleased with our made-in-Alberta solution that addresses Alberta's unique needs, making sure that our labour legislation is fair to unionized employees and employers while ensuring that essential public services are maintained for Albertans.

Thank you for your questions.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the minister for the answer. I just have actually one more question if I might ask. So it's up to \$1,000, but the question I have is: in terms of your legislation who will determine what that amount is? Is that the umpire? Is it the commissioner? Who determines that?

Ms Gray: Thank you very much for the question. The fine amounts in the case of an illegal strike or lockout are, I believe, determined by the courts, but I'm actually not a hundred per cent certain. I have many experts and assistants, potentially. When it comes to the fine amounts, there may be someone else who can answer that question for us.

The Chair: Any further questions or comments with respect to amendment A2? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Madam Chair. Basically, just a quick comment. I mean, what we're talking about in this section, of course, is wildcat strikes. Based on my experience in the labour world, when you're getting into a position of a wildcat strike, somewhere before that the one single thing that has happened has been a failure to communicate. Somewhere along the line somebody stopped listening, and the concerns that are being brought forward are not being addressed. A wildcat strike is just not something that you, you know, pull out of the drawer as a willy-nilly thing to do. It's gotten very, very serious when workers are prepared to go out in the midst of a contract period, feeling that their concerns have not been addressed. Most of the time it's usually been around things like health and safety, where the workers felt that their safety was imminently at threat.

When we start talking about putting very large sums of money as a deterrent to this, again it just simply does not solve the problem

of not listening to what those concerns are. So I just wanted to put that out there for folks.

The Chair: I'll recognize the hon. leader of the third party.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I always find it funny in here, the phrase "wildcat strike." It's an illegal strike. It's against the law. Trying to make it sound like it's not against the law doesn't serve this House very well and doesn't serve Alberta very well, when you're trying to make an illegal act sound like it's legal. It's not legal. The phrase is kind of offensive that way because, frankly, in my view, it's a way to disrespect the law, labelling something that's illegal and trying to make it sound like it is not.

11:20

I will say, more to the point on the legislation, that I heard the minister talk about a larger labour code review, which is probably a good idea. But it does beg the question that if the government is going to do a larger labour code review, why have they gone in this legislation beyond what the Supreme Court of Canada decision requires? If the government was only to put through what the Supreme Court of Canada requires – and I agree with that; actually, I'm not sure I've heard a single member of this House say along the way that they don't agree with that – then we could get this done easily.

The problem is that the government is trying to slip in other elements of legislation, a Trojan Horse as some would say. Others would just say that they're trying to do things in some cases that are beyond that legislation, that haven't been fully discussed and vetted. In my view, the proper place for that would be in the larger labour code review that the minister referred to. If along the way we can get the minister to agree to pass what the Supreme Court of Canada requires and take everything else out for now until we get to the larger labour code review, that would be a step forward and one that I would applaud.

Ms Fitzpatrick: I rise against this amendment, and I'm going to just refer to what the Member for Edmonton-Decore had said. I will refer to it as an illegal strike. I was involved in, actually brought in as a third party to, an illegal strike at the Grande Cache Institution. The issue at hand was the safety of the staff and other inmates at the institution. The institution had many blind spots, where there was no camera, where there was no ability to see if staff or an inmate were in a certain area, and staff had actually been attacked by inmates in the area. They'd gone to the department. They'd asked over and over and over again to at the very least put a camera into those blind spots so that there would be some semblance of safety for anybody who would be there. The department did not do that.

I'm not saying that an illegal strike was the best way to do it, but that's what happened. The staff could not tolerate putting their lives at risk every single shift when they worked, and they had an illegal strike. The result of that was that every staff member who was involved was fined, and they were prepared to live with that rather than lose their lives. Eventually the department fixed that problem. As my colleague said, those kinds of strikes do not happen unless there is something incredibly significant that occurs and is not being fixed. I would say that looking after your life when you're working in a correctional facility is a pretty significant reason for doing that. They had attempted to have that conversation over and over again with management and the department to no avail.

I am absolutely opposed to this amendment.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I would like to thank the Member for Lethbridge-East. I feel that was very important to say. It's also important to say that, actually, this amendment doesn't say that we should change the law in terms of the amounts because a wildcat strike is good or bad. It's not pointing that out. What it is saying is that if it's an illegal strike and we have changed now the labour laws under the Supreme Court ruling, this issue of a wildcat strike is actually not as needed in the environment that we now see in Alberta.

Remember that this amendment speaks not only to the union responsibilities but also to the business or to the government responsibilities as well, saying that if there is an illegal action taking place, the consequences will be severe. This is the reason why we've brought forward this reasonable amendment. We feel that it is a check and balance on the system so that this isn't being done willy-nilly, as the member said. This is something that they need to really think seriously about, that if they're going to go down this road, there are significant consequences to their actions.

And remember, once again, as the hon. member to my left said, this is an issue dealing with an illegal strike or an illegal action by a government or department or business. We're not talking about the right to strike. We know that the Supreme Court ruling has said that is a right. We're just talking about the nuances of this.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any further speakers to amendment A2? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Loyola: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to make a clarification. Let me just present the idea that when there is a wildcat strike, what's happening is that it's not the union itself that makes the decision that these members are just going to go out and cause the wildcat strike. I can think of no greater democratic process than the members from a workplace not even consulting their union and saying: hey, there's something here that's not okay. In most cases, as far as I know, it has to do with the workers' own safety, right? Not even their union is involved in the process of saying: hey, you should do this wildcat strike. They're not being told to do it. They're doing it because they see it as an infringement upon their safety while in the workplace.

Now, what happens when they do go on the wildcat strike? Well, it's the Labour Relations Board that would deem if it is an illegal strike, in their words, and then would ask the union to do something about it. It would be a judge that would then determine the amount of the fine, and it would be determined within the courts. Okay? Again, as my two colleagues here have expressed, this really has to do with workers themselves within their own workplace determining that there is a safety risk and then highlighting what that risk is for them to actually go on a wildcat strike. Fines are determined by the judge, and if it is an illegal strike, it is determined by the Labour Relations Board.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A2?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A2 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 11:29 a.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

For the motion:

| | | |
|--------|--------|-----------|
| Aheer | Ellis | MacIntyre |
| Cooper | Hunter | McIver |
| Cyr | Loewen | Panda |

Against the motion:

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|
| Anderson, S. | Ganley | McKittrick |
| Babcock | Goehring | McLean |
| Bilous | Gray | McPherson |
| Carlier | Hinkley | Miller |
| Carson | Horne | Miranda |
| Ceci | Kazim | Nielsen |
| Connolly | Kleinstauber | Piquette |
| Coolahan | Larivee | Renaud |
| Cortes-Vargas | Littlewood | Sabir |
| Dach | Loyola | Schmidt |
| Dang | Luff | Sigurdson |
| Drever | Malkinson | Sucha |
| Eggen | Mason | Sweet |
| Feehan | McCuaig-Boyd | Turner |
| Fitzpatrick | | |

| | | |
|---------|---------|--------------|
| Totals: | For – 9 | Against – 43 |
|---------|---------|--------------|

[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

The Chair: Back on the bill. Are there any further comments, questions, or amendments with respect to the bill? The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Chair. The legislation as presented removes the ability of a public-sector employer to bring in outside temporary workers to get the job done while there is an ongoing strike or negotiation. In no way, shape, or form did the Supreme Court decision require this. I am proposing an amendment to address this issue. I have the requisite number of copies, and I will present them to the Clerk.

The Chair: You can go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that Bill 4, An Act to Implement a Supreme Court Ruling Governing Essential Services, be amended in section 8 in the proposed section 95.41(3) by adding, "unless permitted by the essential services agreement" after "bargaining unit that is on strike or lockout."

As ministers of the Crown would know, they are responsible for the services their ministries provide to the public. This amendment simply allows those services to be provided while strikes and negotiations are still ongoing. This amendment is not – and I want to be absolutely clear about this – about an unfettered right to use replacement workers to get around negotiations. It simply amends the bill so that replacement workers can be allowed when both sides agree as part of their essential services contract. This is a fair measure, aimed at ensuring that Albertans can have access to essential services while respecting the rights of all parties.

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Madam Chair. With our essential services agreement framework we are asking both sides to come to the table in good faith and to come to an agreement together, termed an essential services agreement, where we are outlining an environment of what will happen during a strike or lockout. We want to ensure in the event of a work dispute that patients or anyone

impacted will be continually cared for and looked after throughout any strike or lockout or work action that may be happening.

11:50

The replacement worker discussion was held at consultation. It was something that various parties included in their submissions around what might make sense. My view on the replacement worker discussion is that we need to make sure that the agreement negotiated by the parties is what is used going forward. In this case the opposition has proposed an amendment that says, “unless permitted by the essential services agreement,” implying that a replacement worker provision might be negotiated into the essential services agreement, which I think is perhaps a misunderstanding of what’s happening.

If there is a function that needs to be continued during strike or lockout action, that needs to be determined as an essential service and provided by the members of that bargaining unit during the strike or lockout. If it’s work that’s not essential, then those workers deserve the right, as defined by the Supreme Court, to be out on the strike line. The idea that both parties might choose to include other parties or someone hired during a strike or lockout only is very unusual and is not something that I think would happen very often or at all as we look at this going forward.

The amendment as I read it adds “unless permitted by the essential services agreement” after “bargaining unit that is on strike or lockout” and begins on the premise that both parties, employer and employee, would come to an agreement that involves hiring outside employees in this case. This may not be in the best interest of Albertans because in many cases it is the employees who have worked in a facility – I’m thinking in this case about health care environments – who understand that work environment, who understand the patients, who understand the needs. In that case, through the essential services agreement we need to be determining that someone needs to stay and continue to perform those functions.

I’m looking forward to hearing more debate on this issue and discussion. At the current time I will not be supporting this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead, hon. leader of the third party, followed by the hon. minister.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Chair. I’m looking at this amendment – and I know I’ve had a couple of chats with the minister about this particular section – and I’ll ask members of the House to consider how important this might be. Of course, under the legislation anybody who is an essential service can’t strike anyway, so that wouldn’t apply. This is people that are not considered essential. But as we all know, “essential” is a word that means something different, probably, to every one of us in this room, right? I think the minister talked about health care workers and hospital workers. I think we could have a long and interesting discussion about who is essential and who is not in a hospital room. Is the person that mops up vomit and blood off the floor essential? I think there’s a pretty good argument for yes, and there are some arguments that some people could say no. Doctors and nurses, I think most people would say, are essential.

The Chair: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt, but pursuant to Standing Order 4(3) the committee will now rise and report.

Mr. McIver: Oh, okay. Thank you.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Northern Hills.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has under consideration certain bills. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 4. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? All in favour, say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed? So ordered.
The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. In view of the hour, I would move that the House stands adjourned until 1:30 this afternoon.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 11:55 a.m.]

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