



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Third Session

# Alberta Hansard

Tuesday morning, November 28, 2017

Day 57

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta**  
**The 29th Legislature**

Third Session

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

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (UCP),  
Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition  
Anderson, Hon. Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (NDP)  
Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (UCP)  
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (NDP)  
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)  
Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)  
Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (NDP)  
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (NDP)  
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (NDP)  
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)  
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (NDP)  
Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (NDP)  
Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP)  
Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (NDP),  
Government Whip  
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (UCP)  
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)  
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (NDP)  
Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (NDP)  
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UCP)  
Eggen, Hon. David, Edmonton-Calder (NDP)  
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP)  
Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP),  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (Ind)  
Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (NDP)  
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (Ind)  
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (NDP),  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (UCP),  
Official Opposition Deputy Whip  
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)  
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)  
Gray, Hon. Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)  
Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (UCP)  
Hinkley, Bruce, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (NDP)  
Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)  
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (NDP)  
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (UCP)  
Jansen, Hon. Sandra, Calgary-North West (NDP)  
Jean, Brian Michael, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (UCP)  
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (NDP)  
Kleinstauber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (NDP)  
Larivee, Hon. Danielle, Lesser Slave Lake (NDP),  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (NDP)  
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (UCP)  
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)

Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (NDP)  
MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)  
Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (NDP)  
Mason, Hon. Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP),  
Government House Leader  
McCuaig-Boyd, Hon. Margaret,  
Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (NDP)  
McIver, Ric, Calgary-Hays (UCP),  
Official Opposition Whip  
McKitrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (NDP)  
McLean, Hon. Stephanie V., Calgary-Varsity (NDP)  
McPherson, Karen M., Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (AP)  
Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (NDP)  
Miranda, Hon. Ricardo, Calgary-Cross (NDP)  
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)  
Nixon, Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (UCP),  
Leader of the Official Opposition,  
Official Opposition House Leader  
Notley, Hon. Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),  
Premier  
Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (UCP)  
Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (UCP)  
Payne, Hon. Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (NDP)  
Phillips, Hon. Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)  
Piquette, Colin, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (NDP)  
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (UCP),  
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader  
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)  
Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (NDP)  
Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (NDP)  
Schmidt, Hon. Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)  
Schneider, David A., Little Bow (UCP)  
Schreiner, Kim, Red Deer-North (NDP)  
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-Centre (NDP)  
Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)  
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP)  
Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)  
Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (UCP)  
Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (UCP)  
Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (NDP)  
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)  
Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (UCP)  
Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)  
van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (UCP)  
Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (NDP),  
Deputy Government Whip  
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (NDP)  
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)  
Vacant, Calgary-Lougheed

**Party standings:**

New Democratic: 54 United Conservative: 26 Alberta Party: 2 Alberta Liberal: 1 Progressive Conservative: 1 Independent: 2 Vacant: 1

**Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly**

Robert H. Reynolds, QC, Clerk  
Shannon Dean, Law Clerk and Director of  
House Services  
Trafton Koenig, Parliamentary Counsel  
Stephanie LeBlanc, Parliamentary Counsel

Philip Massolin, Manager of Research and  
Committee Services  
Nancy Robert, Research Officer  
Janet Schwegel, Managing Editor of  
*Alberta Hansard*

Brian G. Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms  
Chris Caughell, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms  
Paul Link, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms  
Gareth Scott, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms

### **Executive Council**

Rachel Notley	Premier, President of Executive Council
Sarah Hoffman	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health
Shaye Anderson	Minister of Municipal Affairs
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
Sandra Jansen	Minister of Infrastructure
Danielle Larivee	Minister of Children's Services
Brian Mason	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 Community and Social Services
Marlin Schmidt	Minister of Advanced Education
Lori Sigurdson	Minister of Seniors and Housing

### **Parliamentary Secretaries**

Jessica Littlewood	Economic Development and Trade for Small Business
Annie McKittrick	Education

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

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

Chair: Mr. Coolahan  
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Schreiner

Cyr	McKitrick
Dang	Taylor
Ellis	Turner
Horne	

**Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future**

Chair: Mr. Sucha  
Deputy Chair: Mr. van Dijken

Carson	McPherson
Connolly	Panda
Coolahan	Piquette
Dach	Schneider
Fitzpatrick	Schreiner
Gill	Taylor
Gotfried	

**Select Special Auditor General Search Committee**

Chair: Mr. Shepherd  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

Cyr	Littlewood
Gill	van Dijken
Horne	Woollard
Kleinstauber	

**Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

Chair: Ms Goehring  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Smith

Aheer	Miller
Drever	Orr
Hinkley	Shepherd
Horne	Swann
Jansen	Vacant
Luff	Yao
McKitrick	

**Standing Committee on Legislative Offices**

Chair: Mr. Shepherd  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

Drever	Nixon
Gill	Pitt
Horne	van Dijken
Kleinstauber	Woollard
Littlewood	

**Special Standing Committee on Members' Services**

Chair: Mr. Wanner  
Deputy Chair: Cortes-Vargas

Cooper	Nixon
Dang	Orr
Jabbour	Piquette
Luff	Schreiner
McIver	

**Standing Committee on Private Bills**

Chair: Ms McPherson  
Deputy Chair: Connolly

Anderson, W.	Kleinstauber
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

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

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Chair: Mr. Cyr  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Dach

Barnes	Malkinson
Fildebrandt	Miller
Fraser	Panda
Goehring	Renaud
Gotfried	Turner
Littlewood	Westhead
Luff	

**Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

Chair: Loyola  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Hunter

Babcock	Loewen
Clark	MacIntyre
Dang	Malkinson
Drysdale	Nielsen
Hanson	Rosendahl
Kazim	Woollard
Kleinstauber	

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

10 a.m.

Tuesday, November 28, 2017

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Acting Speaker:** Good morning.

Let us pray and reflect, each in our own way. As Canadians and as Albertans we give thanks for the precious gift of freedom and peace which we enjoy. As Members of this Legislative Assembly we rededicate ourselves to the valued tradition of parliamentary democracy as a means of serving the people of our province and our country. Amen.

Please be seated.

### Orders of the Day

#### Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

##### Bill 28 School Amendment Act, 2017

[Adjourned debate November 16: Mr. Eggen]

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 28, School Amendment Act, 2017. Bill 28 addresses a number of issues surrounding education and is in this sense an omnibus bill. The fact that the minister continues to delay the proclaiming of the Education Act and instead has chosen to amend the School Act is, on this side of the House, concerning simply because it continues the trend of a lack of clarity regarding the Education Act.

If the Education Act has serious flaws in the eyes of this government, then it should make it clear to Albertans that this government has no intention of proclaiming the Education Act. It should then be willing to articulate the reasons why it believes that the students of Alberta would not benefit from its proclamation. It is time for this government to not simply amend the School Act but to also explain to Albertans why it is unwilling to proclaim the Education Act.

Bill 28 makes a number of changes to the School Act that will affect a wide spectrum of educational delivery across this province. However, let us be clear: these amendments would appear, once again, to give the Minister of Education more power at the expense of local autonomy of school boards. It also places important elements of education outside of the School Act and into the regulations. Both of these are serious issues, the first because it continues the trend towards a distant and far-off minister deciding what is best in education for local parents, for students, and for educators.

I believe and this party believes very strongly that local boards and local schools and parents are best positioned to make decisions which affect their day-to-day activities in education. These individuals understand their own schools and their communities far better than the Minister of Education does. Continually eroding the responsibilities and the ability of local decision-makers to make decisions for themselves does not improve the education system in Alberta.

Secondly, this piece of legislation once again asks this Assembly to have faith, faith that the regulations will reasonably reflect what

the people of Alberta want as represented through the informed consent of the MLAs in this Legislature. Regulation is important – don't get us wrong – but legislation, the part that is most directly controlled by the people of Alberta through their representatives, must first and foremost speak to how education will run, not simply regulation.

The lack of clarity provided by this legislation is very apparent as you read through a number of the major changes made by this legislation. For example, this bill introduces professional practice standards for principals, superintendents, and certificate-holding central office staff. Now, this has the potential to be a great addition to the School Act. This side of the House is in agreement when it comes to the setting of professional practice standards. We have some of the best teachers, we have some of the best principals and superintendents anywhere in the world, and this portion of the legislation will allow Alberta to prove that. However, we are concerned for how these standards will be developed and what they will look like and who will oversee them, for none of this has yet been decided. This bill pushes that off to regulations.

This bill allows the minister to establish standards for educational service agreements and to allow increased access to education for on-reserve First Nations students. That is a concept that our party wholeheartedly supports. Every student in this province has the right to a high-quality education no matter where they live or what their background is. However, we are not sure what these agreements will actually look like, if there will be federal funding available to school boards, and when these standards will be finalized.

This bill also moves the walk limit into the school transportation regulation. That is also something that we can support as that is probably, in our view, a more appropriate place for the walk limit. However, what will replace the current 2.4-kilometre limit? That has not yet been decided, and we have heard concerns from some of the major stakeholders and school boards that they will not be given enough flexibility to meet their local needs.

This bill introduces a trustee code of conduct. This is also an idea that our party can support. It is my understanding that many boards across this province already have codes of conduct that they have developed and that they are pursuing, but the minister once again took a good idea and shrouded it in regulation and asked us to trust him as he works out the details in private. We don't know what mandatory elements the minister will impose on trustees, we don't know how or when these codes of conduct will be made public, and we don't know how much flexibility local boards will be given when they develop these codes of conduct.

There are also parts of this bill that we believe will need to be addressed through a series of amendments that would help to make this bill better for Albertans. The United Conservative Party will be able to support a standardized age of entry, the creation of educational service agreements with First Nations, and most of the technical amendments and administrative amendments suggested for Bill 28. These are common-sense proposals, and I think everyone in this House can get behind them.

The professional standards of conduct for principals and superintendents and the code of conduct for trustees are, as I previously stated, ideas that we can support. Some of the details we have some issues with, but we will have some amendments to address some of our concerns at a later stage in the debate.

The transportation piece of this legislation is worthy of discussion, but we would caution the minister to ensure that local decision-making on distances and the scope of co-operation between the diverse school jurisdictions in the province be addressed in this debate and that respect for local autonomy of school boards be presented in this debate. Forcing school boards to

co-operate is a dangerous precedent as we've heard some very good reasons as to why boards do not currently co-operate, including the most obvious, that some school boards already run all of their buses completely full.

**10:10**

Lastly, we look forward to the debate in this establishment on the establishment of separate school districts. Bringing clarity and balance to the process of establishing or disestablishing Catholic education, especially in light of the antifaith, antichoice paradigm of this government, is a good thing. In light of recent decisions and comments by the Premier and the Minister of Education it will be important that Bill 28 actually bring clarity and reinforce to Albertans that this government believes in choice in education, especially choice based on something as important as faith and the creation of faith-based separate school boards.

We will speak to our desire to ensure that education in Alberta will continue to respect choice in our education system here in this great province, and we would ask the government to support the amendments that we will put forward at a later stage in the debate as we believe that they will help to bring clarity and in turn make Bill 28 a stronger piece of legislation that will benefit Albertans and Alberta students moving into the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for . . .

**Mr. Hanson:** Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

**The Acting Speaker:** Sorry.

**Mr. Hanson:** That no longer exists after next week.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 28, the School Amendment Act, 2017. I want to thank the hon. Minister of Education for bringing forward this bill as there are some very good things in it. Ultimately, though, the legislation simply gives the minister and Alberta Education the platform to work with various stakeholders and professional associations to implement changes over the coming years.

But I'm a little confused, for not too long ago the Assembly passed a bill known as the Education Act. The Education Act was supposed to replace the School Act. The Education Act remains unproclaimed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, which leads me to wonder why on earth we are here tinkering with the School Act again.

As with any bill from the hon. Minister of Education, the United Conservative Party has to question, with all those actors around the NDP who advocate for one public system and the end to the separate and charter schools: can we trust the Education minister to act in good faith with the powers being requested in Bill 28? The Education minister denies any wrongdoing and malevolence towards separate and charter yet has been caught twisting and construing concerns expressed by these institutions for their curriculum rewrite.

Bill 28 continues a troubling trend of consolidating power by the Minister of Education, and this is one of the biggest issues I have with this bill. A number of changes over the past two and a half years has increased the power of the minister, which in turn decreases the power of local decision-makers. This trend needs to stop. Our school boards are elected by parents to reflect their views, and this needs to be respected.

Let's get into the bill and take a look at what the minister is asking for. Bill 28 will require mandatory notice to the local public school

board of the establishment of a separate school district. I can already see the public boards howling in outrage of a competitor for education showing up. They already do.

When the city of Edmonton asked the public board what to do with undeveloped school sites, the board was okay with releasing the sites to the city. When charter and independent schools showed up wanting to buy the undeveloped school sites, the public board very quickly changed its tune about releasing the assets. I'm seeing the same situation up in Lac La Biche right now, where the public school board is dragging their feet when it comes to releasing the Dr. Swift school to the Catholic board and also another school to the francophone school board.

Bill 28 changes the nature of student records and financial records, which need to be kept by private and independent schools. Increased transparency and accountability is a very positive step; however, these changes could be cost prohibitive for small schools with a limited number of financial and staff resources.

There are also going to be professional practice standards that will be implemented for principals and superintendents. This, again, is probably a good idea to mandate a consistent level of training for principals and superintendents. Now there's also going to be a school board trustee code of conduct developed that will mirror the code of conduct found in the Municipal Government Act. In principle and concept this is also a good idea, but the devil will be in the details when the regulations the minister creates come out.

It's very good to see education service agreements with First Nations in order to enable access to provincial schools for on-reserve First Nations children. This plan will ideally increase the graduation rates and educational success of on-reserve First Nations students in Alberta, so I applaud that.

Standardizing the age of entry for kindergarten – children must now be five years old by December 31 in the year they are entering kindergarten – is also a step in this bill.

Now, the fiscal conservative in me likes this provision around busing co-operation. I've already been working toward that end with some of the school boards in my area, trying to consolidate busing where it's practical. Bill 28 gives the minister more power to compel school boards to co-operate with respect to the transportation of students. I don't know about the urban MLAs, but I'm sure that just about every rural MLA hears from people that have three or four buses going through their area, and they don't see the economics in that.

There have been transportation concerns for children in both rural and urban Alberta, and these changes seek to solve some of those issues. Currently there is a 2.4-kilometre walk limit in the School Act, which means that if you live within 2.4 kilometres of your designated school, the school is not responsible to bus your children as it is assumed that they could walk. Bill 28 drops this, but again there is a ministerial power grab here to compel when the minister could simply be the facilitator. It should be up to the individual school board to determine the walk limit before busing begins.

This is how I see Bill 28. I look forward to productive debate and potential amendments.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members wishing to speak to 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in the House this morning to speak to Bill 28, the School Amendment Act, 2017. While the School Act was last amended in the spring, Bill 28 proposes some of the most substantive changes to the act that we've

seen in many years. Some of the changes are long overdue. Some could be problematic.

In particular, this legislation mandates a one-size-fits-all solution for transportation that does little for students enrolled in alternative school programs. Students in traditional learning and French immersion, for example, not to mention their parents, are completely sidelined by the bill, and many will have to continue walking, driving, or taking the bus long distances in order to reach the school of their choice. The government seems to be under the impression that every kid goes to their designated school. While they may see this bill as a case of the needs of the many outweighing the needs of the few, they should recognize the nuances of school transportation in the province. Of the several families that have contacted my office in the last few months, very few would be helped by the bill.

The value of standardizing the age at which students enter kindergarten makes a lot of sense from an administrative perspective, bringing all the school boards in the province into alignment with one another and ensuring students moving from other jurisdictions within the province will be held to the same standard. For example, if a young person in Grande Prairie is eligible to start kindergarten in the fall and their family moves to Calgary, they're still able to start their studies on the same timeline in their new home. Similarly, students who move within their own municipality, join another school district are all held to the same mandatory age of entry.

But what about students who move to Alberta from other provinces, particularly students who have already started kindergarten in their home province? This is not in step with other jurisdictions. For instance, Newfoundland and Labrador's Schools Act allows school boards to admit a kindergarten student who is less than five years of age if they are enrolled in kindergarten in another jurisdiction or will be five years of age before the end of that school year. That's from their Schools Act, 1997. Unfortunately, Bill 28 does not instantiate any mechanism by which the Ministry of Education or any of the province's school boards can use their discretion and allow a student to enrol in kindergarten in Alberta who is eligible to do so in their home province but will not turn five by New Year's Eve.

There are certainly many positive changes proposed in Bill 28. I'd like to particularly commend the government for establishing and strengthening education service agreements with First Nations communities and for putting a mechanism in place to establish a code of conduct for school board trustees. As elected officials, like MPs, MLAs, and municipal council members are, trustees should be held accountable to their constituents and for their actions, especially since their conduct has an enormous effect on our children.

**10:20**

As we are still in the early stages of debate on this legislation, the Alberta Party is not taking a firm stance on Bill 28 at this point. What we will do is ask questions, pay close attention to amendments, and possibly propose some of our own. In the end, we'll see where the bill goes.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members wishing to speak to 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

**Ms Luff:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm happy to rise today as a cosponsor of this bill to speak to it at second reading. As many

people know, I think, and certainly when people ask me why I decided to run for politics, I got into politics because of education. Education was the primary reason and primary driver for me getting into this because, you know, over my five years in the Calgary board of education I saw the previous government not valuing education to the degree that I thought was necessary and often what I saw as playing politics with education.

I'm a firm believer in equitability in education and equitable access to education. For me it's incredibly important that every kid in every school in every part of Alberta receives the same education as any other kid, that they have the same chance to go to university or that they have the same chance to pursue a trade, that their education prepares them for whatever it is that they want to do in life. It's one of the things I'm proud about Alberta because we actually do a really good job of this. We're not perfect, certainly. There is often a perception in Alberta that your kid will be better off if you go to one school instead of another school in one part of the city instead of another part of the city.

The fact of the matter is that we really do an excellent job in Alberta of educating every kid in every school in every part of the province. It's not perfect, but we're working on getting there. That's one of the reasons that I support this bill, because it really does help to support equitable access to education on a number of fronts here in the province of Alberta. Largely this is an enabling piece of legislation. It enables the minister to do things going forward that will help to solidify and improve our school system in Alberta.

The first thing that several people have spoken about already is that it makes the age of entry standard for kindergarten all across the province, which I think is really important. My son actually entered kindergarten this year. I was a little unsure about putting him in kindergarten this year because he has an October birthday, and I know that some people like to hold their kids back from school, boys especially, if they have a later birthday because there is all sorts of evidence that shows that children who are older in kindergarten have a tendency to do better, especially boys because they learn a little bit differently than girls at that age. They like to run around, and they like to roughhouse. That's not always an environment that is allowed in kindergarten, but that's another thing that we're working on.

**Mr. Mason:** When will that change?

**Ms Luff:** Soon, I hope.

It's wonderful to see that, like other members have suggested, the age is the same, so if you move from one place in Alberta to another place, it's easy for you to make sure that your child is entering kindergarten at the same age as others. An important part of this, I think, is that this is an amendment that's being grandfathered in. There are four years, I think, to make this shift, so people who have already planned to put their children in kindergarten, who have planned kindergarten around child care schedules and things like that have time to adjust. You know, if your child is being born now, you know that for sure by the time they're entering kindergarten, they're going to be entering at the same age as everybody else. That helps us support equitable access to education.

The other part that I am really excited about is the strengthening of First Nations education service agreements. Unfortunately, we know that it's a major problem that we have in Canada that First Nation students don't receive the same amount of funding as other students in provinces. It's a fundamental inequity that we have in Canada. We've had it for a long time, and it's something that we really need to work towards fixing because saying that someone is less valuable through the amount of money you provide to them for education when education is one of the most important things that

we do and one of the most important things that we can do for the future of our province is just fundamentally unfair and wrong, actually. Hopefully, through the strengthening of First Nation service agreements, what we're going to be able to do is provide more equitable access to all of our First Nations kids in Alberta to make sure that they have the same access to education as other children in Alberta. It's going to help close the achievement gap between First Nations students and other students in the province, which is something that our school boards have been doing a really good job of lately. It will help further with that.

The other thing that helps promote equitability is the professional practice standards for principals and superintendents. All teachers have to follow the teaching quality standards, the TQS. It's something that is drilled into you as you exit teachers' college to make sure that you are upholding a particular standard of professional practice. Up until now this wasn't something that had been necessary for principals or superintendents. Although I know that all principals and superintendents are doing the best they can, what it meant was that you might have a varying quality of principals or superintendents across the province. What this does is work to help standardize that principals have the same quality standard all the way across the province. You can be assured that, again, whatever school your child is in anywhere in Alberta, their principal has to follow the same quality standard as any other principal and that your school board superintendent has to follow the same quality standard as any other superintendent. I think that's really important.

I've heard some concerns about making sure that school boards still have the autonomy to do what they need to do. I absolutely agree that school boards do need to be allowed to have the autonomy to do what they do. In developing these amendments, the ministry has worked very closely with school boards to ensure that school boards are okay with these changes and to make sure that this is something that they're going to be able to deal with and to address.

The school transportation walk limits. Taking that out is actually the result of some consultations that we've had with school boards. Various school boards have said that the 2.4-kilometre walk limit was inappropriate; it didn't work for them. What that does is it allows some flexibility to be able to work with school boards to decide what will work for them. I know that transportation has absolutely been a struggle. It's been a struggle in Calgary for a wide variety of reasons. Hopefully, what this will do is help boards to plan and help them to figure out how they can move forward with transportation.

Another example of how we worked with school boards. I was talking to some folks from the ATA in Calgary last week who asked me why the age of access wasn't extended. That was something that was in the consultations. People were considering extending access to education to the age of 21. What school boards told us in those consultations was that they prefer to be able to offer that option on a case-by-case basis rather than making it the norm. That's, you know, an element of flexibility for school boards that we chose to leave out of this legislation because that was what they told us they wanted.

Overall, this is just enabling legislation that will help to improve equitable access to education in the province. You know, I'm going to be happy to hear from the opposition what amendments they have proposed coming forward. I will leave it at that for right now.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any hon. members wishing to speak to 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thanks, Madam Speaker. Good morning, everyone. I am very happy today to rise and speak about Bill 28, the School Amendment Act, 2017. There is a lot in this bill that I'm extremely happy to throw my support behind. Obviously, there have been positive changes that have been made in standardizing the age of entry for kindergarten, implementing the trustee code of conduct, providing additional support for First Nations children that would like to attend provincial schools, and increasing collaboration and co-operation around school transportation, which, as we know and as other members have spoken about, has been an extremely contentious issue not just in the urban areas but in the rural areas especially.

**10:30**

We elect these boards because they understand the thumbprints of the schools that they are privileged to work for. It's absolutely imperative that they are included in those discussions beyond consultation but actually to understand what is necessary for each of those schools.

I'm also very encouraged to see that Alberta will be leading in Canada as the first province to set professional practice standards for the principals and superintendents. Thank you very much for having that in this bill.

Many of these changes are obviously widely supported by our caucus and seem to be supported by stakeholders across the province as well.

One of the things I'd like to mention is that, as we all know, 50 per cent of the folks that are working in these jobs now are new, so there's a lot of transition that needs to happen between the previous trustees and the new trustees coming in, something that I think we need to consider as we're pushing through legislation. A lot of this transitional information that is going between previous trustees and new trustees hasn't quite been solidified between these folks. I have spoken with some of ours, and that is of some concern with respect to regulations that will be put forward with this bill.

Unfortunately, though, we also see in this legislation a continued pattern of behaviour where the government puts forward legislation that actually doesn't have a whole lot of content and then promises that all of the concerns will be addressed during the regulations phase. I can tell you that from the perspective of the trustees and the school authorities, that is a little bit concerning.

Madam Speaker, we have to consider democracy when we're talking about these things. Obviously, things need to be left up to regulations, but if the meat and bones of the bill are not descriptive enough for the folks that are actually being impacted by this bill, I think we need to relook at the information that's coming forward. We have a crucial job in holding the government accountable and asking tough questions, but it's hard to present and ask questions when a bill is vague and to debate and question them on this and then just to have the legislation rammed through and the real work, the nitty-gritty work, done in regulations. Those regulations have real-world implications for Albertans.

The question, I guess, I'm asking is: how am I supposed to ask the government pointed questions about their plans if the programs that roll out essentially give the Minister of Education the platform to do whatever changes that he may deem necessary? I mean, if you look at what boards are required to do and what their responsibilities are, they know what the communities need, so generally speaking a government will delegate the authority to the boards.

That's why they're elected in the first place. They know what their communities need, they know how to use the resources, they understand the educational practices of the communities they represent, and they keep education in line with today's world. They



also evaluate the school board superintendents and understand that they have to work within the annual budgets, and they guide the goals within the district and within the communities. They're also responsible to make decisions regarding the health and safety of their students.

When you have vague legislation like this that gives the minister this level of oversight, we have to understand that – the question, I guess, is that if the minister believes so strongly that people are going to support every aspect of this legislation and that there's no contentious hidden agenda, then why would there not be a comprehensive plan brought forward, Madam Speaker, so that we can actually debate the bill and debate the intentions and this massive oversight and understand how it's going to be regulated so that we understand going forward, going to our communities, what their intention is and what the minister's intention is for the future?

The reason why this is concerning is because this isn't just one bill where this is happening. This has been a continued pattern with this government, where a piece of legislation comes forward, you look at it, and you can widely support it, but it's hiding other legislation under that legislation. So it's incredibly frustrating to me as a legislator, Madam Speaker. I love the practical ideas that are in a piece of legislation like this – and I don't want to vote against legislation – and there are so many fantastic pieces that are in this bill that I'm encouraged, but then there are several other pieces of this legislation that are really, really vague. It's very concerning even though there are pieces that all of us can agree on, that are necessary changes.

But then why does the government insist on putting almost like deal breakers in each one of these pieces of legislation that go against the practicality of the intention of the bill? There are so many significant changes that would be brought on by this bill that are not contained within the bill itself, and that's ludicrous. How are we supposed to debate that? How are we supposed to bring that information to the public, which is actually our responsibility, with the vagueness of the bill? There are actual pieces that I've spoken about, that we've all agreed on in here, that are good, are excellent, but there are chunks that are concerning with regard to this oversight.

Giving a minister, any minister within the government this much power without the decisions having to actually come through this House, Madam Speaker, is very concerning for me, and I think it erodes democracy in our province. Part of the necessity of having a strong opposition and having government is to be able to vet any of those concerns in this place, in this House.

Whether you're on the government side or the opposition side, I think we can all agree that regardless of what ends up happening with the legislation, we all learn a lot about that legislation by being able to go through that process. That's why this is concerning, because the more information that the government can bring forward – I mean, we may not agree on everything, but at the very least the discussion is opened up and the discussion becomes something where we can all understand where everybody is coming from.

But the vagueness that is supplied in this bill at this point in time: I'm not really sure why there are so many pieces that will be left up to regulation, that aren't being brought forward in this Legislature to actually discuss. The concern is if there's a workaround in the process of this legislation because maybe it's just – I don't know – for lack of a better word, Madam Speaker, inconvenient to bring it in here. I don't know. But the question always needs to be: why would the government not bring it forward so that we can actually debate it and speak about it?

Also, again I need to speak about the timing of this bill. I realize that the government did do outreach with stakeholders and all of

that, and thank you for that. However, again, with 50 per cent of our trustees being new, the timing of this bill is difficult because a lot of the new trustees would love to be able to put their input in. The trustees that have left may not have had the chance to transpose all of the information coming from previous trustees to new trustees, especially if there is a lot of oversight by this minister to actually take power away from the boards and the trustees. Like, that's why this is really important, to make sure that all eyeballs have had a chance to really look at this legislation before we put it through.

There were also very significant efforts undertaken by previous governments and this current government to consult and inform stakeholders. However, has the government taken into account the fact that our province has had this significant turnover? It's just something, I think, that we need to think about. I'm not sure what the right solution to this is at this time. The bill didn't come forward as a result of timing. That wasn't done on purpose, but I think it's something where there's a sensitivity that needs to be there with respect to actually going forward with how this legislation is going to present itself, especially because so much of the legislation will not actually be debated in this House.

I'm sure that we're going to have many more opportunities to discuss this bill. I would like to thank the government for the significant changes that they have made, that, again, I really appreciate. However, I am concerned. We will be bringing some amendments to it.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 28 read a second time]

#### 10:40 **Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole**

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

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

#### **Bill 29 An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving**

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

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have an . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** Oh, sorry. I didn't see you, hon. Government House Leader. Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much. Before we begin on the main bill, Madam Chair, I have an amendment to propose.

**The Deputy Chair:** Hon. member, if you could just wait until I have the original and the copies, please. Your amendment will be referred to as A1.

Government House Leader, please proceed.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I propose a government amendment to Bill 29, An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving, that the bill be amended as follows.

Section 14 is amended in the proposed section 88.11(1) by (a) striking out “the Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2017” and substituting “An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving,” and by (b) in clauses (a) and (b) striking out “the Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2017” and substituting “An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving.”

Madam Chair, the naming of the bill came towards the end of the process. The original working title of the bill was the Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2017. When the official name was adopted, a drafting error neglected to correct the name in the bill, and this is simply an amendment to make sure that all references in the bill refer to the actual name of the bill as presented to the House. It’s as simple as that.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. minister.

Are there any comments, questions on the amendment?

Seeing none, I will call the question on the amendment.

[Motion on amendment A1 carried]

**The Deputy Chair:** We are now back on the original bill.

The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have an amendment as well if I could present it to you.

**The Deputy Chair:** Please wait till I have the original and the copies.

Thank you, hon. member. It just needs to be sent to Parliamentary Counsel for approval.

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

**Mr. Ellis:** Are you asking for speakers?

**The Deputy Chair:** Yes. Are there any other members wishing to speak?

Actually, hon. member, the amendment that was just introduced is out of order at this time. It needs to go back to Parliamentary Counsel.

Do we have any other speakers that would like to speak to the bill as it is right now? The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate this very much. You’ll forgive me because I thought the amendment was before us. But you did explain that quite nicely, so I’m grateful for that.

First of all, let me say that we recognize over here that the government is in what I would call a bit of an awkward situation inasmuch as they didn’t make the decision over there on the other side of the House to legalize cannabis. We certainly will not give them either the credit for it or the blame for it, depending on your viewpoint. We recognize that that was something that was foisted upon them by the federal government, and they are merely trying to do their duty to manage the situation. We’re grateful that they are indeed trying to step up and do their duty to manage a situation that’s been put upon them by the Trudeau government. Even to some extent we recognize that it was a promise that the Trudeau government made. I guess it’s always a little bit difficult to criticize people for keeping their promises, so we’ll recognize that, too. [interjections] They’re making fun over there, so I’ll take the opportunity to point out that the carbon tax was never promised yet delivered.

But we are on the marijuana bill right now. It is truly incumbent upon provinces to take safeguards to protect as much as possible the public in their areas of jurisdiction when the federal government makes new rules. Bill 29, by the now corrected title, deals with impaired driving, and our government needs to take this most seriously. Protection of every member of the public is of utmost importance.

Madam Chair, in 2013 a study found that more than half of the drivers killed in automobile collisions in Canada tested positive for drugs, with 1 in 4 of those people consuming cannabis. Interestingly enough, 1 in 4, not necessarily the same 1 in 4 statistically, also tested positive for alcohol and drugs in that 2013 study. Another statistic out of that study which is, I think, worthy of mention this morning is that nearly half of all the licence suspensions were due to drug impairment.

The Traffic Injury Research Foundation found in 2012 that drugs were detected in 41 per cent of fatally injured drivers in Alberta. While it maybe knew that cannabis is going to be legal here next year, it surely in no way knew that people consuming cannabis have been behind the wheels of their automobiles for some time and, via the statistics that I just mentioned, sometimes with dangerous and even tragic circumstances resulting.

Statistics compiled by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction show that cannabis impairs psychomotor skills and judgment. Of course, its effect on driving includes deficits in tracking of objects, reaction time, visual function, concentration, short-term memory, and the ability to respond to multiple sources of information and to react to unexpected events. This, of course, responding to multiple sources of information and reacting to unexpected events, is a fairly constant requirement for anybody driving.

Surely, even on a calm day with low traffic and good weather and on a sunny day with bare, dry roads there are certainly lots of things to keep track of just in terms of vehicle speed, the dials on the dashboard in front of the driver, the objects on the road, the width of the road, lane changes, speed changes, signs on the road. There are multiple sources of information to be kept track of even in the best of circumstances and, of course, indeed when we go from the best to normal but not best circumstances, where there might be heavy traffic, people leaving the lane, coming into the lane, bad weather, change in speed, maybe mistakes by other drivers, perhaps an animal coming onto the road. Under less than ideal circumstances someone unfit to respond appropriately and in a timely way to multiple sources of information would be, obviously, more likely to be at risk of getting into a collision.

**10:50**

Since all of the above are critical to driving and problems occur when unexpected events happen, maintaining people’s wits about them is an important aspect of driving, and on this I am fairly certain that there is agreement on all sides of the House. Studies on driving performance show that marijuana use results in an increased likelihood of swerving and difficulty maintaining speed and maintaining a safe distance from other vehicles. Studies also show that an increased risk of collision begins at very low levels of marijuana use and escalates quickly. One recent study concluded that cannabis use doubles the risk of collision for drivers.

The message to drivers I think has to be that we always need to be careful, and of course now the difficulty that I’ll acknowledge that the government has is in trying to set up a set of rules during this time in history, when there isn’t really a generally accepted way of measuring the amount of cannabis that is in a person’s bloodstream or in their body. It doesn’t seem to be that there is – although some number is out, I don’t believe that there is

widespread agreement on what amount of cannabis in the bloodstream will be the equivalent of making the driver impaired.

Again, the government is not at fault for any of this. These are just facts that we're all presented with and that we're all dealing with. It does make it awkward in a situation where (a) you don't have a good way of testing cannabis use and where (b) you don't even have widespread agreement on how much is too much or if indeed any amount is too much. We don't have agreement on that either. I acknowledge that the government is in a difficult situation. Nonetheless, they are trying to wrestle with this issue that's been foisted upon them, and our job is to help, as always.

The government has said that it will launch a public information campaign about marijuana and driving. We on this side think that's a good idea. Really, my opinion, Madam Chair, is that zero tolerance should be an important part of that campaign. Now, the day may come, not unlike with alcohol use, where the science is there and the testing is there and you can say, "This amount of marijuana use will not have you impaired, and it's safe to drive," similar to how in our law today it says, "This amount of alcohol in your bloodstream means that you're not impaired and that you're okay to drive, and once you go over that line, you are impaired and you're breaking the law, and if you go over it further, you're impaired and you are criminally breaking the law."

It would make me happy when we can agree on the science and the testing, where we can get to that point with marijuana, now that it's going to be legal. I don't see any signs that the federal government has dropped any hints, either broad or small, that they're changing their mind. In fact, the signs that I see are that the government is completely committed to doing this and completely committed to doing it on July 1 next year despite the fact that police services across this great country of ours, Canada, have said to the government repeatedly: please don't. At least, they've said: "Please don't yet. We're not ready. We don't have ways to know whether drivers are safe. We don't have ways of testing drivers to know how much marijuana they've used, and we don't even have agreement on how much is too much."

With these really awkward and unfortunate circumstances before them, if marijuana becomes legal before these situations are sorted out, the police services in this country are going to be in a terrible position, and frankly, Madam Chair, the drivers on the road and the pedestrians on the road and the children crossing the road and the seniors crossing the road and people going to their jobs in businesses crossing the road are all going to be at risk when the availability of cannabis will be greater because of the fact that it will be legal and be readily available.

You know, I don't think anybody is going to argue with me on this. The fact is that today it's not legal, but it's surely readily enough available. When you've got half of the people in accidents and deaths having marijuana in their bloodstream, I don't think you can reasonably argue that the illegal status of marijuana has made it any less available. Sadly, it's often said – I don't think it's scientific knowledge; it's probably generally accepted – that if you're looking for marijuana, you can probably find it in the average high school or junior high. That's a sad statement although it's probably a true statement.

I would ask the government about – and I would be interested in hearing their opinion on it – zero tolerance as a standard, at least until such a point where we have good testing, at least until such a point where the police are comfortable, at least till such a point where there is agreed-upon science about at what level of marijuana in the bloodstream we could still have a person unimpaired and a good way of testing it. If you don't know how much makes you impaired and you can't test it, I'm not sure what level the government could possibly make legal.

At this point, even if they did figure out at what point it was legal, with no way to test it, you're leaving the poor police with no way to enforce it and, by extension, the public at risk. I would be interested in having somebody from the government side, perhaps the minister if he sees fit, stand up and address this issue. Frankly, the Transportation minister, as the lead on this thing, is in a terrible position because of the facts that I have talked about here. I don't know how he can make any other decision although if he has something in mind, I would certainly be grateful to hear his thoughts on it. Again, I'll acknowledge that this awkward and terrible position that the minister is in is none of his own making but, rather, has been put upon him by the federal government.

Another thing to think about is that the existing system allows for drivers to obtain a temporary licence and appeal a suspension on some things, and for zero tolerance that could be something that's considered tough but fair.

Madam Chair, if you look at this, the government is in a tough position. The police have said publicly and, I think, responsibly that they're not ready, and it's not for lack of them wanting to be ready. There is an existing device, as I understand it, a saliva test or cheek swab, which can determine the presence of THC in someone's system. The device may be ready for use by July 1, 2018, but there are no guarantees. If it's not, then police are left in a position where they have to seek a blood sample.

Now, the federal government has set levels for cannabis in a driver's blood, but unlike with alcohol, I don't believe that it's generally accepted whether the limits the federal government has set are the right ones and what they actually mean. So there's another problem for the courts. You could end up with a situation where the provincial government allows a certain level of cannabis to be used. I don't know how they could do it, but again my mind is open, and I will be interested in what the government or the minister says.

I don't know how the courts are going to enforce it when there's not a reasonable way, really, of determining that, and I'm not sure that the police are going to be anxious to run everybody down to the police station to take a blood sample every time someone is under suspicion or is found using cannabis while they're driving. I think the only sure way to make sure that the public is safe is to just say: "You know what? Cannabis is legal. If you're an adult and you want to use it and you make that choice, that's up to you, but please don't endanger your fellow citizens." I actually think that's a reasonable thing to ask responsible adults to do.

**11:00**

When we consider all the unknowns, when we consider what the police have agreed is a lack of time for them to prepare and make way for the safe regulation of cannabis on the roads, it certainly makes sense to our caucus to delay the regulation, but we also recognize that for our provincial government that's not their choice. The federal Trudeau government has said that they're not going to delay it, so we acknowledge that our colleagues across the floor have a difficult, almost impossible, and time-limited decision to make. We're going to try to help and give the best advice we can along the way.

Now, Quebec, interestingly enough, has gone the zero tolerance route, as I understand it, with their legislation. They have said publicly that they also believe that the federal government is acting too quickly. My understanding is that they haven't necessarily said that they're against the federal government legalizing it, but they've said that the building blocks to create a safe environment are not in place and that they don't believe they'll be in place by July 1, 2018. That's something I think we should take seriously and consider carefully here in Alberta. Rather than have what could be a

dangerous free-for-all on the roads, Quebec has decided to do what I think is a responsible thing and go with zero tolerance, at least at this point. It seems like it's the safest route for everyone.

Madam Chair, I'm not suggesting that it's going to be safe because the roads aren't safe now. Marijuana is illegal for all users, yet with the statistics that I laid out earlier, there is a very high percentage of deaths and accidents and injuries that happen right now with drivers with marijuana in their bloodstream. So to think that any rule that the province puts in place – any rule – is going to completely eliminate that would be unfair to expect. To be clear, the government is not at fault for that because, of course, they have nothing to do with, you know, people driving illegally right now, using an illegal substance right now. Those people are indeed causing death, injuries, and a certain amount of mayhem on the roads.

For all the people that may be watching or listening that have had a loved one injured or killed by someone with marijuana in their blood, I'm sure they're looking at this very, very carefully today and certainly hoping that the government and all of us in this important place do the right thing to keep them safe and their loved ones safe.

The delay is not going to occur, I don't believe, with the federal government, so I believe that it's incumbent upon us to set the highest level of safety on the roads that we can. I believe that's what Albertans at home would want us to do. Here's a quote from the Quebec health minister who is in charge of the marijuana file. It says: the proposed measures aim to limit risk and mischief linked to the abuse of this substance and to fight the trivialization of this product; we will be prudent and restrictive from the start. I would suggest to you, Madam Chair, that that is a responsible attitude for the Quebec minister to have taken. I would suggest to you that that would be a responsible attitude for our Alberta government to take.

We are hopeful that our government here in Alberta takes a responsible, careful tone and spirit on this, similar to what Quebec has done. Again, the day may come when there is science agreeing on what level of cannabis use makes you impaired or not impaired, and we may also some day have a test where you can actually test for when someone has reached that level when they're impaired or not impaired. When that bright and shiny day comes, I think we can have another discussion, but until that bright and shiny day comes, I don't believe there's any safe, reasonable, or responsible position to take other than to say that you can't drive when you're using.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I see that my colleague from Calgary-West has now got his amendment with a legal blessing, but before he introduces that, I do want to respond to some of the comments made by my colleague from Calgary-Hays.

One of the problems that we're struggling with as we move towards the legalization of marijuana in the middle of next year is the perception that impairment by cannabis is less serious than impairment by alcohol. Setting aside for a moment the question of the uncertainty of what the levels are and the variability of the levels of impairment that might be produced in different individuals, I can say that the statistics show that there is considerable mayhem on our roads that is caused by impairment due to cannabis and often cannabis in combination with alcohol, which worsens the impact of both drugs on a person's ability to operate a motor vehicle.

I've certainly been hearing from people on social media and elsewhere that, in fact, they don't believe that impairment by

cannabis is really quite as serious. So we'll be taking steps, as the member has indicated, to try and correct that through public communications. It's an important thing to do, I think, and badly needed. I wanted to just set the record straight on that.

The issue of levels and the amount of impairment caused is still not definitive in the research. There's, I think, no question of that. There's debate about that. There seems to be some evidence that impairment levels vary by individual. As the member has pointed out, a good roadside screening device is yet to be perfected although we understand that the federal government believes that one will be in place by the time that their legislation is implemented, so we very much look forward to that.

In any case, the bill provides the opportunity for an immediate roadside appeal of any sanction by a person demanding a blood test, which is then considered definitive one way or the other. If the blood test shows lower than the prescribed limits in the federal legislation and in this legislation, the sanction is dropped. If it shows a higher level than corresponding to the charge, the higher level is then utilized. That is an opportunity for everyone to demand an appeal of any sanction under this particular piece of legislation.

Now, the hon. member has referred to the federal limits – the per se limits is what they call them – of two to five nanograms. Just for the record the proposed federal legislation makes it a criminal offence at two, and at five the sanctions are just higher. In the federal Criminal Code that is being proposed, anyone found with a level of two nanograms per milliliter in their blood is going to be charged with a criminal offence.

The per se limits for alcohol are .05 and .08, and I remember when the previous PC government under Premier Redford introduced the .05 because the Criminal Code is just .08. Administrative sanctions were introduced by the previous PC government for a lower level. I remember and quite enjoyed the fierce opposition of the Wildrose opposition to that legislation. I used to love it when the PCs and the Wildrose would tangle because it reminded me of dinosaurs fighting, you know.

**11:10**

**An Hon. Member:** Well, dinosaurs and cavemen.

**Mr. Mason:** Yes. Dinosaurs and cavemen.

Okay. Enough of that. Enough of that.

**Mr. Strankman:** But you digress.

**Mr. Mason:** Yeah. I do digress.

What that bill did – and we did support that change – was supplement the Criminal Code with some administrative sanctions because the government believed, and we agreed with them, that it would keep our roads safer. It provided opportunities to provide sanctions that were not criminal in nature, that would not create a criminal record on the part of the offender. We are mirroring that with one important difference in this particular legislation as it relates to cannabis.

Evidence shows that immediate administrative sanctions have a better deterrent effect than a prolonged criminal proceeding. It has a greater effect. It can in many ways lessen the collateral damage to families and so on. So it's a very effective way to keep people off the roads because it has a better deterrent effect, it's quicker, and it does not leave people with criminal records. It's a useful tool, and we're mirroring it here when it comes to cannabis. The difference is that the previous legislation with respect to alcohol provided administrative sanction at a level below that prescribed for a criminal act; in other words, .05 instead of .08. In this case we're using limits that correspond exactly to the Criminal Code; that is, .02 to .05 and higher.

Getting back to my previous point, which is that there is some unsettled science with respect to impairment, I've heard this – and I know some of our members have, and I'm sure members opposite have as well – why did we pick that? Well, it wasn't based on the fact that we had made the determination of what constitutes impairment. The administrative sanctions are meant to supplement and to dovetail with criminal sanctions. That's always been the case, so it's important that we use the same limits as in the Criminal Code. It will in some cases provide a peace officer with an alternative to laying a criminal charge. That is the direction that B.C. has gone in, and it's proven quite effective.

I just wanted to make it perfectly clear that it's critical that our administrative sanctions contained in this act correspond to the levels of impairment set out in the Criminal Code as is proposed by the federal government, and that is why those limits are there. I can't see any other way to go but to make sure that we use the same standards as the federal government does.

I just wanted to put those facts and those points on the record, Madam Chair. I appreciate some of the comments by Calgary-Hays about the difficulty that our government has been placed in by the federal decision. We are working very hard and as quickly as we can to make sure that as marijuana becomes legal in the middle of next year, we've done everything possible to keep our roads safe. That's what this bill is about.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you to the Government House Leader for those comments. I do believe that this government is taking this bill seriously and is trying to do what is in the best interests of the people of Alberta, so thank you for those comments.

Madam Chair, I do have the necessary stamped requisite copies for you.

**An Hon. Member:** Details, details.

**Mr. Ellis:** Details, details. I know.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member. Your amendment will be referred to as A2.

**Mr. Ellis:** Great. Thank you very much. I move that Bill 29, An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving, be amended by adding the following after section 29.

29.1 By December 2019, and every 5 years after that, a special committee established by the Legislative Assembly must begin a comprehensive review of this Act and must submit to the Legislative Assembly, within one year after beginning the review, a report that includes any amendments recommended by the committee.

I do have the necessary copies for you, Madam Chair, of course.

Madam Chair, really, the only point I want to highlight is that this amendment looks for a review after two years instead of the traditional five years. That is to ensure, of course, that we can address any issues that arise with the legislation of cannabis. I just want to say, really, just to piggyback, actually, on the Government House Leader, that I believe that everybody here is working in the best interests of the people of Alberta, and we're talking about safety. This is really, truly an unknown at this time.

To put this in perspective, this is an industry that is currently, for the most part, owned and operated by organized crime, so there is a paradigm shift in the way that we are thinking. It's a cultural change in regard to cannabis and marijuana, and I think that it is only

reasonable that the Legislative Assembly after two years just reflect back with a report to make sure that the legislation being put forward is satisfying the needs of the people of Alberta and, certainly, if there are any recommendations as a result of that after two years, to make sure that that legislation can be improved upon to make things better. Again, I think that this is a very reasonable amendment, and I certainly hope all members of this House support this common-sense motion.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members wishing to speak to amendment A2? The hon. Member for Airdrie.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to my colleague from Calgary-West for putting forward this amendment in relation to this legislation, Bill 29. You know, as we have this legalization of marijuana thrust upon us from the federal government, there are many different aspects that this government is responsible for in terms of public safety in our province and certainly on our roads. So here we are today amending legislation to update these changes.

The amendment put forward by my hon. colleague created quite a discussion – and I'm sure everyone in this Legislature has had this discussion – around, you know, how the safety on our roads is extremely critical. Everyone here drives quite a bit. We're on the roads all the time. We see all sorts of different drivers, and a lot of them aren't great. It's even more concerning to think that some of them might be impaired regardless of age. We certainly know that there's maturity to one's driving ability when it comes to age and length of time they've been driving. Certainly, actuaries calculate this with insurance rates, those types of things, so we know that age matters and that maturity of the driver certainly matters. It's important that we recognize that in all types of impaired driving.

Now, it's interesting that Bill 29 is actually very much so putting alcohol and cannabis into the same level of impairment area. I suppose that's okay a little bit, but I think it's not the same. We know that cannabis is not the same. We know that its effects are not the same. It's not calculated the same. We don't have all of the information, to be fair. That's no fault of this government by any means. I think it would have been great to have more time from the federal government to sort some of this stuff out, you know, when the technology actually catches up with where we need it to be to have cannabis fully legalized and integrated into our society.

**11:20**

I suppose they had the same problems with alcohol many, many years ago, when drinking and driving was not frowned upon or looked at in any way. It just wasn't a thing. Then people just started dying all over the place from getting into crashes and that type of thing. So the laws have since evolved from there. As with Bill 26, I believe that Bill 29 will be amended and updated as the technology catches up and the training catches up.

I have many concerns around the training of our police officers when it comes to road safety and simply just the vast amount of training and knowledge that our officers need to have in recognizing cannabis impairment in our drivers. I know we've heard from these organizations, police organizations across this province, and they're very, very concerned about the lack of resources and training and information and all of that stuff that will come around this. I mean, it is what it is, and, you know, we're just going to have to do the best job that we possibly can making sure that they have all the resources and tools that they need to ensure the safety of our citizens

and, more specifically in relation to Bill 29, the safety of our citizens on our roads.

In saying that, where marijuana and alcohol are not the same type of impairment, it's hard to put them into the same type of category. I would honestly like to see zero tolerance straight across the board with no age limit. We don't know what this impairment on the roads does. You know, you can have one or two beers and get into a car, and you're not impaired in any way, shape, or form. You're able to operate that vehicle, no problem. It's a small amount, a very small amount. I suspect some can have more than others, which is obviously a factor. But with marijuana, like, how much marijuana makes you impaired? Some of that will come up the ranks. I think we'll have more information on that by the time this is actually implemented or the legalization comes into effect. But, I mean, is it one puff on a joint and you're impaired? Probably for many people.

I think that right off the get-go there are going to be lots of people who have never indulged in the cannabis products, and they're going to be trying this for the first time. There might not be that level of education there where they know that, you know, they can have a smoke and go for a drive or whatever this might be. I mentioned the other day in the Bill 26 debate that I think we should go really tough off the get-go and then ease back from there as we get more information and try things out and that type of thing. But under 21 zero tolerance is certainly a good step. I like that this is in line with the GDL program in our province. MADD Canada certainly sort of likes that correlation. I know that they would like to see it under 22, zero tolerance across Canada. This is a little bit more in line with the laws that already exist here in our province. In saying that, the GDL does take into account the age and experience of the driver and how they might react to using cannabis as a product.

However, I mean, there are a lot of people that will get a driver's licence in their 20s and 30s, and they're going to adhere to the GDL, but they're not necessarily good drivers after that period is up. So there's lots to think about there. I really hope that there's going to be an education component to this and that, you know, there's a lot of information out of there and a lot of training for the people who are handling and distributing these products and that type of thing.

[Mr. Sucha in the chair]

I think it's really important that this legislation comes back for review, mandatory review, not just, you know, old laws kind of on the books and that type of thing. It's important that we thoroughly go through this legislation and figure out what works and what doesn't, as with anything, right? We've all been through elections, certainly, of our own, and one of the important things that happens after an election is that we sit down and we go: what went wrong, what went well, and what do we do next time? That's just a very small example and not as serious as impaired driving legislation in this province.

But it's very important that we really do take a thorough look at this because our kids are on these roads, right? Our parents are on these roads. Our loved ones, our friends, family everywhere need to know that we are doing the best job that we can to keep everybody safe, and for us to be able to bring this to a special committee to undergo review of the legislation and make sure it's the best that it possibly can be – I think that there should be more regular updates on this, as I'm sure any responsible government would do, reacting to the inner and outer workings of the realities in the province. You know, if there are lots of reports of impaired driving incidents in the province, I would certainly hope that the government would take immediate action and make those changes where they see fit. However, I think it's really good with any

legislation, to be honest, to have a sunset clause where we are forced to review legislation.

I know the city of Airdrie still has a law on the books that says that you can't tie your horse up in front of city hall. There's maybe no need to really get rid of that law. There's also one that says that you can't store your dynamite underneath the stairs. I would suspect that that probably needs a bit of updating, and maybe we shouldn't be storing dynamite in our homes at all. I would suspect that that's a great example of where to update our legislation and review it.

First and foremost, I think that everyone in this Legislature can certainly agree that safety on our roads is absolutely paramount, and whichever is the government when this review comes up, I'm sure that they'll be responsible in the undertaking of this review. But that certainly doesn't take away from the fact that if issues arrive in the meantime, there will be a swift call to action to make the necessary changes that need to be done to ensure that our friends and family members that are travelling on the roadways or anywhere near them are safe and secure.

This province used to have a very good reputation for checkstops. I know that we're going to have the very few highly trained police officers when it comes to impairment detection in these checkstops placed across the province, and that's going to be great, and I certainly hope that they'll have support from the government. I am fairly certain that they will, absolutely, and we the opposition will fully support checkstops in this province. I just really hope that we can get the training across to the officers that we need, if we can afford to do it. As well, it's a bit of a challenge. I know that it's costly to put these officers through that type of training, but it's very necessary to make sure that we have the proper procedures in place to detect impaired driving or impairment in general.

11:30

That education component: I can't stress this enough. As I said yesterday, MADD Canada has put out some advertising about impaired driving, and they're really pushing across that zero tolerance component, which is great. Maybe that's the way we go. We know that Quebec has done zero tolerance for driving impairment, and I think it's a great way forward. I mean, again, you can go too hard coming out of the gate and be safe, be on the safe side, and then make changes as necessary as you move forward.

I think that we have, you know, a very responsible population here in Alberta, but there are always those that don't necessarily think before they do things. I had a friend who died in a drinking and driving accident, and he was the one that was drinking. I said to his widow, "This is unfortunate, this is tragic, and I'm so sorry, but you know that there are a lot of people that are going to learn from this in the future." She looked at me and said: "They're never going to learn because they're drunk when they're doing it. This is when they're making these decisions."

What I'm trying to say is that we're still going to always have those people that make really dumb decisions because they are impaired, but if we can get that education piece in front of it – and I know that for my generation it was ingrained in us, certainly, by my parents: "If you ever need a ride, you just call us, right? Think ahead so that you're not tempted to take your car home if you're impaired," that type of thing. We really need to get that message out. We need to do it in our schools. The re-enactments that Crime Stoppers and MADD Canada do in partnership with our emergency workers in the community – EMS and the RCMP – are imperative and really important in that education component when it comes to our youth, who are sometimes not necessarily stuck in their ways.

I really hope to see that piece come forward, because this is something new. This isn't alcohol. This is marijuana. This is very, very different, and I hope that we can all recognize that. It'll be

important in this conversation, right? This is a controlled substance, but this isn't like tobacco. There are some of the same dangers in it. This is a controlled substance, but it's not like alcohol. There are a lot of similarities, but they're not the same, right? They're sort of pieces of all, and you can see in the legislation that's been brought forward bits and pieces of all of that type of thinking. As this thing evolves, this sort of hybrid, regulated product that's being decriminalized, legalized in our society will need to be treated as such, the hybrid product that it is from the controlled substances that we currently have in this province.

All in all, I feel like there's a willingness to work together, but I certainly hope that I have been able to stress enough the importance of reviewing this piece of legislation in particular. I think it's important. I think that it's probably not easy to disagree with. We can work together in special committees, and this is a nonpartisan issue. There's not a single person in here that doesn't agree that we should do everything we possibly can to keep our citizens safe, our residents in Airdrie, and those travelling and visiting here, whoever it is on the roads. We all have a personal vested interest, and we certainly have a duty, as representatives of the people that elected us to be here, to ensure their safety. They expect us to do that, and I think that they would expect us to make sure that we're properly reviewing legislation.

At the end of the day, it doesn't cause harm to put a sunset clause in this legislation to review it and to really sit down, bring in experts, anyone that we may need to give us the feedback and the knowledge to tweak where there are problems. I think we can all see the advantage of doing that, really, with any legislation but certainly, in particular, with our driving impairment legislation. I'd like to see that.

I mean, we've seen it. The minister had a great example of when the government changed the limit from .08 to .05, right? It was not an automatic review, but it was an example of revisiting the legislation and making changes where the government of the day felt that it would benefit the residents in our province, the citizens in our province. That's really great to see, but, you know, it would be nice to see nonpartisan committee work. This is a great piece of legislation that would work really well in an all-party, nonpartisan committee, where we can bring in the experts and the people that know how and where and what to tweak.

I mean, this is something so new and so kind of crazy, a little bit. I still can't believe we're legalizing marijuana, but it's here, and it's on us. It's our responsibility to do the best job we possibly can in ensuring that this legislation is right for the people of Alberta. I know that every single person in here would certainly agree with that.

With that, I humbly ask that you support this amendment as it is important that we be responsible and that we put this in there. Let's bring this back for review.

Thank you.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and I want to thank the hon. Member for Calgary-West for his amendment. I believe that it is a well-intended amendment. Certainly, it's very important that the legislation is reviewed, and it will be reviewed in about a five-year time frame.

One of the things that I've talked about with my department rather extensively and with the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General with respect to this legislation is the fact that not all the data that we need is currently available. We're going into some uncharted territory with this legislation. There's no question about

that. I freely admit that that is the case, and quite frankly it's just unavoidable. As we go forward, we will gather more data, and it will inform our review of this particular piece of legislation. That has to be an ongoing process, and it has to be conducted by government, by law enforcement agencies, by organizations that represent I guess what used to be called the motoring public, and so on. A lot of information will be garnered as we go forward that will help us evaluate the bill and make changes as required, and that process needs to take place.

However, we don't know for sure when the information will be available, so it has to be an ongoing process. This is not an ongoing process. It's an every-five-years kind of a process and done strictly at a committee level by the Legislative Assembly. That's not normally how we develop and evaluate legislation, Mr. Chair. But I want to assure all members that this will be an important priority for the Transportation department, for the government as a whole, and, I'm certain, for law enforcement agencies.

**11:40**

There will be ongoing review of this legislation; I want to assure the House of that. I also want to undertake that when we have sufficient data, which may not be according to the schedule set out in the amendment – and that's, I think, a key point – it will be shared with members of the House. If there are additional changes and amendments to this legislation to be brought forward, that will be done, and it will be scrutinized here in the House. We will be gathering the input of our partners in keeping our highways safe.

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

With respect, I do appreciate very much the intent of the amendment, but it is not how we propose to proceed with the ongoing review of this legislation, so I would urge hon. members to defeat this amendment.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

**Mr. Strankman:** Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased that Drumheller-Stettler gets a chance to be recognized. Due to some miscommunication on my part when you mentioned Airdrie, I thought maybe you were just describing the diverse constituency of Drumheller-Stettler incorrectly.

It's a pleasure to talk to Bill 29, An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving. I rise, respectfully, as one of the members of the former Wildrose caucus and perceived in some circles to be of a generation previous to what we have here, in some circles referred to as dinosaurs, which is not necessarily the case but stronger, different versions of a conservative sort of government.

I'm wanting to support my colleague's amendment here, which talks about: "By December 2019, and every 5 years after that, a special committee established by the Legislative Assembly [would] begin a comprehensive review of this Act." Simply to build on what the Government House Leader has said, we are going into in many ways uncharted territory in the establishment of this legislation in regard to this new ground that we're reaching, not to approve or deny the acceptance of the medicine or the product that's being regulated in this case but to approach it in the spirit of a regulatory review and/or therefore a potential reduction of it.

I looked at a piece of legislation that was handed to us yesterday, described as Bill 30, and respectfully, with the greatest respect, it's 150 pages of legislation. But the last page, Madam Chair, of the legislation talks about a review of the act. With that depth of going into this situation, I can read from it: "shall, on or before February 1, 2021 and at least once every 5 years thereafter." Now, this is a

proposal by the government to effect a review. This is quite onerous legislation, so I fully understand and I believe that it's appropriate that this legislation would be reviewed. I think it's only due diligence that we do this sort of thing.

My friend and colleague from Airdrie talked about – and I was pleased that she talked about it – an old act in the town of Airdrie that would take away or add or have legislation that you can or cannot have a facility where you may or may not want to tie up your horses in front of a place of business or appropriately or inappropriately store your dynamite. In a modern world these things are not necessarily needed.

There needs to be a process where this type of legislation can be brought to a review by the people as it goes forward. I think that it's important that we have this process. The government has presented that, in fairness, for one of the most onerous pieces of legislation that we've seen in this session, Bill 30. We're already at 30 pieces of legislation. Should we be at three, or should we be at 50? I don't know. But this is what the government is bringing forward. I think that on the technical side of things it's a self-cleansing way of re-establishing, reapproaching these bills in a committee of this Legislature, not unlike what we do for budgets and estimates, where the opposition gets a chance to question the government on their approaches to budgeting, et cetera. It's an annual occurrence that takes place. I think it's important that we as government in respect of taxpayers' dollars have a legitimate process, that we can review the activities that go on in here in an open, public, and transparent way. The recent government legislation talks about that.

I think that the amendment before us is simply a reiteration of a process that the government has already initiated. I'm in favour of the government's model, and I'm in favour of the amendment to continue on with the government model.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to amendment A2? The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

**Mr. McIver:** Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the amendment. I'm sincerely hoping that the Transportation minister reconsiders his opposition to it. The amendment actually makes sense, particularly in the context of what the minister said.

The minister did say that the government has promised that there will be a device to measure cannabis content by July 1 of next year. I don't know whether that's true or not. I'm sure that when he said it, he meant it. I'm sure he believed it, and it may actually be true. [interjection] No. I appreciate that. I'm not questioning the minister's integrity at all here. I'm just saying that he was told that, and I believe that he's telling us what he believes to be true.

But just the fact that he hasn't got it yet – and considering the fact that even if indeed it does come, we're so new in the legalization of cannabis situation here, there are bound to be more and more improvements on ways to measure the amount of cannabis. There's bound to be more and more science available on determining what level of cannabis is in the bloodstream or some other method of testing. Who knows? They might find something that tells the level of cannabis in your hair follicle. I'm just making that up. My point is that there are people working in laboratories all over the place now looking for ways to measure the amount of cannabis in a human body in order to, by further extension, determine what level actually is impairment and which one isn't.

This is all so new. It seems to me that the most responsible thing we can do is to commit to reviewing the legislation at an early date. In this particular case, it doesn't even cast any aspersions on what

the government is doing here. It just seems like the responsible thing to do. There is so much – and the minister agreed – in flux here. He also agreed with me that what the federal government has set as a standard, between two and five nanolitres or something – it's between two and five.

**Mr. Mason:** Nanograms.

**Mr. McIver:** Nanograms. Thank you, Minister. I appreciate it.

Perhaps the minister has more experience with cannabis than I do because he seems quite specific about what's high and what isn't or what level is a lot and what isn't, but I'll just take his word for that.

**Mrs. Littlewood:** At least somebody knows what's going on here.

**Mr. McIver:** Well, we've got somebody from Fort Saskatchewan that seems an expert on cannabis, too. I hope that she'll get on her feet and enlighten us more.

**Mr. Mason:** Point of order, Madam Chair.

**The Deputy Chair:** A point of order has been called.

#### Point of Order Allegations against a Member

**Mr. Mason:** I like a little jocularly in the House as much or more than anyone, but the hon. member seems to be casting aspersions on the personal lives of members, which I think crosses a bit of a line.

11:50

**The Deputy Chair:** The hon. member.

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I had the floor, and members were volunteering information across the floor, including the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, that just said: at least somebody around here knows what they're talking about.

**Mrs. Littlewood:** Sorry. Point of order.

**Mr. McIver:** No. That's what she said while I had the floor. So if she doesn't want it talked about, then perhaps she should leave the person with the floor to discuss the issue at hand rather than say something that she doesn't want reported back. And I think that's a good warning for all of us in this House because all of us at times say things across the floor.

So with all due respect to the Government House Leader, let's get back . . .

**Mr. Mason:** Let's get back to the matter.

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you. With your co-operation, Government House Leader and those on that side, I'd be very happy to get back to the topic at hand, which I will now do.

#### Debate Continued

**Mr. McIver:** I think the hon. Transportation minister did say that even the federal government standards, that they've set as a level to determine what is impaired and what is not – and I agree with him, just for the record. My understanding is that that's not fully and generally accepted. It's a standard they set. I'm sure that it's based on some research, but there are certainly a lot of people that may not agree with that. My understanding is that it's not generally accepted as the right number. I'm sure the federal government is doing the best they can, too, with the science, such as it is, and



probably using a number that they believe is the best available today. My point with this amendment is that since the science is still unfolding, since the technology for measuring impairment due to cannabis use is unfolding, I think it might even be seen as a little bit irresponsible.

But I will say that it definitely would be seen as responsible to review the legislation at an earlier stage rather than a later stage, knowing how much is unfolding right now, because that will give us an opportunity to look at it and make adjustments. We may pick a different level for impairment. There may be a different piece of technology to approve rather than the cheek swabs and the blood test and so many other things. In this area of newness, uncertainty, and constant research going on right now, it makes the amendment extremely responsible, and I would hope that the government would reconsider their position on that.

Again, it's not even to slag or knock their legislation; it's just a recognition of an area with a lot of moving parts here for all of us. It would be good for all of us in the House to be able to review it at an earlier rather than later stage in order to make sure that we can adjust something that I think is probably a pretty good piece of legislation under these tough circumstances with more information. There's almost for sure going to be a way to make it even that much better, not because the government has necessarily made a mistake right now but, rather, because more information will become available that is in no way available to the government now. For that reason, I would hope that they will support the amendment.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to amendment A2? The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

**Mr. Yao:** I would like to speak on this amendment, please. Thank you so much. Madam Chair, I'm here to amaze and dazzle you with my experiences in emergency services over the last 20 years in regard to this bill here. This is a good bill, and this is a fair amendment. I guess what I'm trying to say is that there's a lot of diversity, and people are going to take these things that inebriate them in different ways. Some people are just wired differently. Some of these things, these narcotics and other things, might not even affect them, but we have other people who are at the far end

of the spectrum that are very susceptible to the influences of these supplements, if you will.

With this bill, the act to reduce cannabis and alcohol impaired . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** Hon. member.

**Mr. Yao:** Yes.

**The Deputy Chair:** I hesitate to interrupt, but pursuant to Standing Order 4(3) we shall now rise and report progress.

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

**Mr. Hinkley:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 29. I wish to table copies of all the amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Does the Assembly concur with the report? All those in favour, please say aye.

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

**The Acting Speaker:** Those opposed, please say no. So ordered.  
The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I move that the committee rise and report progress. [interjections] Did you just do that? Well, then let's go for lunch. I move that we adjourn until 1:30 this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. Government House Leader, you are now calling it 12 o'clock, and you would like to adjourn until 1:30 this afternoon?

**Mr. Mason:** Yes. That's what I said.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 11:57 a.m.]



## Table of Contents

Prayers.....	2027
Orders of the Day .....	2027
Government Bills and Orders	
Second Reading	
Bill 28    School Amendment Act, 2017.....	2027
Committee of the Whole	
Bill 29    An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving.....	2031, 2038

*Alberta Hansard* is available online at [www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca)

For inquiries contact:

Managing Editor

*Alberta Hansard*

3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 St

EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E7

Telephone: 780.427.1875