



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Fourth Session

# Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, May 10, 2018

Day 28

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 29th Legislature

### Fourth 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

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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),  
Alberta Party Opposition House Leader  
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),  
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Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP)  
Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP),  
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Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (NDP)  
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Official Opposition Deputy Whip  
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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)  
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Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)  
Vacant, Fort McMurray-Conklin  
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New Democratic: 54 United Conservative: 25 Alberta Party: 3 Alberta Liberal: 1 Progressive Conservative: 1 Independent Conservative: 1 Vacant: 2

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## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 10, 2018

[The Speaker in the chair]

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon. I'm from southern Alberta. It's nice to see that there's a little bit of rain happening. It's dry out there.

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Guests

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

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Adriana LaGrange. Adriana has served on the board of trustees for Red Deer Catholic regional schools since 2007 and is currently in her second term as president of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association. She's known as a faith-filled and energetic leader with a great passion for Catholic education across Alberta. With Adriana today are Dean Sarnecki, executive director with the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association, and Eugenia Kowalczyk, also with the ACSTA. I would ask that they now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly family members of our current page Amanda Porter. Seated in the Speaker's gallery are James and Shelley Porter, Amanda's parents, as well as her sister Elizabeth Porter and grandfather William Klute. Shelley is a former school trustee who is currently with Alberta Justice, and James is a salesman with a love of politics. William is a farmer in Sturgeon county, and Elizabeth is currently studying chemical biology at UBC. They are in the Speaker's gallery today to observe Amanda in her role as head page during her last session here at the Legislature. We will bid farewell to Amanda as she leaves to attend university in the fall, after holding her position as a page since November 2015. I would ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

**Ms Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, joining the Porter family in the Speaker's gallery is former page Christian Fotang. Mr. Fotang was a page until last year and is joining us to watch session one more time. I would ask him to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Good to see you again.

The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

**Mr. Orr:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you today the students and assistants from St. Augustine school, a great bunch of students and a great school, I have to say. The students are accompanied by teachers Sharon Hackett and Ken Hackett along with some chaperones: Amanda Scott, Jennifer LaForge, Sara Dennis, Crystal Fleck, Alison Roland-Klimec, Marilyn Almond, and Tony Cabay. I would ask them all to rise, please, and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**Mr. Carlier:** Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Alberta's official forest fire prevention mascot, Bertie Beaver, standing today in the members' gallery. Bertie was a gift to the province of Alberta from Walt Disney as a thank you for filming in Kananaskis. This year marks Bertie's 60th birthday, and I must say that Bertie has never looked better. As we observe Alberta Forest Week, I invite everyone to honour and protect our forests by following Bertie and helping us stamp out wildfires. I would like for Bertie to wave and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** So, hon. minister, what's the matter with being 60?

**Mr. Carlier:** Nothing, Mr. Speaker. Not a thing.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you Janice Willier along with her sons Zachary and Jaxon. The Willier family lives here in Edmonton, but they are proud members of the Moostoos family in Sucker Creek First Nation in Treaty 8 territory. Janice has long worked to improve the holistic health of First Nations in Alberta, a passion that has led her to an executive director role at HCOM, the Health Co-Management Secretariat, here in Edmonton. Zachary is a talented fiddle player who attends Maskwacis academy and has represented Alberta youth at the national Métis gathering in Batoche, Saskatchewan. Jaxon attends Prince Charles school and is also a gifted fiddle player who dabbles in drums, guitar, and violin. I would ask them now to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Health.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions today. First, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you members of the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation and some of the families that they support, who are seated in our members' gallery. They're here to celebrate Stollery day, and I hope that my colleagues were able to spend a few minutes with them downstairs to celebrate the excellence that they are helping us provide in terms of children's health. Now, please stand as I say your names – the Stanley, Post, Pinchuk, and MacKinnon families as well as Martin Schuldhaus, Mike House, and Cora Carter – to receive the warm welcome of our Assembly as well as our appreciation.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

**Ms Hoffman:** The second, Mr. Speaker, if I may. Thank you. I also rise today in recognition of World Lupus Day. Lupus is a serious autoimmune disease affecting approximately 1 in 1,000 Canadians. I want to commend Lupus Canada and the Lupus Society of Alberta for their leadership in promoting public awareness and general education about lupus and for providing compassion, hope, and support for those who are affected as well as their families. I invite Shane from Lupus Canada as well as Rosemary from the Lupus Society of Alberta and all of the patient advocates who are here today seated in our public gallery to please rise and receive the warm welcome and, again, appreciation of our Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning has another introduction, I believe.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand to introduce to you and through you a school from Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, Destiny Christian School. Currently they are visiting the Legislature with 26 students from their school. I would ask them all to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

### Members' Statements

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

#### Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The health of our province starts with the health of its children. The Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation has a vision. It wants to help transform children's health care so that every child, no matter where they live, can get the best possible care anywhere. That's why we're proud to host Stollery day at the Legislature today. This is an opportunity for our members to celebrate the amazing, world-renowned expertise that exists right here in our own backyard to help kids like Austin from Cold Lake, Evanna from Calgary, Jack and Lily from Redwater, Josie from Whitecourt, and Porter in his backyard of Onoway. I'm proud to say that all of these Stollery kids and their families are with us today in the gallery.

With more than 291,000 patient visits each year and more than one-third of those kids coming from outside the Edmonton region, the Stollery children's hospital is one of the busiest children's hospitals in Canada. It is the most specialized pediatric facility in all of Western Canada, performing more than 11,000 surgeries per year and providing care to some of the most complex health cases anywhere in the world.

The foundation is committed to investing in the best people, programs, equipment, and research to make sure that the Stollery has what it needs. With the support of its donors the Stollery is the foremost funder of pediatric research in Alberta, \$40 million over 10 years, through the Women and Children's Health Research Institute at the University of Alberta.

1:40

The foundation also believes in equity and fairness. That's why it's investing in mental health, indigenous health, and transitional health from child to adult in an effort to expand the Stollery's growing network of care.

Stollery day is an opportunity for us to reflect on the tremendous impact this hospital has on our province and the vital importance children's health plays in the future of our province.

On behalf of Austin, Evanna, Jack, Lily, Josie, Porter, and their families, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Catholic Education

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise and highlight today as World Catholic Education Day, which is being celebrated across Canada. Catholic education has served parents, their children, and communities in countries across the world. In Canada Catholic education is an integral contributor to our Canadian identity and culture, serving the nation through faith-based learning. Catholic education, with its deeply rooted teachings of social justice, service to the community, and ongoing promotion of respect and dignity for all persons, values which are inherent to our identity as Canadians and Albertans, has helped define who we are.

Catholic schools provide an environment for the students which encourages not only high academic achievement but strong emphasis

on love of God, self, and others. This is achieved by permeating all curriculum with faith, emphasizing sacrificial love, respect for creation, and academic development in an effort to form the student's whole person.

Mr. Speaker, the strength of Alberta's education system is built on the foundation of choice. Parents have a variety of options to choose from as they decide what the best avenue of education is for their kids. With steadily increasing enrolment numbers, parents in Alberta continue to demonstrate that Catholic education remains a primary option for many families across the province.

I would like to offer my most sincere congratulations to all who are involved in Catholic education in our province, and I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating all of our fantastic English and francophone Catholic schools across this great province and wishing them the best as they celebrate World Catholic Education Day.

#### Human-animal Bond

**Dr. Starke:** Mr. Speaker, humans have kept domestic animals as pets for thousands of years, but it's only been in the last 40 years or so that the benefits of the human-animal bond have become better understood. Research has shown the health benefits of pet ownership: lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol, less anxiety, fewer heart attacks, and fewer suicides. Incredible service dogs support people who are blind, deaf, have autism, epilepsy, or PTSD.

Other research has shown the benefits of having animals in our workplaces. While we've gone to great lengths in making this place more family friendly, our four-legged family members are banned. I used to bring my dog to work here at the Legislature, and those days were the best days.

Ninety per cent of Canadians consider their pet a member of the family. Now, as a veterinarian I viewed my job not as someone who cured disease or repaired injuries; my job was to preserve family relationships.

Now, our family has been blessed with the unconditional love over the years of three dogs: our Airedale, Hillary; our golden retriever, Sara; and until three weeks ago our Bernese mountain dog, Liesl. We shared all the joy, the laughter, the heartaches, and the tears of our time together.

It's been said that dogs live short lives and that it's really their only fault. When they die, we grieve and maybe ask the question that I got so many times from teary-eyed children: will my dog go to heaven? Now, Hollywood says that all dogs go heaven, but some theologians argue that dogs can't go to heaven because they don't have souls. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm a veterinarian, not a theologian, but I've looked deeply into the trusting eyes of thousands of dogs, and my professional opinion says that dogs have souls. And as for going to heaven, well, I agree with Will Rogers: if dogs don't go to heaven, I want to go where they went.

In the meantime I'll keep believing that we are richly blessed to share the Earth with animals and that when my earthly journey here is done, my dogs will be waiting patiently for me at the rainbow bridge to go for one more walk.

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

#### Mental Health Week

**Drever:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to speak about a topic that affects us all. Mental health is something that affects us – 1 in 5 Albertans – and when you think about your family, your friends, and your co-workers, I'm sure that you yourself know

someone who has been impacted. Mental health is something that we should all be aware of year-round, but this week especially we need to make some noise and let everybody around us know that mental health is an issue to be taken seriously.

The 67th annual Mental Health Week runs this year from May 7 to 13. It is an opportunity to attend events, speak to loved ones, and raise awareness. The theme of this year's event is Get Loud, and the Edmonton chapter of the Canadian Mental Health Association lets everyone know what that means.

Getting loud means speaking up to stop the discrimination and the stigma that usually go hand in hand with mental illness. It means using your voice to raise awareness and build support. For someone at work. For someone at home. For yourself.

I am proud to be part of a government that recognizes the importance of mental health. Soon after our election the Premier struck the Alberta Mental Health Review Committee to look at the state of mental health and addictions treatment in Alberta. From that committee came the Valuing Mental Health report and a series of recommendations to improve the system. I'm proud to say that Alberta Health has been taking a proactive role ever since implementing those recommendations and working in collaboration across government and with community agencies to support people in need.

For this Mental Health Week let's say it proudly and loudly: mental health is everyone's business. Stop the discrimination and stigma. Offer and build support. Together we can all be healthier.

Thank you so much.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

### Catholic Education

**Ms McKittrick:** Thank you. Merci, M. le Président. Alberta's Catholic community makes an enormous contribution to our province. This is why I'm rising today to recognize World Catholic Education Day. Every year Catholics across the world give thanks for the gift of Catholic education. Alberta has a long and wonderful tradition of publicly funded education. Every day Catholic schools teach students the skills they need to be leaders in their communities and to build a bright future for themselves, their families, and the province as a whole.

The government is proud to support all of our students. We are hiring new teachers, reducing school fees, and making investments we need to make in our children. In my constituency we are celebrating the announcement of the modernization of l'école Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic elementary school, which will provide modern learning spaces for students for generations to come.

Alberta's greatest strength is its diversity. Alberta is home to many faith communities, who have contributed greatly to the identity of this province. While each of us in this province lives out our own values, there is more that unites us than divides us: our sense of fairness, our compassion, our sense of justice, our desire to ensure that all children are nurtured and cared for, our pioneer spirit, and for many of us the centrality of our faith to our daily lives, myself included. I love walking into Archbishop Jordan school in Sherwood Park and seeing the 12 chairs and the statue of Jesus, where students meet and develop community. It brings the centrality of faith into the everyday life of the students.

I hope that World Catholic Education Day brings Albertans marking the occasion inspiration and grace and that together we can continue to do the important work of ensuring that our children can reach their full potential.

Merci.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

### Justice System Concerns

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our legal aid system limps along in a state of crisis that costs all Albertans in longer court wait times and impaired access to the legal system for everyday Albertans, with serious charges being stayed in criminal court cases. The president of the Criminal Defence Lawyers Association recently said that a lawyers strike is possible if the NDP government doesn't provide a significant funding increase immediately for legal aid, currently needing about \$61 million. Albertans who are full-time employees making the minimum wage, about \$19,000 a year, currently would not qualify for legal aid coverage. If the working poor can't get legal aid, then the system is broken. It must be fixed now. The system is overwhelmed, with up to 1,400 calls per day.

I applaud the government's investment in therapeutic courts for mental health and addictions issues, which keep people out of jail and help people heal as well as free up court time, but changes are essential to improve efficiency in the system. Foremost is a more independent board to Legal Aid from the NDP government. What is the government afraid of? Allow the board to make common-sense changes; for example, to streamline folks needing social services, mediation, private lawyers; more flexibility for family law cases to reduce conflict and ongoing court disputes that drain the system, damage clients, and do not result in optimal outcomes, especially for children.

1:50

Clearly, there's also a need for more focus on the 30 per cent of clients that are indigenous. Siksika Nation, for example, has duty counsel and social workers on-reserve at the band office. Other First Nations would benefit greatly from this service. The NDP Justice minister is not providing lasting solutions, including some increased funding, to deal with increasing demands. Instead, it's offering more consultations and delaying essential changes to the provincial justice system. We need solutions now. Albertans cannot wait any longer.

### Oral Question Period

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

### Provincial Response to Pipeline Opposition

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all want to see Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion succeed and ensure that our natural resources get to tidewater. That's why our Official Opposition called for consequences last summer, when the B.C. NDP was sworn into government, but the government chose to ignore calls for consequences until just recently. To the Premier: why did the government not take B.C.'s threat seriously until B.C. was already taking active steps to obstruct the pipeline?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. We are working to get our pipeline built to tidewater, and we are committed to ensuring that it succeeds. As our Premier said this morning, Ottawa is in a very serious and determined discussion with our government with regard to Kinder Morgan. I want to assure Albertans that those discussions are focused on one outcome and one outcome alone, the construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline. We won't take our foot off the gas. We're going to keep moving forward. We're proud

that we are in a position to be able to move this important project in the national interest forward after many decades of it failing to move forward under the former government.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since last summer our Official Opposition has called for this government to turn off the taps to British Columbia if their NDP government tried to stop the pipeline. Only on March 8 of this year did the government announce that they would take such an approach. There are now only 21 days left until Kinder Morgan makes a decision on whether or not to even proceed with the project. To the Premier: why did this government wait until March 8, after months of uncertainty, to even consider this?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and again to the member for the important question. Certainly, we know that over many, many years there was a Conservative government here in Alberta and a Conservative government in Ottawa and that they didn't turn the taps down. We know that things have also changed over the last several months. We are very determined to make sure we get this pipeline built. That's why we brought in Bill 12, and that's why we are going to back down at nothing.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 15 B.C. Premier Horgan said that our Premier told him they wouldn't actually be using Bill 12. On April 17 B.C.'s Attorney General said: clearly, the legislation is a bluff; they don't intend to use it. There are now 21 days left until Kinder Morgan makes a final investment decision. To the Premier: how does this government plan on using Bill 12 to get the pipeline passed if they've already signalled to British Columbia that they won't use it?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much again, Mr. Speaker. Again, we've heard this question asked before, and the answer remains the same. Of course, we brought in Bill 12 so that we can have additional tools so that we can use them if we need to use them. I understand that you're taking: somebody said something to somebody else that got reported in the media, and now it's coming back to Alberta. I can tell you straight up that if we need Bill 12, we will use Bill 12. If I were one of the people in British Columbia – we've already seen the prices at the pumps go up – I'd be really worried about what's going to happen if Bill 12 does have to get used, which, of course, is at our disposal, hopefully, very soon.

**The Speaker:** Second main question.

#### Federal Policies on Pipeline Development

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After his April 15 meeting with our Premier, the Prime Minister announced that the federal legislation would be coming to reassert and reinforce federal jurisdiction on pipelines. There are only 10 sitting days left federally until Kinder Morgan makes its final investment decision, and the Liberal government has not actually done so. To the Premier: has the government reached out to their federal counterparts to see why they failed to table this promised legislation?

**The Speaker:** The Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're using various tools with the goal, of course, of getting that TMX construction on track this summer. We aren't going to back down. I'm very proud of the work that we've done to build bridges and to build relationships with folks across this country, including now the majority of British Columbians, even in the Lower Mainland. We're going to keep moving forward to get this pipeline built.

I won't take advice from the members of the opposition around a number of things, including their proposal around outing gay kids. This is making international media, including *The Guardian*: Forcibly Outing LGBT Children to Their Parents Is Monstrous. I have one question: will you please stop?

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association federal Bill C-69 will make it "difficult to imagine that a new major pipeline could be built in Canada." Given the uncertainty already created over the Trans Mountain expansion and a number of companies already divesting in Alberta, this is troubling for the families that depend on our energy industry. To the Premier: when was the last time this government expressed concern about Bill C-69 to the federal government and on which specific date?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We've been very clear. I believe that the correspondence started last fall, and we continue to say that we want to ensure that we not only get our pipeline to tidewater but that we have a means of transport to ensure that it gets across to the markets that really do want it. The Asia Pacific markets are very hungry for our resources. I do have to say that this is an important project in our national interest. We won't back down from standing up for Albertans, whether it's women accessing health care, children wanting to feel safe at school, or getting our products to tidewater.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The urgency and necessity of the Trans Mountain expansion is the result of the failure of other important projects like Northern Gateway and Energy East. A recent report showed that the lack of pipeline capacity is costing our energy industry \$15.8 billion every year, or nearly 1 per cent of GDP. To the Premier: with the continued uncertainty over Trans Mountain, what actions has this government taken to ensure that future pipeline projects can be considered?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the Leader of the Official Opposition did in fact indicate that he didn't think that the Northern Gateway pipeline was in the national interest. Certainly, we do need to ensure that TMX is built, and we will ensure that TMX is built. That's why it's a priority of this government. It's identified as a national priority, unlike with the Leader of the Official Opposition. It's been identified as such because our government has put it on the agenda. We've also secured the approval for the Enbridge line 3 project as a result of the climate leadership plan. As for our interventions on federal C-69 there are about 120-odd amendments that we're sifting through right now.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
Third main question.



### Health Care Wait Times

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information Albertans are now waiting longer for surgeries than they were just three years ago, including hip replacement surgeries, cataract surgeries, and knee replacement surgeries. Fewer Albertans are receiving these surgeries within the recommended times. To the Premier: how is it that wait times for these important surgeries are increasing?

**The Speaker:** The Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. We know how important it is for Albertans to be able to access timely care in the right place at the right time by the right provider. Of course, we believe that that should be public. It shouldn't be derived based on how much money you have in your pocket but on how much need there is. The need has gone up dramatically over the last few years. We have made significant strides in reducing wait times in a number of areas like hip fracture repair, radiation therapy, stroke treatment, but we know that there are additional needs. That's why we brought in a bigger budget. We wish that the opposition would have voted for it, but we're proud to pass a budget that's going to invest in health care.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a matter of outcomes, not spending.

According to a freedom of information request wait times for heart valve surgeries are up from 16 weeks in 2015-16 to 23 weeks last summer. That's a long time for families waiting for a needed surgery for a loved one. To the Premier. These increases all happened under this government's watch. Can you explain how it happened, and what steps are being taken to address it?

**The Speaker:** The Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much. Well, there are increased needs in this province, so while we're providing more services, there are additional people who are also lining up. That's because people are choosing Alberta as their home, and we're really proud of that. We've also, as I've mentioned, addressed wait times in a number of those other areas. As well, family physicians have been able to reduce the wait-list for nonurgent GI treatment in the Calgary zone by 98 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That's certainly a success. One of the other things we did was that we added \$40 million for AHS direct funding to support things like cancer surgeries and hip and knee and cataract surgeries. We voted for that budget. Why didn't you?

2:00

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A recent Alberta Health Services quarterly update shows that the percentage of Alberta children needing mental health treatment and actually getting an appointment within 30 days has been declining in Edmonton, from 77 per cent in 2014 to only 45 per cent last year, and in northern Alberta, from 84 per cent in 2014 to only 70 per cent last year. To the Premier: how is it that these wait times are getting longer? Are you concerned about it, and if so, what is being done today to address it?

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

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker and for the question. It's a fair question. We have increased service provision significantly across the province. Part of what is also happening at the same time is that more people are coming forward identifying as being in need of mental health supports. That is certainly a good thing. We want people to come forward and ask for help, and we want to make sure that help is there for them. That's why just on Monday – this is Mental Health Week – we announced the increase of a grant that we have that goes specifically to schools to help hire staff to support children in school. We've increased that grant by 50 per cent this year alone. That's why we brought forward a Health budget that increased spending instead of calling for drastic cuts. I'm proud of our government and what we're doing.

**The Speaker:** Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

### PDD Program Review and Advocate

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government of Alberta has a legal and moral obligation to provide appropriate and equitable funding to persons with developmental disabilities and to manage the PDD program in a manner that's responsive to the needs and concerns of individuals, families, service providers, and workers. To the Premier: when will the government conclude its review of the PDD program in respect to the principles of inclusion, transparency, independence, collaboration, and best practices?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't agree more with the hon. member. It is absolutely the case that this government is completely committed to ensuring that we have a better PDD program going forward. As my colleague is always saying, what we've heard loud and clear from various communities is: nothing about us without us. We are absolutely taking the time to go out and consult with different communities. We've demonstrated our commitment by increasing funding by \$150 million to provide 800 additional PDD clients with the supports they need, and I'm sure I'll have more to say about that shortly.

**Ms McPherson:** The community is confused by conflicting messages about the government's intentions with the PDD program. It's been almost three years since the government has taken power, and we've yet to see a comprehensive PDD strategy. Why did it take so long to initiate a PDD review, let alone address community members' long-standing and well-known concerns?

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

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Well, of course, as all members of this House will be aware, when you're dealing with a complex situation and you want to make sure that everyone is included, sometimes it takes that long to get it right. I think that rather than hearing from us, we should hear from some people who have been affected by this. Bruce Uditsky, Inclusion Alberta CEO and parent of a son who receives PDD services, said that our government showing "leadership in launching this forward-thinking review and ensuring families and individuals with developmental disabilities are fully heard and engaged is much appreciated."

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.  
Second supplemental.

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In May 2017 this Assembly voted unanimously to create an advocate for persons with disabilities to examine broader issues affecting people with disabilities and assist individuals having difficulties with the system. Despite royal assent in June 2017, the government only began searching for an advocate this week. To the Premier: how much longer will Albertans have to wait for an advocate to finally hear their concerns after years of inaction by previous and current governments?

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

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. Of course, our government is incredibly proud of the Member for Calgary-North West for passing a private member's bill to make life better for Albertans with disabilities. I'm proud to announce that the posting was opened recently. There was incredible engagement on this file. Over 1,300 Albertans with disabilities, their families, and self-advocates shared their input on the role that the advocate should take through a survey to help us determine what the priorities are. We're committed to working with those communities to make sure that we get it right.

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

#### Access to Health Services and Social Supports

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I attended the Momentum mental health awards honouring those who've helped end stigma that prevents many from seeking help. Indeed, stigma against mental illness can drive some to self-medicate through substance use. Yet while the Leader of the Opposition yesterday expressed concerns about access to treatment, he also continues to spread stigma about individuals who access life-saving supervised consumption sites, having referred to them as addicts who inject poison into themselves. To the Associate Minister of Health: alongside providing funding for those life-saving health services, what steps are you taking to end stigma by pushing back against such life-threatening misinformation?

**Ms Payne:** I'd like to start by thanking the member for his advocacy on this important issue. Mr. Speaker, stigma kills. Stigma prevents people from talking openly about mental illness and substance use, and stigma prevents people from accessing the help they need. I'm so proud of the work our government has done to make supervised consumption services available in Alberta. In Calgary there have been more than 10,000 visits to the Chumir site since it opened, and almost 200 overdoses have been reversed. Behind each reversal is a person with value who deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, who has friends and family who care about them. Now they have another chance to find help.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.  
First supplemental.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that stigma is also one of the reasons that many LGBTQ2S-plus youth struggle with their mental health and given that studies show that GSAs save lives by offering them safe spaces with peer support free from judgment and given that the opposition leader and UCP MLAs have contributed to harmful stigma against them by repeatedly suggesting GSAs...

**Mr. Nixon:** Point of order.

**Mr. Shepherd:** ... teach secret curriculum on sexual subjects, to the Minister of Education: what steps are you taking to push back against such life-threatening misinformation?

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

**Mr. Eggen:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, GSAs literally do save lives in schools and outside, too. I've visited a number of these GSAs around the province, and I've heard that message loud and clear from students. For that reason, we passed Bill 24 into law this past fall, and I was definitely disappointed that we did not get unanimous support for that. The opposition did vote against it and then brought forward policy that would reinforce the destructive elements on GSAs. I was very disappointed, but certainly our government is here to protect kids. They know that, and students should feel safe and welcome.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
Proceed.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that women have long faced judgment and stigma simply for insisting on the right to control their own bodies and reproductive decisions and given that members of the opposition refused to even engage in discussion on ensuring they can exercise that right with privacy, safety, and dignity and given that the majority of their party members voted to strip that right from young women old enough to drive and work a part-time job, to the Minister of Health: what steps are you taking to ensure that all women in our province can access this safe, legal health care service?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Health.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This government stands with women, and we believe strongly that women's rights are human rights and that their right to make their own decisions is not up for debate. The members opposite showed what their beliefs are at their convention, but they won't stand up in this Chamber and state their beliefs for Albertans. On this side we welcome every day all members of this House to stand up for Albertans. This side of the House won't stop doing their work to protect the things that matter most to Alberta families.

Thank you.

#### Power Company Compensation for Coal Phase-out

**Mr. Gotfried:** Mr. Speaker, when the government agreed to compensate coal-fired electricity producers, these companies assumed the government would act in good faith. Well, one year into this agreement there are already issues. Capital Power is suing Alberta Energy, alleging the government failed to act in good faith, shorting the company \$2.7 million in just the first year of this 14-year agreement. To the Minister of Energy. One year into this deal and we already have a lawsuit. Will this be a recurring theme of Alberta Energy, being sued for failing to live up to contractual obligations?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the agreements that our government negotiated are fair. They will help companies continue to power our electricity grid, to transition to natural gas where appropriate, and ensure that power companies keep their headquarters here in Alberta and protect worker benefits. They were negotiated with the support of an internationally respected expert with decades of experience. This particular case is

before the courts, so it's inappropriate to comment any further, but we are confident in our legal position.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

2:10

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that litigation is almost always a last resort, I would assume, taken only when parties refuse to negotiate or bargain in good faith, and given that on April 9 a dispute resolution meeting between Alberta Energy and Capital Power was arranged to avoid costly court proceedings; however, at this meeting a deal could not be reached because the province did not send someone with the authority to resolve the dispute, to the Minister of Energy: why did you force Capital Power to pursue litigation by refusing to send someone with a level of authority to negotiate a settlement in good faith?

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

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is inquiring about a specific case, so it would be inappropriate to comment on this particular case and what led to it. We are confident in our legal position. We are also confident that the communities that are affected by the coal-fired transition, whether it's the 12 that were phased out under Prime Minister Stephen Harper at the time or the remaining eight 12 years from now – we're making sure that the worker benefits are in place, that there's a transition fund for workers. The communities will be protected.

**Mr. Gotfried:** A great way to do business, Mr. Speaker.

Given that yesterday ATCO indicated they are considering litigation against this government as a result of the coal compensation agreement and given that if litigation is instigated by ATCO, that would mean 3 out of 4 companies compensated through the coal phase-out will have had to sue the government in order to receive the compensation they are owed, again to the minister. These companies want to be adequately compensated based on contracts signed in good faith. Why are you forcing them into the courts and proving yet again that this government cannot be trusted?

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

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. While I will not provide comment on a particular case before the courts or a hypothetical case before the courts, what we do know with respect to this government's approach to the coal-fired transition is that we ensured that the federal government had the regulations in place to ensure coal-to-gas conversion, something that the previous federal government utterly failed to do and, in fact, the previous Conservative government here in Alberta as well. We made sure that we had transition funds in place, some \$40 million, to ensure that families have the supports they need to phase out coal, and it was certainly not supports that were in place under Prime Minister Stephen Harper's phase-out of coal.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Greenway.

### Long-term Care Facility Construction Costs

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you. During budget estimates the Health minister told me that my math was wrong when I pointed out that her government's plan to build a long-term care bed program through a purely public funding model is costing 10 times that of the

abandoned ASLI program. The minister offered to table her department's figures one month ago. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister. Minister, it's been a month now, and you still have not tabled those figures yet. Can you please table those figures now?

Thank you.

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

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will be happy to table the responses that I said that I would be happy to provide. Let me just say right here in this place, in the 30 seconds that remain, that the types of beds that are being built are very different from some of the other types of beds that were being built in the past. Instead of building low levels of care, we're building the highest levels of care for those who are most in need. Rather than keeping people living in hospitals or unsupported in home facilities, we're building these types of beds, that are most needed for those who are most critical in our province, and I'm proud to do that.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we all had noted that the \$110 million Willow Square project in Fort McMurray was costing, Minister, approximately \$700,000 per bed – I understand, as you just mentioned, that you're building different types of beds – and given that under the ASLI program the average cost per bed was \$65,000, can you please explain to the taxpayer why your program is costing 10 times more than the previous program? What kinds of different beds are you making or developing or creating?

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much for the question. One of the biggest differences, that I'm happy to explain, is the difference between renting and owning. When you're building a facility that is publicly owned, the province after five years, 10 years, 30 years will still own that facility. When you're building a facility that the members in your own caucus asked us to move from out of town to downtown, where we have to do some flood mitigation to make sure it respects the needs of the community – we're willing to invest in that. We're willing to invest in Fort McMurray, honouring the requests of your own caucus members. Why aren't you?

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been asking for that but not on the taxpayer's dime, which is costing them 10 times more, Minister.

Given that the Health minister informed this House her government is on track to build 2,000 long-term beds by 2019, please let us know and please share the information with the House: what is the status of those 2,000 beds? How many of those beds have been created? How many are left? When are you planning to complete them?

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, I did answer that question yesterday, so I'll be happy to make sure – I can't table *Hansard*. On the exact breakdown, I did answer that yesterday.

Let me tell the people of Fort McMurray how proud I am that we are investing in the project that the people of Fort McMurray asked us to. Your government kept jerking them around for more than 10 years about whether the site was going to go forward or not. These people are sitting in the hospital waiting for the very important health care service that they certainly deserve. This government stepped up to the plate. Instead of moving a project from the edge of the city to the heart of the city, that's what we did. Instead of

making people languish in hospital, we're building a facility, and I will be very proud to move forward on that.

I can't believe your colleagues are letting you ask . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
Chestermere-Rocky View.

### Carbon Levy and Pipeline Approvals

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pipelines are the safest and most green method of transporting our resources to tidewater and to the world market, yet the Premier doesn't seem to believe that this is good enough. Given that the Premier has felt that rather than fighting to show her friend Justin Trudeau that pipelines themselves would reduce emissions instead she imposed a crippling carbon tax and given that the carbon tax has failed to get the social licence promised from her Liberal friends, why would the government not scrap the carbon tax, which has failed to get anything more than paper approval for these pipelines?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, we do share with the hon. member across the way the priority of getting a pipeline built, but it's the only thing that we share.

Here's a list of things we don't share, Mr. Speaker. We don't share the value that you need to out gay kids in our school system, that you need to privatize health care, that you need to show up at an emergency room with a credit card and not a health care card. We don't share the idea that cutting education funding and attacking teachers is any way to build this province. We don't think that you need to cut taxes for the wealthiest 1 per cent. Those are some things we don't share.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, this government brought in the largest tax hike in the history of Alberta, a tax that they did not run on and that makes life more expensive. Albertans were told that this bitter pill would ensure a pipeline to tidewater with thousands of jobs, yet here we are, three years later, with no pipeline, damaging policies, and bills for families that are piling up because of this carbon tax. What does this government have to say to everyday Alberta families that can't afford to put their kids into hockey this year, take a family trip, buy fresh groceries because of the NDP's failed tax grab?

**The Speaker:** Thank you.  
The hon. minister.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the climate leadership plan led to the approval of two pipelines to tidewater, and we stand in this House every day to talk about the work that we are doing to get that pipeline to tidewater. That's our job. We're happy to do that job.

Clearly, the opposition is not interested in doing their job. They continue to run away from a debate on women's health care. Looking at some of the motions they passed over the weekend, I guess we know why they need to run away from being honest with Albertans about what they really stand for.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, on two separate occasions my colleagues in this House brought forward a motion that would suspend this crippling carbon tax until there were shovels in the

ground on the Kinder Morgan pipeline. Given that on both of those occasions this government voted against those motions and given that this government's carbon tax has failed to get a pipeline to tidewater and given that pipelines are the safest and most green method for transferring resources, why won't the Premier scrap the carbon tax when the pipeline, by its very nature, should have been enough of a green incentive to get approval from their friends in Ottawa?

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

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you very much. Of course, our climate leadership plan led to the approval of those two pipelines. Certainly, that pipeline will be built, unlike the expectations of the members opposite, who are continually cheering for Alberta to fail on this. When we do succeed – and we will, Mr. Speaker – we will generate revenue that we will put towards important health care projects like the Calgary cancer centre, something the members opposite dismissed as “a fancy box.” It'll add to resources used to cut wait times, to assist our EMS workers, and it will add to a public health care system that in this government's hands will remain public.

2:20

### Bill 12

**Mr. Hunter:** Mr. Speaker, Bill 12 was introduced on April 16. We are now at May 10. Why has this NDP government dragged their feet on passing this legislation?

**Ms Hoffman:** Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. We're really proud of the progress that we're making.

**Mr. Nixon:** Point of order.

**Ms Hoffman:** We continued to make progress on that bill yesterday, and we look forward to doing so again today, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Hunter:** Given that we are now going on to almost four weeks since it was introduced, why has the government not passed it sooner? There are only 21 days left.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're happy to move through the business of this House, including Bill 12. It is one very important piece of legislation. We certainly are looking forward to being able to have it passed and to have those tools at our disposal. We're also looking forward to being able to protect women who are walking into clinics from being bullied, shamed, and harassed. We're also looking forward to being able to invest in the petrochemicals diversification program, that's putting thousands, tens of thousands of people to work across our province. We have a number of important bills, and we look forward to you supporting them and helping them all make their way through this Assembly. Maybe you'll vote on all of them. We'll see.

**Mr. Hunter:** Mr. Speaker, given that the Official Opposition has indicated that we are more than willing to pass this legislation in one day, why has the government dragged their feet? Are they really championing this Kinder Morgan pipeline?

**Ms Hoffman:** Of course, we are. Of course, Bill 12 is one tool that we are using to help us champion it. We are in regular contact, almost daily contact, as a matter of fact, with the folks in Ottawa to make sure that they are moving all of the barriers that lie in our way. We are making sure that we are meeting regularly with Kinder Morgan. We've taken intervenor status, and we've won 12 out of

12 court cases, Mr. Speaker. We are using all of the tools at our disposal, and we are happy to welcome the Official Opposition to start cheering for the project instead of finding ways to pretend that they are cheering for the project when they're actually working towards its demise.

### Eastern Slopes Land Management

**Mr. Westhead:** The eastern slopes are some of Alberta's most valuable environmental assets. They provide water for millions of downstream users, recreation opportunities for Albertans and tourists alike, and critical wildlife habitat for endangered species like westslope cutthroat trout. To the Minister of Environment and Parks: what role do environmental NGOs play in advising the government on ways we can protect and enhance Alberta's wild spaces?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Over the weekend the Leader of the Opposition vowed to fight civil society if they stand up or advocate for the protection of our wildlife, our fish, our water. Here's what Dave from southern Alberta had to say about this in the pages of the *Calgary Herald*.

I feel that recent comments about "activist special interests" are directed at me, my friends, family and neighbours who share my values . . .

There is, however, one special interest group I will gladly admit to being part of: Grandfathers who want to give their grandchildren the same clean water and life-filling fishing, hiking, camping and hunting experiences that I have had the privilege of enjoying in Alberta's foothills.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

**Mr. Westhead:** It's hard to believe the opposition leader would add grandparents to his enemies list.

To the same minister: given that draft management plans for the Livingstone-Porcupine area were recently opened for public comment, can you please tell us about the consultation process that went into creating the draft plans?

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

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. For years landowners, grazing lease holders, ranchers, and others in southern Alberta have been asking for better management of our public lands. Certainly, the Livingstone Landowners Group and the Livingstone-Porcupine Coalition were some of the first to ask us for that. They'd been asking the previous government for years and years, falling on deaf ears. We listened to ranchers, we listened to people who live there, we listened to recreation groups, and we've put forward plans that enjoy the broad support of the people in that area. You know, it's really not surprising that the folks across the way have chosen to side with . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
Second supplemental.

**Mr. Westhead:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It hardly sounds like a special interest to me.

Again to the same minister: given that there had been plans to close fisheries along the foothills due to declining trout populations, why were those plans reversed?

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. As I said, civil society in Alberta, whether it's the Alberta Fish and Game Association or

Trout Unlimited or the land trust organizations or others, has been asking us for better management of our resources and our water resources, in particular, and really managing to keep habitat in place so that we can ensure that we have native trout species to enjoy for generations. For years those concerns fell on deaf ears. In terms of our approach to fishing regulations I said very clearly to the Fish and Game Association that I was not going to make Alberta anglers pay for 40 years of Conservative inaction on habitat. So we're moving forward.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
The Member for Calgary-South East.

### Legal Aid

**Mr. Fraser:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I asked the Minister of Justice previously about the problems facing legal aid, and the minister has responded by pointing the finger at other levels of government or previous administrations, but defence lawyers currently have their fingers pointing squarely at the minister. Calgary defence lawyers are open to meeting with this government to discuss this in good faith but warn that the situation is dire enough that they're considering strike action. To the Minister of Justice: will you commit to meeting with these lawyers and attempt to resolve this issue before things get worse?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the first thing to note here is that stating that legal aid has historically been underfunded is not intended to blame anyone; it's simply a statement of fact. That's why when our government took over, we took this issue very seriously. We have increased funding to legal aid by close to 40 per cent. We absolutely are in negotiations for a new governance agreement. We meet regularly with the defence bar in terms of that governance, and we will continue to have those conversations.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Fraser:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that court slowdowns caused by a strike action would not only have a negative impact on those seeking justice but would also likely end up costing the government more money in the long run and given that this government has spoken at length about the need to invest in the future as justification for borrowing, to the same minister. Minister, a healthy legal aid program is like a vital piece of infrastructure for our justice system. Why are you shortchanging this one program?

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

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Well, I think the member's statement is fairly inaccurate. It's absolutely the case that legal aid has received a greater increase in funding percentagewise than anything else in my department. It's absolutely correct that we continue to need to invest in legal aid. That's a critical service. But many of the other services in my ministry are also critical services, and we have to continue to invest in those as well.

**Mr. Fraser:** Given that court times and a responsive justice system are threatened by the troubles facing legal aid and given that the expectation of a fair and timely trial is both a right, regardless of personal wealth, and encourages participation in the justice process by both offenders and victims and given how crucial public trust is for this process to succeed, to the same minister: how will you

ensure that your conflict with defence lawyers and legal aid won't erode public trust in our justice system?

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

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we have regular conversations with all participants in the justice system to ensure that we're responding to the Jordan decision and to underfunding from the government of which that member was a member. It's the case that we've worked very closely with the defence bar. For instance, the CTLA here in Edmonton had advocated to have defence lawyers at bail hearings. We've heard that call, and we've responded accordingly.

#### Air Ambulance Service in Peace River

**Mr. W. Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, Alberta Health Services issued an air ambulance service update on March 15, 2018, stating that it will base one plane in Peace River, on the tarmac, exposed to the elements of Alberta's weather because the successful proponent did not have a hangar, with a second plane based out of Grande Prairie to service this region. This was followed up by an assertion by AHS on March 16, stating that this was an improvement in patient care. My question to the Minister of Health: can she explain how one plane stationed on the Peace River Airport tarmac is equivalent to the level of service that was provided by the previous supplier, that being two planes stationed in a fully serviced hangar?

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

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, the hope of AHS is that the provider will be able to secure space for both planes in a hangar in Peace River. I understand that there are some details that are before the courts right now, but I can assure all Albertans that the plane that is in Peace River is the plane that responds to all emergency calls. The plane that is in Grande Prairie is the one that goes out for scheduled calls. But the direction has also been given that if the emergency plane is away and the scheduled one is not on another call, it be moved to Peace River as well to ensure that there's always one in Peace River available to respond to those emergency calls.

**Mr. W. Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, given that the preferred proponent still does not have hangar facilities at the Peace River Airport, why didn't AHS simply extend the current service provider's contract, which would have ensured a higher level of service while AHS continues to inappropriately do all it can to resolve the problem for a proponent it should not have selected in the first place?

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, you know, it's really interesting, Mr. Speaker. Some days the members opposite ask for fair and open and transparent bid processes, and other days they don't. What is happening right now is that there is a review before the courts. There was a bid process. Of course, my expectation is that all Albertans have confidence that they're getting a high level of care. I've made it very clear that we need to have air ambulance in Peace River, and that's why, even though it can't be in a hangar, it's on the tarmac. I'm grateful that this is making its way through the courts and that we'll be able to hopefully come to a decision soon.

2:30

**Mr. W. Anderson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the preferred proponent still has insufficient facilities at Peace River Airport and given that just recently the aircraft was improperly stored without proper facilities to date and given that just two weekends ago their airplane was stuck in the mud and could not leave with a patient for

two and a half hours after dispatch, can the minister agree that this a reduction in service? If not, how so?

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, I certainly will agree to look at the details of the assertions that were just made. We've seen on more than one occasion that when members opposite throw mud in this place and then we look into the details, they're not exactly factual. I will guarantee that I will look into the situation that the member just asserted occurred, and I will be happy to address that with him at a further date.

Thank you.

#### Agricultural Concerns

**Mr. Barnes:** Mr. Speaker, a rangeland recovery study was launched by the universities of Alberta and Saskatchewan to look into how farmland responds to wildfire. The province will put in \$200,000 to fund this study. Odd. That is the same amount that the government offered up in March to cover all of the landowners that were devastated in the Hilda and Acadia Valley wildfires. To the minister: with losses in the millions of dollars, don't you think that spending a similar \$200,000 for a study shows a lack of respect and understanding reminiscent of your handling of Bill 6?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reference to Bill 6 is the oddest part of that question, but I will answer the legitimate part of that question. The study was requested by some of those landowners down there. Some of the grasses that were affected are in very delicate soil, so it's important that we have all the information we need to be able to continue assisting those producers down there. The wildfire was a traumatic event. We're going to make sure that we do what we can to ensure that the grasslands are able to survive and are able to continue doing what they do; that is, providing feed for the cattle down there.

**Mr. Barnes:** Mr. Speaker, given that Alberta farmers and ranchers settled in and built Alberta to what it is today and given that these entrepreneurs face increasingly expensive and burdensome regulations brought in by your Bill 6, the Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act, Minister, with all the uncertainty farmers face, why is your government continuing to treat our farmers and ranchers with so little respect?

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

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'd request that the member perhaps needs to hire more researchers over there so they could actually have real questions, but I'm happy to talk about the good work that this government is doing for our farmers and ranchers. Last year was the highest sales for farms in the history of Alberta. It was 12.6 per cent higher than the year before. I think the member there owes all farmers and ranchers in this province an apology. This government will continue supporting that good work that farmers and ranchers do.

**Mr. Barnes:** Mr. Speaker, given that Alberta farmers and ranchers help feed the entire world and given that these entrepreneurs face global, personal, and financial risks and given that a UCP government would repeal Bill 6 and that farmers and ranchers are always offering a hand up and that they will often rally the entire community to a good cause, Minister, why can't your government help and repeal Bill 6?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of agriculture.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Jocularly. Jocularly. I believe the member has not talked to any farmers and ranchers. He should realize that the legislation protects farm workers, and they appreciate that. It also protects farms from getting sued. Bill 6 is doing what it's supposed to do, and farmers and ranchers are respectful of that and appreciate that. We'll continue doing the work here on behalf of them, as we always have.

### **Mental Health Services for Children**

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, mental health outcomes for children in Alberta are spiralling downward, and this government doesn't have any answers for families across Alberta. But mental health is just one portion of the problem. Twenty-five per cent of Alberta's population are under the age of 18, approximately 1 million kids, and research has proven that many health outcomes that plague adults often set in in the first thousand days of life. We're spending most of our money on health outcomes for adult services rather than prevention. This government doesn't have a comprehensive children's health strategy. Why not?

**The Speaker:** The Associate Minister of Health.

**Ms Payne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, given the member's statement and given all the research that we do have around the impacts of the early days of a child's life, I would actually say that that's all the more reason the members opposite ought to be supporting programs like the early childhood learning centres and \$25-a-day day care, that have been introduced by this government. That is one of many things that we are doing as a government to support young people across our province, including making sure that young people and their families have access to the mental health supports that they need.

**Mr. Cooper:** Given that there is a pressing problem of children in emergent need of mental health services and given that the Stollery children's hospital is the only emergency department in Edmonton capable of dealing with children in imminent danger and given that families whose children are in crisis have described the system as a revolving door and that these families are ending up in the ER regularly with no long-term solutions, to the minister. Your government is supposed to be implementing the mental health review. When is the revolving door going to stop for these families?

**Ms Payne:** Mr. Speaker, I couldn't be prouder of the work that our government is doing in partnership with the Stollery as well as the Stollery foundation to improve access to mental health supports for children in the Edmonton region as well as across our province. They are great partners, and we're pleased to work with them. Further, our government has been working diligently to implement the recommendations from the Valuing Mental Health report, to the point that they are embedded in every single thing that we are doing in the mental health space. We are making sure that families and children are among the top-priority populations and that we are investing in their supports. I wish the members opposite would have done the same at budget time.

**Mr. Cooper:** Given that representatives from AHS described the child mental health system as, quote, I think we often don't have a very well co-ordinated and easy system to navigate, unquote, and given that we've heard almost no details about the government's child suicide prevention strategy and given that the results from the mental health review have not yet been implemented, to the minister: when are you going to start taking some responsibility and

make meaningful change to protect Alberta's families, that are struggling to navigate your poorly co-ordinated system?

**Ms Payne:** You know, Mr. Speaker, it takes a little longer than three years to fix a system that was underfunded for 44. Our government knows that an important part of providing services is to address the stigma that has existed for so long and that has led mental health to be treated as an afterthought by the previous government. We support mental health initiatives for children and youth. In 85 communities across the province, from as far north as Fort Chipewyan to southern towns like Milk River, we are doing everything we can, working diligently with Children's Services to develop a youth suicide prevention framework and are working with community partners and advocates across Alberta.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

The Member for St. Albert.

### **Diabetes Support in Schools**

**Ms Renaud:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Type 1 diabetes is a complex condition that requires patients to manage and monitor their blood sugar through a combination of diet, insulin injection, and blood sugar checks. It often affects children and youth, who require accommodation so they can thrive in school. One of my constituents is just such a child. To the Minister of Education: what supports exist to support students, especially K to 4, with the management of diabetes in classrooms?

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

**Mr. Eggen:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that the care of a student with a health or medical condition such as type 1 diabetes is a shared responsibility, and our government is working collaboratively with school authorities, Alberta Health Services, Community and Social Services, Children's Services, and other partners with the regional collaborative service delivery system that we have in place. Certainly, we're looking for a common way to tackle type 1 diabetes here in our schools.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Ms Renaud:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of young constituents, as I said, living with diabetes. I'm sad to say that some of those young students are not getting the supports they need to thrive at school. Given that this can affect their academic performance and cause medical complications later in life, again to the minister: what is your ministry doing to improve the access to supports for students who need these critical medical supports?

**Mr. Eggen:** Well, thank you to the member for that critical question. I've been hearing from parents about the challenges that students face in regard to type 1 diabetes. That's why my ministry has been providing resources and information assembled by Diabetes Canada directly to school boards to help to build policy to deal with medical conditions, especially type 1 diabetes. I'm very sorry to hear about your constituent not receiving the support she needs. We can certainly meet to discuss this further, how we can ensure that she has her needs met in terms of diabetes.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Ms Renaud:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a lack of consistency across the province when it comes to how students with type 1 diabetes are supported in our schools. We need to ensure that all students in Alberta get equitable access to supportive learning

environments regardless of where they live. Again to the minister: what is your ministry going to do to make sure that all students with type 1 diabetes get the supports they need to succeed in school?

2:40

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

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I have directed my ministry to develop a provincial guideline that will set common and consistent expectations across the province of Alberta to support students with type 1 diabetes. I do recognize that the impact is significant, and we need to make sure that our kids with this condition are safe and healthy in our schools.

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

### Election Commissioner

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has committed to adding a new Election Commissioner although the current Chief Electoral Officer said that it wasn't required. Albertans will want to know: can the government tell Albertans how much the new Election Commissioner will be paid?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Labour and democratic renewal.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased with the work that our government has been able to do to renew democracy, beginning with Bill 1: banning corporate and union donations, putting in new, important spending limits for both individual campaigns and for parties, and bringing in someone who, especially during an election period, will be able to focus resources to look into any complaints or concerns so that the Chief Electoral Officer can concentrate on running an election and the new Election Commissioner can concentrate on enforcing. This is a model that we've borrowed from the federal government that will allow us to make sure that our democracy is respected and is working cleanly.

**Mr. McIver:** Well, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of protecting democracy and given that the new commissioner will have a term expiring in May 2023, which is exactly in the middle of the writ period in the second next election, my question for the government . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, I'd like you to address your question to the policy issue.

**Mr. McIver:** I am. That's exactly what I'm doing, Mr. Speaker. The policy I'm addressing is: will the government change the election schedule, or will they actually change commissioners in the middle of a writ period?

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

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's very important to us that Albertans are able to trust in a fair and democratic electoral process, one that gives the power to the people of Alberta, not big money, not heavy influencers, which may have been the case in the past. We will continue to work with the Chief Electoral Officer, as we have in the past, and now with our new Election Commissioner to make sure that our Alberta elections are protected, respected, fair, transparent, and accountable.

**Mr. McIver:** Mr. Speaker, given that the government won't say how much the new commissioner is getting paid and given that they won't commit to sticking to the election schedule – we know from

past history that that hasn't turned out well for other governments – and given that the Chief Electoral Officer said that the position wasn't necessary, to the government: will you apologize to the Chief Electoral Officer for ignoring his advice?

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, that question is a significant stretch, I think, from a policy matter. It seems to be focused on an administrative matter.

I would give the minister an opportunity to respond if she would like, but it's entirely your call.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We greatly respect the Chief Electoral Officer, as we respect Albertans, unlike the members of the opposition, who follow a leader who promised to disclose his donors and has not. We need to work very hard to make sure we get big money out of politics and have a . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

### Introduction of Bills

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

#### Bill 205

#### Supporting Accessible Mental Health Services Act

**Ms Woollard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Peace River I rise to request leave to introduce Bill 205, the Supporting Accessible Mental Health Services Act.

This bill is very close to the Member for Peace River's heart, who knows the challenges and stigma that patients can face when seeking treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders. Mr. Speaker, everybody has a fundamental right to be treated with dignity and respect when dealing with a substance use disorder or mental illness.

If passed, Bill 205 would establish the enactment of a mental health bill of rights. This bill also looks to establish a publicly accessible online registry of mental health services available in Alberta and to ensure that supports and understanding are in place for all Albertans seeking treatment for a substance use disorder or mental illness.

The Member for Peace River looks forward to debating this bill with her colleagues in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 205 read a first time]

**The Speaker:** I believe that the hon. Member for Calgary-Klein has a request.

**Mr. Coolahan:** I'm introducing a bill, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Oh. I'm sorry. Please proceed.

#### Bill 206

#### Societies (Preventing the Promotion of Hate) Amendment Act, 2018

**Mr. Coolahan:** Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request leave to introduce Bill 206, the Societies (Preventing the Promotion of Hate) Amendment Act, 2018.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta has seen a rise in organized hate groups with racist and extremist views, and that is something that should not be supported by this or any government. No organization that is founded on the principles of hating another Albertan or engaging in illegal activities should receive special recognition from the government.



Bill 206, the Societies (Preventing the Promotion of Hate) Amendment Act, will ensure that organizations that exist solely to promote hate like the Ku Klux Klan will not be revived as a legitimate organization under the Societies Act, and Bill 206 will prevent modern hate groups from achieving legitimacy by incorporating under the Societies Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to debate on this bill.

[Motion carried; Bill 206 read a first time]

**The Speaker:** Minister of Municipal Affairs, I believe you have a request.

**Mr. S. Anderson:** Yeah. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask if the House would allow us to revert to Introduction of Guests briefly.

[Unanimous consent granted]

### Introduction of Guests

(continued)

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

**Mr. S. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is it an honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House some of my incredible staff that I work with every day and who keep me grounded. If they would stand as I say their names. First is Lisa Gentles, my scheduling co-ordinator, who is actually somebody who runs my life and finds me babysitters at times and more; Cindy Chisholm, our correspondence assistant, who deals with everything that comes into our office and picks ties for me all the time even though I wear shirts that they don't match, so I appreciate that. They are also newly grandmothers, which is fantastic as we get to see cute baby pictures all the time. Gillian Kerr, who is my ministerial assistant, is one of the smartest people you'll ever meet. I don't know how, but she's got more energy than probably all of us combined. As well, we've got Harman Kang, who is our new intern for the summer, who is incredible. I'm so glad that she's joined us this week on our team. Hopefully, she has a great summer.

Again, thank you to them. They keep me grounded, and I couldn't be doing what I do without them. If we could give them the warm welcome of the House, I'd appreciate it.

2:50

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to introduce a group that was here a little earlier during question period, that I didn't have a chance to introduce before. It's the Rosedale Christian School. They're from the bustling metropolis of downtown Ridgevalley. In the group here I have Mr. Andrew Reimer, Darla Goossen, Fred Goossen, and then Arlin Loewen, my cousin, and Gloria Loewen, his wife. I had a chance to meet with them earlier, I guess, last week. They had some great questions, and we had a great discussion on how the Legislature works and the different processes that happen in this place. If we could give them a warm welcome, I'd appreciate it.

Thanks.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** The Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite number of copies of a letter from June 18, 2013, that I quoted today in my main question. It was written by the MLA for Edmonton-Strathcona to the then minister of human services.

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

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings today. The first is an article I referenced in my comments this morning on Motion 16, about the appointment of the Election Commissioner, an opinion article by Paula Simons, Gibson Affair Sends Terrible Message: When the Chief Electoral Officer Criticizes Government and Loses His Job, What Are Other Officers to Think?

My second article is from the *Lethbridge Herald*, titled Kenney Opposes Consumption Sites, in which the Leader of the Opposition states, "Helping addicts inject poison into their bodies is not a solution to the problem of addiction."

Thirdly, I have an article here from CBC news regarding Bill 24, which was passed last fall, the title being Gay-straight Bill Could Allow Covert Sex Ed: Alberta United Conservatives, which states, "Alberta's United Conservatives say they're concerned the government is using a bill on gay-straight alliances to prepare for kids to be taught sex education without parents being told."

**The Speaker:** The Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite number of copies of an article from CBC entitled Oilpatch CEOs Blame High Costs, Red Tape for Erosion of Canada's Competitive Edge. This is in response to the Minister of Transportation two days ago questioning this information.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Highwood.

**Mr. W. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to table the appropriate number of copies, alluding to my question to the Minister of Health, giving some photographic evidence of an aircraft in Peace River stuck in the mud for two and a half hours, not providing services for a needy patient, from April 29 of this year.

My second tabling, Mr. Speaker, is the appropriate number of copies of AHS's March 16 statement outlining their opinion that having fewer aircraft would actually improve patient care.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I believe we have a couple of points of order to deal with.

Calgary-Foothills, did you have a point of order? No. Withdrawn?

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills is indicating, and I will officially on his behalf, to withdraw his point of order, but I would like to argue my point of order. At the time, I called it.

**The Speaker:** Proceed.

### Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

**Mr. Nixon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on 23(j), using "abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder," particularly language of a nature likely to create disorder. The hon. Deputy Premier and Minister of Health in her answer to a question today in regard to Bill 12, the shut-off-the-tap legislation, indicated

two things that are certainly likely to cause disorder in this House. The first was that the opposition in some way was rooting for trying to slow down Bill 12, the shut-off-the-tap legislation. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, twice we have voted against adjourning on Bill 12, trying to get that piece of legislation done. So that's one misleading of the House.

Second was to say that they're trying to get it all through the House in one day, when, clearly, we know that, Mr. Speaker, that is not the fact. We gave them a chance again last night to do that, and they haven't. We will give them a chance shortly to do it yet again, and hopefully they will do it.

So I would ask that you would ask the minister to stop misleading this Assembly.

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

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This point of order is clearly, actually, just a matter of debate and not a point of order. The minister did not use unparliamentary language. What she did do was to engage in legitimate debate in a manner that is not unordinary in this Chamber. This isn't the first time that the members of our government have pointed out just how much the Conservatives seem to root against Alberta. A similar claim was made on December 7, 2016, when the Premier first pointed to Conservatives at the Prosperity Fund meeting who called the possibility of this government getting pipelines a doomsday scenario. No point of order was raised at that time, and none should have been raised today.

The fact of the matter is that we have an opposition party who thought getting pipelines was a doomsday scenario and who just don't seem to be on the side of Alberta families. I think it's unfortunate, and I wish they would put their partisanship aside and celebrate the great progress being made.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, it seems to me that this is yet again another example of a difference of opinion about the discussions in the House. I don't know how many more times you want to hear the warning about avoiding those circumstances, but in this particular instance I don't see that there was a point of order.

## Orders of the Day

### Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

#### Bill 6

#### Gaming and Liquor Statutes Amendment Act, 2018

[Adjourned debate May 1: Mr. Smith]

**The Acting Speaker:** Are there any members wishing to speak to the bill?

**Mr. Nixon:** Yes, Madam Speaker. I move that we immediately adjourn debate and go to Bill 12 and get it passed this afternoon.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion to adjourn debate lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 2:58 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

For the motion:

Anderson, W.	Hunter	Panda
Drysdale	McPherson	Swann
Gotfried	Nixon	Yao

Against the motion:

Anderson, S.	Hinkley	Nielsen
Carlier	Hoffman	Payne
Carson	Horne	Phillips
Connolly	Kazim	Piquette
Coolahan	Kleinstauber	Renaud
Cortes-Vargas	Larivee	Rosendahl
Drever	Littlewood	Schreiner
Eggen	Loyola	Shepherd
Fitzpatrick	Luff	Turner
Ganley	Malkinson	Westhead
Goehring	McKittrick	Woollard
Gray	Miranda	

Totals:	For – 9	Against – 35
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[Motion to adjourn debate lost]

**The Acting Speaker:** We are now back on the debate for second reading of Bill 6. Are there any members wishing to speak to the bill? The Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Nixon:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm disappointed that we can't move on with important legislation that needs to be dealt with soon, but we'll talk about Bill 6 for a little bit.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is in response, of course, to the federal government's decision to legalize cannabis. I think it's important that we note that this discussion is not about whether or not cannabis should be decriminalized. That decision was not up to the provincial government. The provincial government, without a lot of time, has had to regulate cannabis to prevent a legal vacuum, putting us in a spot where we have to make some decisions. This government does not have the authority and the responsibility, however, to make important decisions when it comes to legalization.

Last fall this government passed Bill 26, An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis. My understanding is that this bill is a companion to that bill or a follow-up piece of legislation, if you will. Our caucus ultimately voted in support of Bill 26 as a fairly reasonable response to the federal government's decision to legalize cannabis. We did have some concerns and questions surrounding Bill 26 at the time, however, Madam Speaker, that you may recall. Unfortunately, as is the pattern with the NDP, the NDP rejected our amendment to mirror restrictions around alcohol instead of mirroring their public consumption laws with tobacco. This plan allows us to question whether public health is one of the NDP's main priorities when it comes to cannabis laws.

When marijuana becomes legal, Madam Speaker, unless a municipality passes a bylaw restricting it, people can walk down the street smoking a joint and they can smoke in public parks. Albertans will be exposed to it almost everywhere outside. Alberta will have a patchwork of smoking laws across the province, no doubt confusing citizens and making it challenging for the police and bylaw enforcement officers to enforce.

Public safety and health of our children need to be priorities, Madam Speaker. We need a sound public education strategy on the effects of cannabis as well. Some people are already doing cannabis illegally and know the sorts of effects cannabis has on them. But when it has been legalized, likely some people will try it for the first time and those who were doing it illegally might get bolder. I've

heard from constituents concerned about drug-impaired driving in particular, and it's not very clear what this government is doing on this front.

In closing, though, Madam Speaker, it's clear that this legislation has to be discussed in this place because of the decision by the federal government, and I look forward to the discussion as we go through Bill 6.

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

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

Are there any other members wishing to speak to Bill 6?

**Mr. Panda:** Madam Speaker, I rise to speak about Bill 12, actually. So I'm moving to adjourn the debate on Bill 6 because Bill 12 is impacting the livelihoods of Albertans and Canadians as we speak. This government, as they spoke today in question period . . .

### Speaker's Ruling

#### Projected Government Business

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. member, can you please sit down. Thank you, hon. member.

I just want to clarify for the members of the House Standing Order 8(2.1), which indicates that on Thursday afternoons the government sets the agenda for the government debates. You get an Order Paper that gives you the order of the bills that will be debated. Unfortunately, this afternoon Bill 12 is not on the Order Paper to be debated. So if we could please continue on with the debate that is on the Order Paper, as set out in the standing orders.

#### Debate Continued

**Mr. Panda:** With due concern, I move to adjourn the debate on Bill 6, Madam Speaker.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion to adjourn debate lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:19 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

For the motion:

Anderson, W.	Nixon	Strankman
Drysdale	Panda	Yao
Hunter	Stier	

Against the motion:

Anderson, S.	Hinkley	Nielsen
Carlier	Horne	Payne
Carson	Kazim	Phillips
Connolly	Kleinstauber	Piquette
Coolahan	Larivee	Renaud
Cortes-Vargas	Littlewood	Rosendahl
Drever	Loyola	Schreiner
Eggen	Luff	Shepherd
Fitzpatrick	Malkinson	Turner
Ganley	McKitrick	Westhead
Goehring	Miranda	Woollard
Gray		

Totals:	For – 8	Against – 34
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[Motion to adjourn debate lost]

**The Acting Speaker:** Are there any other members wishing to speak to the motion? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

**Dr. Turner:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** My apologies. Sorry, hon. member. The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills still has the floor as his time allotment has not expired.

The hon. member.

**Mr. Panda:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to rise and speak at second reading of Bill 6, the Gaming and Liquor Statutes Amendment Act, 2018. I realize that this discussion is not about whether or not cannabis should be decriminalized and that it is not up to the provincial counterparts, like my colleague from Rocky Mountain House said, but I have come to share and perhaps ask some questions. This bill was brought about to basically close holes that were in Bill 26. It amends the Gaming and Liquor Act as well as other small sections of other acts to respond to the federal government's decision to legalize cannabis and set up a retail framework and combine cannabis with most tobacco laws.

On the provincial side of things, Madam Speaker, we really haven't had too much time to respond to the legalization of cannabis but have the responsibility of regulating cannabis to prevent a legal vacuum. That said, however, the government does not have the responsibility and authority to make the very important decisions surrounding legalization, decisions that could affect thousands of people across the province. There has been a lot of debate, and the issue has been well circulated in the news. Some are in support; others are not. I'm not here to debate those issues but, rather, to discuss reasonable responses to the federal government's decision to legalize.

Late in the fall the government passed Bill 26, An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis. That bill was more in response to the federal government's legalization through their Bill C-45. The bill more or less discussed how households would be allowed to grow up to four cannabis plants at home, that the only way to purchase legally online would be through the one publicly operated store, and that sales would start immediately following legalization in July 2018. That is coming up here shortly. It also gave the specialized private retailers the ability to sell cannabis legally with no co-location with alcohol, tobacco, and pharmaceuticals. Eighteen was decided to be the minimum age to use and sell, and 30 grams was decided upon as the maximum public possession limit. It discussed restrictions on where cannabis could be publicly consumed, which basically is anywhere that smoking is already banned.

The bill also gave the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission the authority to carry out the oversight and compliance functions, and it will manage the distribution of cannabis to licensed sellers. Bill 6 is basically a companion or follow-up piece of legislation which will amend and fix some of the issues that may have been missed in the previous legislation.

My colleagues and I did have some misgivings about Bill 26. Unfortunately, the NDP rejected our sensible amendments to mirror restrictions around alcohol and instead decided to mirror their public consumption laws around tobacco. Even though the federal government has legalized cannabis, the provincial government has been given the authority to work out the details, so that was one of the areas that kind of shocked us and had us questioning whether public health really was one of the NDP's main priorities.

3:40

We did support the premise of Bill 26, but that doesn't mean that we necessarily support all the additions that were made, and we had

kind of wished that the NDP would have listened to some of our amendments. Now, once cannabis becomes legal here in July, unless a municipality passes a bylaw restricting it, anyone can walk up and down the street smoking their joint and will also be able to smoke it in public parks. Unfortunately and most importantly, due to the nonrestrictive use our youth will be subjected to it everywhere outside.

The other problem with mirroring the public consumption laws on smoking is that Alberta has a lot of different smoking laws across the province, which will no doubt confuse citizens and make it challenging for the police to enforce. I'm a firm believer that public safety should come first and that the health of children needs to be the government's top priority.

On that note, I would like to ask the government if they thoroughly went through all the suggestions of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta and the College of Pharmacists. They both indicated concerns about the health implications of using cannabis recreationally, particularly amongst individuals younger than 25. Did this government take their suggestions into consideration?

I sure hope that there will be some sort of public education strategy on cannabis effects that will roll out prior to it being legalized here in July. It is very important that all Albertans be educated on the effects. There are some who, once it is legalized, will decide to try it for the first time. We know that there are plenty of people doing it now illegally. They already know the effects it has on them, but those who will be tempted to try it now may not know how it can alter and impair the mind. The other point I would like to point out is that for those who have already tried it illegally, they might get bolder and try to use it with another substance. These are some of the issues that should be covered in the public education piece, Madam Speaker.

Many people are concerned about the impaired driving piece. We would like to know what the government is doing on that front. Will the police be properly supported, and will they have the right tools to do their jobs properly? Albertans are asking that. The United Conservatives will be monitoring the government's implementation of the legalization of cannabis and will continue to talk with and seek feedback from special-interest groups and the public.

The government has been quiet about details on how the government-run online store for cannabis will work. One of the questions Albertans have: how is the age verification process going to work when ordering online? It would be a shame if minors would be able to process orders online. Even if asked for a driver's licence, what is to say that they won't use another adult's identification?

Bill 6 opens the door for permitting cannabis sales in an existing business such as a separate section of the rural general store in communities too small to support a stand-alone cannabis store. Was this done because the government was hearing concerns from special-interest groups? We understand that enabling regulations for this subsection will be created if there is demand. Is there already demand?

Also, I have noticed that Bill 6 includes two additions unrelated to marijuana legalization. One allows you brews and establishments to order liquor products such as for premixing batches of cocktails, adding flavouring, infusing food with liquor, and creating barrel-aged liquor. Why have you decided to add in this piece? The other one is that government is proposing changes to the liquor laws while the act is open, and they have the opportunity because they were apparently listening to what Albertans want. I wish this government would listen to Albertans more often. This was not the case with the previous Bill 6, that affected all farmers in this province.

I would like to now close by saying that I'll be supporting this bill although it is Bill 6, but it's a different bill, so I'll be supporting

this. It's my hope that they would answer the questions that we have on this side of the House as most questions that we ask come directly from the concerns of Albertans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Strankman:** I really enjoyed the presentation from the Member for Calgary-Foothills, Madam Speaker, because he's got a bit of a rural background and from a foreign country. I wonder if he could expound on some of his perceptions of Canada, from another country.

**Mr. Panda:** I'd like to thank my friend from Drumheller-Stettler for his advocacy on another bill, Bill 6, on which he was our lead as ag critic. That bill scared all Albertans to death. But this bill, Bill 6, I think is a companion bill to the previously approved Bill 26, which we supported with some reservations. But to the member's point: what do I like about this bill? The way I understood, it's the federal government which has the jurisdiction, so they chose to legalize cannabis.

Personally, I never tried it, and I don't intend to try it even when it is legalized. Where I grew up, it was taboo, actually. People wouldn't try it, at least the people that I know, that I grew up with, my family members. They don't have access to it. They won't try it. But here, if both levels of government and municipal government choose to implement, I'm cautioning, based on what I hear from my constituents, that we can't make it a free-for-all. We have to implement it with the utmost caution and care in a responsible way.

Thank you.

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

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

Seeing none, are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

**Dr. Turner:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I've actually been looking forward to being able to speak to Bill 6 for some time, and I was actually quite disturbed earlier in the day when it appeared as though the opposition was basically impeding the work of this Legislature in making progress on this very important legislation.

I mean, you can't compare bills. That's like comparing children. But this bill is a necessary bill. We need to get working on this bill so that Albertans and Canadians as well as retailers and basically all citizens and municipalities know what the lay of the land is from the provincial legislation point of view.

It is really important legislation that we've known is coming down the pike for a while. This government has been showing some proactivity in getting ready for what is going to happen, presumably in early July. It may be delayed because of some activities by the Conservative Senators in the Canadian Senate that are putting some obstacles into getting the federal legislation actually enacted. In any case, it's very important that we here in Alberta are ready to go and that we can deal with the health issues, with the public safety issues, with the potential exposure of our youth to a mind-altering and presumably brain-altering medication.

3:50

I just read in the *Edmonton Journal* that 450 small-business people have actually applied for a licence to open a shop to sell cannabis in the city of Edmonton. Now, in the hamlet of Sherwood Park apparently there's only one. I don't know what that tells you about Sherwood Park, but I can tell you that here in Edmonton, and I presume in Calgary as well and probably in most of Alberta, there

is a lot of interest among small business as an economic opportunity. Why would the opposition want to stand in the way of small business developing a new market and, you know, allowing us to diversify the economy? Here is a great chance, folks. Go for it.

I was just out at the Edmonton airport, the pride of the Member for Leduc-Beaumont. Edmonton airport is a fantastic place, and if any of you are not using that facility that are in the opposition, please start doing so. They've got a new Costco, an outlet store, and the actual Edmonton Airports is expanding its footprint a lot. There's a race track there that you can bet money on if you wish. It's great for that sort of stuff.

You know what else is at the Edmonton airport? One of the largest hemp-growing facilities and also part of a company that, I believe, is called Aurora Cannabis. Aurora Cannabis is Canada's largest grower. That company is showing a lot of faith in what this province can do in terms of economic development. It needs to know that we've got some laws around the production of cannabis.

I would also say that it's important that we modernize our liquor laws as well, and this law has some very common-sense points in it that are going to bring us, basically, up to date in that regard.

It really is a pleasure on behalf of the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General to rise in support of Bill 6, which is amendments to the Gaming and Liquor Act. You know, we're making a number of amendments to modernize and update that act. In some cases these amendments are in response to the impending legalization of cannabis, but it's also the result of extensive consultation for some time that these are coming through. As I said before, the amendments help to further protect public health, keep cannabis out of the hands of children, and most importantly – and I didn't mention this before – limit the illegal market. I mean, we talk about getting dark money out of politics; let's get dark money out of drugs.

We're also going to increase the capacity and capability expertise of the board of AGLC. I talked about the economic opportunities here in Edmonton and across the province for cannabis sales. The changes in this law are also going to help the liquor retailers.

The federal government in April of 2017 announced that cannabis is going to become legal across the country. At that time they said in the summer of 2018. At that time, a year ago, this government started to develop a system for legal cannabis, and the minister started by asking Albertans what our province's legal cannabis system would look like. She reports that there were over 60,000 Albertans that responded. That must be one of the most – I think only my colleague from Edmonton-South West's consultation on daylight savings time actually produced more response. I believe it was 80,000 that he received. But 60,000 Albertans: that's evidence, I think, of the real interest of Albertans in this process.

You know, besides keeping cannabis out of the hands of children and ensuring public health, road safety is another thing that's really important, not just road safety but workplace safety and even in the public spaces. We've heard a little bit in the previous speech about concerns about consumption of cannabis in public. This legislation is actually going to help municipalities or give the municipalities a framework in order to deal with that. The legislation grants authority to the AGLC to oversee the system, and it paves the way for us to begin preparing for the private, licensed retail sale of cannabis. The regulations were announced in February of this year, and they provide clarity for the cannabis retailers while ensuring our system is safe, secure, and effective.

Today I'm seeking the hon. members' support in this Legislature for Bill 6, which continues to work on what's been done to date. The legislation is important. It's important that we don't drag our feet on it. It's important that we get these bills passed in the next

short while. Bill 6 includes amendments that, if passed, would provide the AGLC board with the tools it requires to better regulate and enforce rules around cannabis. Some of this includes prohibiting retailers from using names such as "pharmacy" or "medi-" or any symbol that has a medical connotation. Actually, as a physician who has prescribed medicinal marijuana, I think this is a very, very important distinction. They also are going to prevent the packaging or naming of the products that would be in any way attractive to children.

You know, it's part of a comprehensive approach to making sure that if cannabis is going to be legalized – and that was a decision made by the federal government. The province of Alberta did not make that decision. This government did not make that decision. I think this situation is kind of analogous to tilting against windmills, that I heard in that previous speech. I mean, the law has been changed by the level of government that has the power to change that law. Why would we try to stand and sort of tilt against that windmill and not deal with this effectively? We want to produce the best kind of legislation, the safest kind of legislation, the legislation that's going to keep our children and youth as safe as possible and our roads as safe as possible, our public spaces as safe as possible, our workplaces as safe as possible.

I'll come back to that "choice" word. We've been discussing other bills that involve choice here. You know, after it's legalized, it's going to be a choice whether or not a person age 18 and over is going to use recreational cannabis. At least in my opinion, government's role is not to get in the way of that choice, just as it's not to get in the way of choice in other contexts. I don't think I have to spell that out, but I'm saying it because the members opposite actually disappear when we vote on that kind of choice. At least they're sitting here listening to me talk about choice. It's a fundamental democratic principle that a citizen, a resident, has choices to make, and it's the responsibility of the government to make sure that it's done in a safe and responsible way.

You know, I do want to talk a little bit about what the AGLC is going to do or the tools that we're going to give the AGLC. There are going to be fines that are an important tool in deterring contravention. We propose increasing the maximum fine from \$200,000 to \$1 million per incident. This amount gives the AGLC the room it needs to properly address serious infractions when necessary.

4:00

Madam Speaker, Bill 6 also amends the act so that for the minor ticketable provincial offences the court could rely on evidence that a product is cannabis based on packaging, labelling, or smell. I think this is very common sense. This applies for public consumption, youth possession, consumption in a vehicle, improper transport in a vehicle, and, most importantly, sales to a minor.

While the legalization of cannabis was the impetus for developing the legislation, we also saw the opportunity to amend the Gaming and Liquor Act so that it will better reflect an evolving liquor industry. The first amendment allows fermenting on a premises basis, and this basically adds to the business.

The bill would also allow retailers to blend and infuse liquor products. This is a growing trend that involves infusing liquors with flavouring agents to create specialty drinks, infusing food with liquor, and creating house-aged liquors. I mean, that's going to help small business in that field.

Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm trusting that members on both sides of this House will support this legislation.

With that, I would ask to adjourn the debate on Bill 6.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

**Bill 17**  
**Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2018**

[Adjourned debate May 7: Mr. Ceci]

**The Acting Speaker:** Are there any members wishing to speak to Bill 17? The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to adjourn debate so that we can speak about the important bill, Bill 12, and have the opportunity to be able to address an issue that is . . .

**Speaker's Ruling**  
**Projected Government Business**

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt you. I've already made the ruling under Standing Order 8(2.1) about Orders of the Day already being determined on the Thursday prior to the proceedings of the week. You were notified that Bill 12 was not going to be on the Order Paper of the day.

In addition, I would like to remind all members of Standing Order 28, which requires "some intermediate proceeding" to take place between a motion to adjourn debate, requiring that at least there is some progress in the debate in order for the motion to be put forward again. I would like to allow a member to at least speak to the bill that has been put in front of us before we ask for an adjournment of the debate.

**Mr. Hunter:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker:** Please go ahead.

**Point of Clarification**

**Mr. Hunter:** Madam Speaker, I actually would like to just reference 13(2). In this situation I'm trying to find out why it is – the government can actually bring forward a bill at any time. It doesn't have to be on the Order Paper. They can bring it forward at any time. What you've quoted to us is actually something that – they would have no problems being able to just bring forward Bill 12, so I'm not sure why we aren't addressing this bill. We've given them many times this opportunity today to be able to address the issue, which is that we're almost four weeks into introducing this bill, Bill 12, and we're still not bringing it to fruition. If they want to put their money where their mouth is, then let's pass the bill. We've already said that we'll do it in one day, yet they're not willing to be able to bring forward the bill. We've given them lots of opportunities to be able to do that, and this is why I'm asking if you can please give us some information.

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. member, I will clarify my ruling. Standing Order 8(2.1):

On Thursday afternoon . . . the Government House Leader shall provide notice to the Clerk of projected Government business to be brought before the Assembly.

As the Speaker it is not my responsibility to debate what the government decides to bring forward as the issue of the day. My job is to moderate between both sides. You need to negotiate amongst yourselves what you will be having to debate on the afternoons when bills are brought forward. That is not my role. My role is to enforce the standing orders, and that is what it says. It's not up for debate.

**Mr. Nixon:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker:** Are you speaking to a different point of order?

**Mr. Nixon:** Yes. Absolutely.

**The Acting Speaker:** Please.

**Point of Clarification**

**Mr. Nixon:** I'm speaking to a different point of order. You let the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud just adjourn debate, and there were no intervening speakers, which seems to significantly contradict what you've just told the Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner. So under 13(2), could you explain that, please?

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. member, your members were actually provided the opportunity to adjourn the debate on the exact same bill twice. I asked if anybody would like to speak. Your member was able to speak and have a break on his time allotment. The next speaker spoke on that particular bill, and my ruling stands. We are now on to the bill that we are speaking about, which is Bill 17. We will not be discussing my past rulings on Bill 6. If you'd like to call a point of order to discuss an issue on Bill 17, please go ahead.

**Debate Continued**

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am most pleased today to speak to Bill 17, Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2018, in second reading. While the UCP agree with the main premise of the bill, I have some questions and some additional comments I would like to make today. Bill 17 amends a number of pieces of provincial tax legislation to reflect changes made at the federal level. Some of the changes are good ones; others I do not agree with. I want to talk today about those things to bring some fulsome debate to the House so that no stone is left unturned.

I'll start with some of the more positive pieces, like the fact that this amendment will now align Alberta tax legislation with federal legislation. This will align tax collection and ensure efficiencies. I am more than sure that this will make many agencies and accountants across the province happy. This will undoubtedly save money, and saving money is obviously a good thing for a Conservative.

On another positive note, this amendment will correct legislation to better align provincial practices with the CRA administrative practices regarding how the carbon tax rebate is calculated for those families who have working child dependants. I'm glad that the federal government did not act and calculate the income, and it's definitely a positive step forward for the provincial government to align with the federal government on this front. Families are already facing too many obstacles, Madam Speaker. This doesn't have to be one of them. Can you imagine including a dependent child's income? How can a family get ahead when we start including income that likely isn't taxed in the first place? This was another piece we brought up when the carbon tax bill was introduced that we believed needed to be changed, but of course a lot of our debate in this House tends to fall on deaf ears. Glad to hear that this one is now being fixed.

However, on that note, I would like to add that I just heard one of the government members talk today about one of the UCP members' speech and how to criticize this side of the House for wasting thousands of dollars in wasted time, just to hear a speech he didn't quite agree with. Madam Speaker, here we are in the House, now fixing a government bill that went awry. I wonder how much these changes have cost the government in time on the carbon tax bill. I mean, we're not talking about just listening to a speech;

we're talking about hours of research and collection of data over the last two years, including lawyers and perhaps some laypeople to make the corrections. Maybe that member would like to count that cost. I'm sure it would cost more than the thousands he accused us of today. We're being paid by Albertans to scrutinize the government. Please, we should not have that taken away from us.

Moving forward, I have to say that I am scratching my head when it comes to taking away any tax credits for fishermen and farmers. This NDP government has shouted from the hilltops that it prides itself on the principle of helping those who are struggling. Madam Speaker, many fishermen and farmers that I know struggle every year. It's not an easy way to make money. It's not an easy way to support a family, and it's sheer back-breaking, hard work. We should be doing everything possible to help our farmers, not removing tax credits that would help them. They feed their province, the country, the world. If it wasn't for farmers, none of us would eat as well as we do.

An article from ATB Financial that was posted in 2017 talks about how the number of Alberta farms has been shrinking for some time. The article claims that in 1996 there were over 59,000 farms in the province. In 2017, just last year, they claim that there were just a little over 40,000 farms. That, Madam Speaker, is a little bit more than a 31 per cent decrease in farms in the province in those few short years. However, the article states that the average size of a farm in the province has grown from 881 acres in 1996 to 1,237 acres in 2016. That is an increase in farm size by a little over 40 per cent, which could prove the theory that only the strong will survive.

I have to wonder if now would be a time to remove tax credits for farmers and fishers alike. I'm not sure if that would actually help small farmers or hinder them. Obviously, it would hinder them. As minuscule as you might think them, every small financial hit hits a farmer and, especially, small farms. Unfortunately, now farmers will have to pay more in taxes.

4:10

Another area that I am not too happy about but really shouldn't be surprised about is the changes in notification, which at first appearance look to lessen government's responsibility to ensure delivery of requests for information related to businesses' tax filing. But that one isn't really worth debating.

Madam Speaker, this will now be the second consecutive year where we are called into the Legislature to correct mistakes that were made in the carbon tax bill. In 2016, when we asked the House to refer Bill 20, the Climate Leadership Implementation Act, to committee, it was because it was riddled with new legislation that wasn't well thought out. A couple of those pieces that were problematic we now see the government trying to fix in this bill.

While we spoke about how Bill 20 would hurt families in the province that don't have the access to everyday needs that most of us have, they made no change. Those families who struggle and who depend upon charities come in all shapes and sizes. We asked and implored at that time for the government to ensure that families have access to the basics and to help out these charities by making sure they were tax exempt. We talked for hours about how this bill would raise prices at a time when charities were already facing a double-edged sword, on one side, due to the fact that many more Albertans were struggling, were going to have to rely on these essential nonprofits and, on the other hand, realizing that prosperous businesspeople would have to focus more on saving their businesses and keeping Albertans employed and would not have the ability to donate at the once generous levels they had once before.

We spoke about how the Climate Leadership Implementation Act would hurt Albertans all across this province. We gave specifics

and told the government exactly how we thought it would hurt them, only for those things we talked about for just two short years to become reality. Madam Speaker, Albertans are hurting. This bill doesn't reach far enough. We're glad to see that there will be some of the changes that were badly needed back then coming to fruition but wish the bill went further.

I truly wish that when legislators come into this House to debate a bill, all sides of the House would take a good look at what is being debated to ensure that all potential problems are included and dealt with at that time. There is wisdom in prudently looking into the future and asking ourselves: how will this piece of legislation affect Alberta families, businesses, and the prosperity of our province? I know that the government has the right intent, and I applaud them for that. They want to do the right thing for this province, but sometimes that means looking outside of your own ideologies and putting all that aside, especially if you see something better that would produce better outcomes. My hope is that during this session the NDP ponder outcomes rather than focusing on so much ideology.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Are there any other members wishing to speak?

**Mr. Panda:** Madam Speaker, I move to adjourn the debate on Bill 17.

**The Acting Speaker:** Before I put the question on the adjournment – we have not been able to make much progress on this bill, as I have already indicated – is there anybody from any other side that would like to speak to the bill?

Then I'll allow the vote on the adjournment.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## Bill 16

### Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Labour and minister responsible for democratic renewal.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is my honour to rise today to move second reading of Bill 16.

Our government continues to act on our commitment to ensure that our electoral system is fair, accountable, and transparent for all. In fact, having me rise as the minister responsible for democratic renewal to introduce legislation to make sure that we have a fair, accountable, and transparent system for our elections and our democracy may seem familiar to you, Madam Speaker. The reason it may seem familiar is because I've had the honour to do this a number of times.

I would like to set the stage into which we introduce Bill 16 today. That stage began with the introduction of Bill 1, the very first thing that our government did when we formed government in 2015. Bill 1, An Act to Renew Democracy in Alberta, banned corporate and union donations, returning to Albertans the confidence that it is the votes of our citizens, the voices of our citizens that will be heard through the democratic process. Banning corporate and union donations as a first act as a new government sent a strong signal to all Albertans that our government was going to be very different, that the priority was not going to be for big money and the insiders but, rather, to make sure that the voices of the citizens were protected, respected in our democracy. I was very honoured to be part of the caucus at the time Bill 1 was introduced.

Following Bill 1, following my appointment as the minister responsible for democratic renewal and building off the work of the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee, that was formed to review the Election Act, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act as well as the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act and Conflicts of Interest Act, I have been pleased to continue to work on the task of renewing democracy here in our province, Madam Speaker, to touch on a number of key issues that impact our citizens as we look forward to the coming election, and make sure that it is the will of the citizens that will prevail.

It was with honour that I stood in 2016 and introduced Bill 35, legislation designed to make sure that we were getting big money out of politics, building on the initial work of Bill 1. The Fair Elections Financing Act, as it was named, was designed to ensure that Albertans, not big money and special interests, decide the outcome of elections. It did a number of important things, Madam Speaker, including amendments to limit campaign spending, ensuring that, for the first time, campaign spending limits for political parties would be capped, at \$2 million. This touches directly on Bill 16, the second reading of which I am introducing now. That \$2 million spending limit would apply to all political parties within an election.

As well, though, we also imposed spending limits of \$50,000 for each individual candidate's campaign so that, regionally speaking, it was not going to be a candidate who was able to fund raise vast sums of money from wealthy donors who would be able to dominate the conversation. We want to make sure that all candidates are able to participate and communicate with the electorate and allow everyone the opportunity to participate.

To that end, while putting in spending limits, we also made a point of making sure that there were certain things that would not count towards those spending limits, particularly candidate travel costs, because we know we have ridings that are incredibly large.

Care for a candidate's or contestant's children and other dependants. Wanting to support women and wanting to support parents who may be interested in running as a candidate for a political party in a provincial election in Alberta was very important to our government. To that end, excluding some of these costs from these spending limits could help to support these candidates.

Expenses related to a candidate or a nomination contestant living with a disability: very similarly, making sure we are accessible and offering supports to all who may be interested.

Petty expenses incurred by volunteers, which we know will vary from region to region but could touch on things like – Edmonton-Centre, represented very well by the member in this House: his volunteers will have parking expenses that my volunteers in Edmonton-Mill Woods will not, so allowing petty expenses to not count towards those limits was something that we were considering.

4:20

Finally, we also imposed nomination contestant spending limits of \$10,000, which is roughly 20 per cent or exactly 20 per cent of the spending limit in each electoral division, because nomination contests can often be very important in our democracy. So those spending limits are very important, and it is on those spending limits that Bill 16 will continue to protect our democracy.

Bill 35 did a number of other things as well. It limited contributions so that individual Albertans – when we banned corporate and union donations, individual donations were capped at that time, Madam Speaker, at \$15,000, up to \$30,000 in an election year. Now, that is big money to me. We have now created an aggregate contribution limit of \$4,000 per individual contributor each calendar year. That means that whether you donate to a party,

to a constituency association, to a candidate, to a nomination contestant, any of these donations contribute to your \$4,000 contribution limit. Making sure that we had reasonable contributions pairs nicely with spending limits.

The other thing we did in Bill 35 which again touches on what we are going to be amending through Bill 16 is third-party advertising. The act set spending limits on election advertising by third parties. The limit would apply from writ drop to the close of polls and be set at \$150,000, of which no more than \$3,000 can be used to support or oppose candidates in a particular electoral division. Making sure that we have those types of spending limits and that third-party advertisers' donors are disclosed in a type of sunshine list is a way of renewing democracy and making sure that it is accountable and transparent for all, so I was very proud, Madam Speaker, to introduce Bill 35 in 2016.

Then, knowing that my work was not done, I was also proud to introduce Bill 32 in 2017, making elections fair and more accessible. This bill touched on the fairness and integrity of our elections, including setting new limits on third-party spending, again, another area that the bill I am speaking to today, Bill 16, touches on. Bill 32 placed new spending limits on third parties that would start December 1 prior to an election year, which is three months before the beginning of Alberta's fixed election period. It made sure that third parties would not be permitted to spend more than \$150,000 on political advertising before the election is called; again, not more than \$3,000 per area. It made clear that political activities should be done by political parties, not by PACs or third-party advertisers. It also made sure that third parties would not be allowed to incur expenses to do the work of political parties: sell memberships, fund raise, or collect information.

Similarly and after a great deal of debate here in the House, where a private member's bill had been introduced, we also introduced restrictions on government advertising, advertising or publishing information about government and provincial corporation programs or activities, and put in clear, common-sense rules when government advertising was taking place during by-elections or general elections, allowing specifically for important health and public safety messages to proceed.

Now, in Bill 32 we also created the new position of Election Commissioner. This new, independent Election Commissioner is responsible for fully investigating complaints and recommending prosecutions, and the annual report goes to the Legislative Assembly.

We reviewed penalties, again an aspect that touches on Bill 16. When we introduced Bill 32, we reviewed the penalties inside of our Election Act.

Now, Bill 32 did a number of other things as well, encouraging greater voter participation, but as that does not touch on my Bill 16 pieces, I will leave that there.

Today we introduce Bill 16, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018. We know that as a result of Bill 35, where we introduced spending limits, our act currently allows each registered political party to incur election expenses up to \$2 million to promote or oppose a registered political party, its leader, or a candidate during an election period. Our amendments forward a simple concept. Elections should be decided on big ideas and not big money. As part of our work to deliver on the promise we made to make elections more fair and balanced, we are now closing another loophole that could be used to get around election financing rules. We've heard concerns from Albertans who've told us that right now it's possible for associated parties to collude together and circumvent the legislated spending limit. Now, this is not right.



It's clear that electoral fairness requires that associated parties be subject to the spending limit of a single party. The proposed amendments would ensure that associated parties won't be able to take advantage of multiple individual spending limits. If Bill 16 is passed, associated parties must abide by and share the \$2 million spending cap. The proposed amendments would enable the Election Commissioner to investigate whether two or more registered parties are associated registered parties. The criteria for being associated would include whether the parties have common leadership, political programs, or policy statements; whether one party controls another; whether parties have the same advertising material and branding; and the nature of agreements and interactions between parties.

The Election Commissioner would be able to initiate an investigation on their own or at the request of the Chief Electoral Officer, an elector, or registered party. The commissioner would not have to wait for a breach of the spending limit to initiate an investigation into whether parties are associated. If the parties are being investigated to determine whether they are associated, then the commissioner would also be required to notify these parties. Parties would also be free to approach the Election Commissioner in advance of an election to seek advice on whether or not they would be in compliance. To be clear, Madam Speaker, we are not suggesting that being an associated party is in any way wrong, only that associated parties should share that same \$2 million spending cap.

To that end, we are proposing adopting an anticollusion provision. This provision would specifically prohibit parties from colluding in order to circumvent spending limits. If Bill 16 is passed, a party would be prohibited from using its status as a registered party for the purpose of circumventing or attempting to circumvent spending limits. In effect, these provisions, like the provisions for associated parties, will prohibit the use of a multiparty structure to get around that \$2 million spending limit introduced in 2016 as part of our Bill 35. The bill would provide for a penalty of up to \$100,000 for associated registered parties or the

chief financial officers of the associated registered parties who contravene the spending limit.

Likewise, the maximum penalty for nonassociated parties exceeding the spending limit is increased to \$100,000. This change would make spending limit penalties for parties consistent with existing penalties for third-party advertisers who breach their spending limits. The maximum penalty for registered candidates, registered nomination contestants, and their chief financial officers would go from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

On another note, Bill 16 will also touch on something out of Bill 32, revising the definition of election advertising period to include by-elections. The current definition only covers general elections. We want to make sure that any advertising done by third parties during a by-election does fall under political advertising rules instead of election advertising rules.

We are also updating the reporting. We are committed to ensuring that everyday Albertans have the confidence they deserve in our electoral system, so we are making changes to both the quarterly reporting and the annual financial statements. These amendments would enhance transparency and protect fairness in election spending.

Fair elections depend on all parties and candidates having a level playing field so that big ideas and not big money decide our elections. Our democracy belongs to Albertans, to every person in our province, and we will not allow private interest groups or big money to unduly interfere in our electoral system. Bill 16 is another step to preserve the fairness and integrity of all future elections within our province, another step along the path that we began with Bill 1, the very first action of our government, followed by Bill 35 and then Bill 32.

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. minister, I hesitate to interrupt, but pursuant to Standing Order 4(2) the House stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 4:30 p.m.]



## **Bill Status Report for the 29th Legislature - 4th Session (2018)**

**Activity to Thursday, May 10, 2018**

The Bill sponsor's name is in brackets following the Bill title. If it is a money Bill, (\$) will appear between the title and the sponsor's name. Numbers following each Reading refer to Hansard pages where the text of debates is found; dates for each Reading are in brackets following the page numbers. Bills numbered 1 to 200 are Government Bills. Bills numbered 201 or higher are Private Members' Public Bills. Bills numbered with a "Pr" prefix are Private Bills.

\* An asterisk beside a Bill number indicates an amendment was passed to that Bill; the Committee line shows the precise date of the amendment.

The date a Bill comes into force is indicated in square brackets after the date of Royal Assent. If a Bill comes into force "on proclamation," "with exceptions," or "on various dates," please contact Legislative Counsel, Alberta Justice, for details at 780.427.2217. The chapter number assigned to the Bill is entered immediately following the date the Bill comes into force. SA indicates Statutes of Alberta; this is followed by the year in which it is included in the statutes, and its chapter number. Please note, Private Bills are not assigned chapter number until the conclusion of the Fall Sittings.

### **Bill 1 — Energy Diversification Act (McCuaig-Boyd)**

First Reading — 6 (*Mar. 8, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 50-51 (*Mar. 13, 2018 morn.*), 184-87 (*Mar. 15, 2018 aft.*), 233-43 (*Mar. 20, 2018 morn.*), 301-08 (*Mar. 21, 2018 aft.*), 919-27 (*May 9, 2018 morn.*), 981-84 (*May 9, 2018 eve., adjourned*)

### **Bill 2 — Growth and Diversification Act (\$) (Bilous)**

First Reading — 118 (*Mar. 14, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 243-46 (*Mar. 20, 2018 morn.*), 294-96 (*Mar. 21, 2018 aft.*), 314-25 (*Mar. 22, 2018 morn.*), 411-12 (*Apr. 4, 2018 aft.*), 702-05 (*May 1, 2018 eve.*), 928-33 (*May 9, 2018 morn., adjourned on amendment*)

### **Bill 3 — Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2018 (\$) (Ceci)**

First Reading — 184 (*Mar. 15, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 221-26 (*Mar. 19, 2018 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 261-68 (*Mar. 20, 2018 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 296-98 (*Mar. 21, 2018 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2018 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 28, 2018; SA 2018 c1 ]

### **Bill 4 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2018 (\$) (Ceci)**

First Reading — 165 (*Mar. 15, 2018 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 226-32 (*Mar. 19, 2018 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 268-75 (*Mar. 20, 2018 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 298-301 (*Mar. 21, 2018 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2018 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 28, 2018; SA 2018 c2 ]

### **Bill 5 — An Act to Strengthen Financial Security for Persons with Disabilities (Sabir)**

First Reading — 200-201 (*Mar. 19, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 360-62 (*Apr. 3, 2018 morn.*), 482-87 (*Apr. 10, 2018 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 847-54 (*May 7, 2018 eve., adjourned*)

### **Bill 6 — Gaming and Liquor Statutes Amendment Act, 2018 (Ganley)**

First Reading — 448 (*Apr. 9, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 533-34 (*Apr. 12, 2018 aft.*), 669-79 (*May 1, 2018 aft.*), 1010-13 (*May 10, 2018 aft., adjourned*)

### **Bill 7 — Supporting Alberta's Local Food Sector Act (Carlier)**

First Reading — 425 (*Apr. 5, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 491-97 (*Apr. 10, 2018 aft.*), 534-36 (*Apr. 12, 2018 aft.*), 679-83 (*May 1, 2018 aft.*), 908-09 (*May 8, 2018 eve.*), 913-14 (*May 8, 2018 eve., adjourned*)

**Bill 8 — Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2018 (S. Anderson)**

First Reading — 374 (*Apr. 3, 2018 aft., passed*)

**Bill 9\* — Protecting Choice for Women Accessing Health Care Act (Hoffman)**

First Reading — 425 (*Apr. 5, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 497-502 (*Apr. 10, 2018 aft.*), 785-93 (*May 3, 2018 morn.*), 775-76 (*May 3, 2018 morn.*), 807-08 (*May 3, 2018 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 909-13 (*May 8, 2018 eve.*), 957-61 (*May 9, 2018 aft.*), 992-94 (*May 10, 2018 morn., adjourned*)

**Bill 10 — An Act to Enable Clean Energy Improvements (S. Anderson)**

First Reading — 528 (*Apr. 12, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 611-12 (*Apr. 19, 2018 aft.*), 643-50 (*May 1, 2018 morn.*), 761-72 (*May 2, 2018 eve., adjourned on amendment*)

**Bill 11 — Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2018 (Gray)**

First Reading — 505 (*Apr. 11, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 612-13 (*Apr. 19, 2018 aft.*), 650-56 (*May 1, 2018 morn.*), 772-74 (*May 2, 2018 eve.*), 967-73 (*May 9, 2018 eve., passed*)

**Bill 12\* — Preserving Canada's Economic Prosperity Act (McCuaig-Boyd)**

First Reading — 547 (*Apr. 16, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 736-46 (*May 2, 2018 aft.*), 854-55 (*May 7, 2018 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 961-65 (*May 9, 2018 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 994-96 (*May 10, 2018 morn., adjourned*)

**Bill 13 — An Act to Secure Alberta's Electricity Future (S) (McCuaig-Boyd)**

First Reading — 606 (*Apr. 19, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 746-53 (*May 2, 2018 aft.*), 808-16 (*May 3, 2018 aft.*), 855-64 (*May 7, 2018 eve.*), 947-57 (*May 9, 2018 aft., adjourned on amendment*)

**Bill 14 — An Act to Empower Utility Consumers (McLean)**

First Reading — 590 (*Apr. 18, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 718-24 (*May 2, 2018 morn.*), 915-19 (*May 9, 2018 morn., adjourned*)

**Bill 15 — Appropriation Act, 2018 (S) (Ceci)**

First Reading — 610 (*Apr. 19, 2018 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 683-89 (*May 1, 2018 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 753-56 (*May 2, 2018 aft.*), 757-60 (*May 2, 2018 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 776-85 (*May 3, 2018 morn., passed on division*)

**Bill 16 — Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018 (Gray)**

First Reading — 879 (*May 8, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1010-13 (*May 10, 2018 aft., adjourned*)

**Bill 17 — Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2018 (Ceci)**

First Reading — 806 (*May 3, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 864-65 (*May 7, 2018 eve.*), 1014-15 (*May 10, 2018 aft., adjourned*)

**Bill 201 — Employment Standards (Firefighter Leave) Amendment Act, 2018 (W. Anderson)**

First Reading — 118 (*Mar. 14, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 201-14 (*Mar. 19, 2018 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future*)

**Bill 202 — Alberta Taxpayer Protection (Carbon Tax Referendum) Amendment Act, 2018 (Kenney)**

First Reading — 179 (*Mar. 15, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 549-63 (*Apr. 16, 2018 aft., defeated on division*)

**Bill 203 — Long Term Care Information Act (Schreiner)**

First Reading — 425 (*Apr. 5, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 632-40 (*Apr. 30, 2018 aft.*), 829-33 (*May 7, 2018 aft., passed*)

**Bill 204 — Land Statutes (Abolition of Adverse Possession) Amendment Act, 2018 (Gottfried)**

First Reading — 425 (*Apr. 5, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 833-41 (*May 7, 2018 aft., adjourned*)

**Bill 205 — Supporting Accessible Mental Health Services Act (Jabbour)**

First Reading — 1008 (*May 10, 2018 aft., passed*)

**Bill 206 — Societies (Preventing the Promotion of Hate) Amendment Act, 2018 (Coolahan)**

First Reading — 1008-09 (*May 10, 2018 aft., passed*)



## Table of Contents

Introduction of Guests .....	997, 1009
Members' Statements	
Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation .....	998
Catholic Education .....	998, 999
Human-animal Bond .....	998
Mental Health Week .....	998
Justice System Concerns .....	999
Oral Question Period	
Provincial Response to Pipeline Opposition .....	999
Federal Policies on Pipeline Development .....	1000
Health Care Wait Times .....	1001
PDD Program Review and Advocate .....	1001
Access to Health Services and Social Supports .....	1002
Power Company Compensation for Coal Phase-out .....	1002
Long-term Care Facility Construction Costs .....	1003
Carbon Levy and Pipeline Approvals .....	1004
Bill 12 .....	1004
Eastern Slopes Land Management .....	1005
Legal Aid .....	1005
Air Ambulance Service in Peace River .....	1006
Agricultural Concerns .....	1006
Mental Health Services for Children .....	1007
Diabetes Support in Schools .....	1007
Election Commissioner .....	1008
Introduction of Bills	
Bill 205 Supporting Accessible Mental Health Services Act .....	1008
Bill 206 Societies (Preventing the Promotion of Hate) Amendment Act, 2018 .....	1008
Tabling Returns and Reports .....	1009
Orders of the Day .....	1010
Government Bills and Orders	
Second Reading	
Bill 6 Gaming and Liquor Statutes Amendment Act, 2018 .....	1010
Division .....	1010
Division .....	1011
Bill 17 Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2018 .....	1014
Bill 16 Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018 .....	1015

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