



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Fourth Session

# Alberta Hansard

Wednesday morning, May 16, 2018

Day 31

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

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

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

### Party standings:

New Democratic: 54   United Conservative: 25   Alberta Party: 3   Alberta Liberal: 1   Progressive Conservative: 1   Independent Conservative: 1   Vacant: 2

### Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Robert H. Reynolds, QC, Clerk	Philip Massolin, Manager of Research and	Brian G. Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms
Shannon Dean, Law Clerk and Director of	Committee Services	Chris Caughell, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
House Services	Nancy Robert, Research Officer	Paul Link, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Stephanie LeBlanc, Senior Parliamentary	Janet Schwegel, Managing Editor of	Gareth Scott, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Counsel	<i>Alberta Hansard</i>	
Trafton Koenig, Parliamentary Counsel		

### **Executive Council**

Rachel Notley	Premier, President of Executive Council
Sarah Hoffman	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health
Shaye Anderson	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Deron Bilous	Minister of Economic Development and Trade
Oneil Carlier	Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
Joe Ceci	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
David Eggen	Minister of Education
Richard Feehan	Minister of Indigenous Relations
Kathleen T. Ganley	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Christina Gray	Minister of Labour, Minister Responsible for Democratic Renewal
Sandra Jansen	Minister of Infrastructure
Danielle Larivee	Minister of Children's Services
Brian Mason	Minister of Transportation
Margaret McCuaig-Boyd	Minister of Energy
Stephanie V. McLean	Minister of Service Alberta, Minister of Status of Women
Ricardo Miranda	Minister of Culture and Tourism
Brandy Payne	Associate Minister of Health
Shannon Phillips	Minister of Environment and Parks, Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office
Irfan Sabir	Minister of Community and Social Services
Marlin Schmidt	Minister of Advanced Education
Lori Sigurdson	Minister of Seniors and Housing

### **Parliamentary Secretaries**

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

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

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

Chair: Mr. Coolahan  
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Schreiner

Cyr	Luff
Dang	McPherson
Ellis	Turner
Horne	

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

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

Carson	Littlewood
Connolly	McPherson
Coolahan	Piquette
Dach	Schneider
Fitzpatrick	Starke
Gotfried	Taylor
Horne	

### **Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

Chair: Ms Goehring  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Smith

Drever	Orr
Ellis	Renaud
Fraser	Shepherd
Hinkley	Swann
Luff	Woollard
McKitrick	Yao
Miller	

### **Standing Committee on Legislative Offices**

Chair: Mr. Shepherd  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

Aheer	McKitrick
Gill	Pitt
Horne	van Dijken
Kleinsteinuber	Woollard
Littlewood	

### **Special Standing Committee on Members' Services**

Chair: Mr. Wanner  
Deputy Chair: Cortes-Vargas

Babcock	Nixon
Cooper	Piquette
Dang	Pitt
Drever	Westhead
McIver	

### **Standing Committee on Private Bills**

Chair: Ms Kazim  
Deputy Chair: Connolly

Anderson, W.	Orr
Babcock	Rosendahl
Drever	Stier
Drysdale	Strankman
Hinkley	Sucha
Kleinsteinuber	Taylor
McKitrick	

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

Chair: Ms Fitzpatrick  
Deputy Chair: Ms Babcock

Carson	Loyola
Coolahan	Miller
Cooper	Nielsen
Goehring	Nixon
Gotfried	Pitt
Hanson	van Dijken
Kazim	

### **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Chair: Mr. Cyr  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Dach

Barnes	Malkinson
Carson	Miller
Clark	Nielsen
Gotfried	Panda
Hunter	Renaud
Littlewood	Turner
Luff	

### **Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

Chair: Loyola  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Drysdale

Babcock	Loewen
Clark	Malkinson
Dang	Nielsen
Fildebrandt	Panda
Hanson	Rosendahl
Kazim	Schreiner
Kleinsteinuber	

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

9 a.m.

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Acting Speaker:** Good morning.

Let us reflect or pray, each in our own way. Let us have confidence in our abilities to make decisions while maintaining respect for those who may oppose those decisions. Never let our actions or words be disrespectful. Amen.

Please be seated.

### Orders of the Day

#### Government Bills and Orders

##### Second Reading

##### Bill 16

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

[Debate adjourned May 10: Ms Gray speaking]

**The Acting Speaker:** Are there any members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

**Mr. Cooper:** Well, thank you and good morning, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to be here with you on this fine May morning, the day after my son's birthday, so happy birthday to you, Porter, if you happen to be watching along at home, which you're not because you're in school. It's a pleasure. It is always a pleasure to rise in the Assembly and speak about issues that are important to Albertans.

Bill 16, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018, is a bill title that I'm sure you're familiar with as we have had this particular piece of legislation come before the Assembly on numerous occasions now, and you'll know, Madam Speaker, that I have spoken at length about this particular piece of legislation. Let me just begin by stating that I think that there are some very positive things that have come from making changes to the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act. You know, in fact, the United Conservative caucus as well as other legacy caucuses have been in support of many of those things, and I think that some good work has been done.

I think it's unfortunate the number of times that we've had to do this. You know, this is now the fourth or fifth time that the government has brought this forward. You've heard me in this House before, Madam Speaker, talking about the importance of that if something is worth doing, then we should do it right the first time. It shouldn't take us four or five times to get things right on Bill 16. Yeah, in fact, you'll know that I've spoken on a number of occasions about the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs and his father's commitment when he was growing up about the importance of just that, doing the job right the first time, and I hope that he communicates to his cabinet colleagues and encourages them in the future to do things right the first time and not have to do things time and time and time again.

In particular, this piece of legislation, Bill 16, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018, is a very, very interesting piece of legislation. If I could be so bold, perhaps Bill 16 might be better named the NDP Doesn't Trust the UCP Amendment Act because this piece of legislation is specifically targeted and tailored to the United Conservative Party.

You'll know, Madam Speaker, that following the unification of the legacy Wildrose and PC parties to create the new Official Opposition, that, I might add, has received some significant confidence and support of Albertans from pillar to post and corner to corner – I find it interesting that the government now is introducing a piece of boutique legislation specifically targeted at the United Conservative Party.

In fact, Madam Speaker, I know you weren't there, but I found it very interesting that at a government briefing for this legislation the minister's office actually made specific reference to internal party documents of the United Conservative Party in the form of the agreement in principle. The agreement in principle was a document that was created to help form the United Conservative Party. I found it very, very interesting that at a minister's briefing we wound up speaking about such an internal party document. In fact, I was quite concerned about this, that the government would be making legislation specifically targeted to the Official Opposition.

Now, having said all that, this legislation does do a couple of things, but the most significant piece of this legislation is the portion that surrounds associated parties. The purpose of defining associated parties is to ensure that parties that are closely affiliated share a single \$2 million spending limit for a single party. As such, parties that may be associated wouldn't then individually be able to spend \$2 million, \$2 million, \$2 million and then be able to circumvent the legislation that prevents a political party from spending more than \$2 million on an election campaign.

Now, Madam Speaker, I don't know if there is anyone else that the government could have been talking about other than the United Conservative Party and the two legacy parties that were united. While we were very clear in the agreement in principle, the document that I've previously referenced, the government clearly has some concerns about that. In fact, in that agreement in principle on page 7 of the document it clearly states that the United Conservative Party "and the Legacy Parties will respect the spirit of the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act (Alberta) by adhering to the spending limits of a single political party registration." So it's a big surprise to me that now they've placed this legislation before the Assembly specifically targeted at the United Conservative Party.

Madam Speaker, I don't know how else we could have been any more clear with our intentions. The Leader of the Official Opposition, the MLA for Calgary-Lougheed, signed his name to that founding document, which is legally binding in the negotiations between the legacy parties. I think you can probably understand my mild entertainment that the government is so concerned about the United Conservative Party's ability to spend \$6 million total even though we've announced our intention to Albertans about adhering to the intention of the law, that now the government is bringing in boutique legislation specifically targeted at this very issue. It speaks to the concern that they have about the strength of the Official Opposition.

I'd also like to point out that there was a much, much, much, much, much better path forward, a much simpler way to create the same result. It's something that the Official Opposition and both of those legacy parties were speaking at length about, and that is simple: allow the parties to merge. Legislation like this has already been found at the federal level and in Ontario and Quebec. When the UCP was formed, its structure of having the legacy parties continue to exist under the UCP umbrella was done out of necessity rather than preference since there's no legislation that exists in Alberta that would allow the political parties to merge. If the government was actually concerned about this – they're solving a problem that will not exist and cannot exist. Instead, they could have just allowed the political parties to merge.

Now, Madam Speaker, despite the somewhat ridiculous nature and the redundant nature of this bill, the United Conservative Party is in favour of transparency and accountability when it comes to Albertans, and we will be supporting, or I will be encouraging my colleagues to support, this piece of legislation because the legislation is doing exactly what we said we would do, and that is respect the intention of the law. But I would state that any time that we're governing for tiny, tiny one-off situations, creating such legislation, this in fact isn't the best way to govern. It would have been much more reasonable and advantageous and forward looking to create a scenario where political parties may want to merge in the future. In fact, I can see a path forward, where political parties on other sides of the political spectrum may in fact want to also merge.

**9:10**

Having said that, we support the legislation. It's a little bit ridiculous because it's specifically targeted at the Official Opposition and doing something that we've already said that we would do. Any time that we create legislation on a go-forward basis on one-offs, it's rarely a good way to govern.

I would also like to highlight some questions and concerns that we have within the legislation. As stated, the legislation has a variety of factors that are used to determine whether or not parties are associated. They need to meet a set number of qualifiers that will deem them associated. Some examples of that are that if parties have the same leader, executive director, persons in positions similar to an executive director, CFO, they could be deemed associated. If they share common political programs, policy statements, advertising, branding materials or if one association controls the others, they could be deemed associated.

Now, Madam Speaker, one of the reasons why I have concerns about this portion of the bill is the fact that the individual who'll be making the decisions about whether or not they could be deemed associated is, of course, the Election Commissioner. This individual has been appointed and was the source of a highly debated and contentious government motion, Government Motion 16, which did not receive universal support from the search committee. Given that this newly appointed position is being filled by, some would suggest, a contentious candidate, additional power to deem associated parties leaves some significant discretion and also some concerns on a go-forward basis.

I specifically have some questions around what the Election Commissioner could constitute as similar political programs or policy statements that would deem registered parties associated given that many registered parties across the political spectrum hold similar platforms and how they could be implemented. You know, one concern that I have for my friends on the left is the Alberta Party and the Liberal Party. They're essentially the same organization, very similar to the NDP, all three of them, and in fact will quite likely make very similar policy statements in the next upcoming election. Like, they're going to all pledge their undying support for the carbon tax. Those are very similar or associated types of statements. They will have very similar political programs. They're all going to be very committed to high debts and deficits. They're all going to be committed to the carbon tax. So I have concerns for them on the left about whether or not an Election Commissioner may in fact deem them as associated because of their policy statements.

These are the types of concerns that we should all take a step back from when making legislation like this, when you're trying to solve one problem but not really getting at the heart of the problem, and that, of course, is continuing to prevent parties from merging because it's beneficial to the government.

I look forward to hearing the minister provide some specific examples on how the following section of the bill would be implemented:

the activities of the registered parties and their registered constituency associations and candidates, including the extent to which the registered parties have been involved in electoral campaigns or made public statements in support of any other registered party or registered parties.

Another perfect example – I know the NDP loves this sort of thing federally, and they love this thing in British Columbia – is making coalitions. Let's just say that the Alberta Party and the Liberal Party chose to work collaboratively in certain areas, or perhaps even the NDP chose to work collaboratively with their friends on the left in the form of the Liberal Party. I mean, we all know that their close personal friend and ally is the Prime Minister, the leader of Canada's Liberal Party, Justin Trudeau, so what would prevent them, then, from working on a coalition-style election campaign when they start to look at the numbers and see, "Oh, man; things aren't looking as good for us as they once did," and then in turn wind up in a situation where they need to work in a coalition to try to prevent other parties from electoral success? Could then they be deemed associated parties by the Chief Electoral Officer and be in breach of the legislation?

I think that there are some very, very significant and realistic concerns that need to be addressed. Again, all of those things would have been mitigated if they solved the actual problem that was before the Assembly, and that is the inability of parties to merge.

You know, Madam Speaker, I spoke at some length already about the need for legislation to come forward and the fact that now we're seeing this particular piece of legislation before the Assembly for the fourth time. Just last session the NDP introduced Bill 32, which made large, sweeping changes to the electoral system. Some of those changes were important, but we also heard from the Chief Electoral Officer about the lack of consultation with his office with respect to Bill 34. He spoke at some length about the potential for unintended consequences in Bill 32, and we've yet to see all of those, but I'm certain that some are forthcoming.

I'm often concerned about the lack of consultation that takes place with the Chief Electoral Officer. I have yet to hear directly from him, but I look forward to hearing back from his office just to find out how much consultation took place with the Chief Electoral Officer during the drafting of Bill 16. I know that the Election Commissioner wasn't in place at that time and, in fact, it was the Chief Electoral Officer who was acting on behalf of the Election Commissioner, so it's my hope that they would have spent some time connecting with the Chief Electoral Officer to ensure that he had the opportunity to provide input and feedback on this particular piece of legislation. Now, it's my guess that that hasn't happened because this government has such a poor track record of communicating with the Chief Electoral Officer, and he's written at some length, in a number of letters that have been tabled in this House, about some of his concerns when the government is tinkering in this area.

Now, it's not to say that all changes have been bad, but we are in the business of trying to make the best changes for Albertans and not the best changes for the NDP, and what we have here before us is a change that's best for the NDP and not necessarily best for Albertans.

Now, I have been clear that it certainly is my intention to support the legislation because it puts into law what we have said that we would do in practice. Now, it's unfortunate that we have to arrive here, but I do believe that members of the Official Opposition will be pleased to speak in favour of the legislation. I've had a good chance to speak to a number of my colleagues,

and certainly they have some concerns about the government behaving in such a way that really targets the Official Opposition and, as such, creates or potentially creates unintended consequences on a go-forward basis.

There are a few things in here, additionally, that I can support in terms of some of the changes around by-elections and quarterly filings that are both good and create some concern about the difficulty that some of those things might pose in terms of campaign return filings, of separating out regular contributions and specific contribution campaigns during a by-election, for instance, where donations were not made specifically by the donor but it was received during a by-election period. There are a few potential challenges around that but nothing that can't be overcome.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, we on this side of the House, the Official Opposition, are incredibly flattered that the government saw fit to create a piece of legislation just for us. It makes us feel very special inside. It highlights the fact that they are concerned about the strength of the Official Opposition, that they are concerned that the Official Opposition is gaining momentum all across the province. In fact, the exact opposite of that is what is happening to the government.

9:20

We simply hope that unlike in past instances, they've thoroughly thought through this piece of legislation and that we won't be back again next session with another bill on elections advertising and financing to add to all the bills that they've rolled out so far in the past. I look forward to the debate. I look forward to supporting the piece of legislation. It's unfortunate that we're here, but I also look forward to the minister's comments.

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

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

**Mr. Gottfried:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again, it's always a pleasure to rise in this House today to speak to Bill 16, Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018. You know, we've had an opportunity to review this. Of course, the UCP Party believes in democracy and accountability and transparency and adhering to these rules, laws, and the spirit of these rules and laws in and outside of election periods, and that's a commitment that we make to all Albertans.

Madam Speaker, we've seen this type of legislation. In 2016 we had Bill 35 and in 2017 Bill 32, and we seem now to be taking three runs at this to try and get it right. There are many very positive aspects of this bill, but as was mentioned by my hon. colleague from Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, there seems to be some specific targeting of one party or another, and I don't think that that's really within the spirit that we would hope is in this House, that we actually try and address things that not only apply to all parties but are taken a look at from many different perspectives to ensure that we do the right thing on behalf of Albertans.

Some might say that there's some overreach in certain parts of this and past legislation into party activities, as the member previously noted. A commitment was made that we would treat the two legacy parties and the new party, in our instance, as one entity in terms of the spending limits. We've made that commitment, and that's a commitment we intended to honour, but of course if that's brought into this legislation, that's certainly something that we would continue to honour in that respect. But what we want to make sure of is that there is no overreach that is targeted and that there is fairness and that nobody is trying to stack the deck here in any way, shape, or form, Madam Speaker.

I think it was referenced with the Election Commissioner that that should be an opportunity for us in this House and in that committee to come together to select an individual who's universally accepted for their fairness and lack of bias and certainly who is acceptable to all members of this House with unanimous consent and in a unanimous decision. That would have been, I think, more appropriate and more respected and honoured in the spirit of what we're trying to do here with Bill 16.

You know, Madam Speaker, I look at some of the past here and some of the practices. I just remind all members in the House here that there is an election coming up, the election that we hope to have next year, intend to have next year, and I hope it will be held on time. It's one that is actually going to have to be hard fought, and the individuals there on all sides of this House will work hard and work fiercely for the privilege and the honour of representing the constituents in their constituencies. I know that I intend to do so. I know that I did so last time.

It reminds me of a few examples that I've noted within the last election, where, in fact – and I'll use a very specific example – in my constituency there really was nothing to worry about for the candidate who was running against me because when they filed their election finances, there were zero dollars spent, Madam Speaker. Zero dollars. I can tell you that even if you're just out knocking on a door and handing out a brochure, that takes more than zero dollars. What it actually showed and what we heard from my constituents as I was knocking on doors was that there was not one door knocked on. There was not one brochure printed. There was not one opportunity to meet the candidate, even a cup of coffee purchased for that purpose, not one sign printed. In fact, all the signs were for the hon. Premier. People were asking where the Premier's name was on the ballot. That was an opportunity there to show that there was really not much intent in terms of the energy, effort, or dollars in this respect to do that.

We saw it across many other constituencies, Madam Speaker. We've heard comments and thoughts that: well, we didn't have to do any of that; we just knocked on doors. But in this case there were no doors knocked on that I know of. I would be happy to be corrected on that. We saw in other constituencies election finances registered of \$300 and \$400 and \$500. Well, that doesn't buy a lot of brochures, and it doesn't do a lot of different things in terms of reaching out.

We want to make sure that everybody in this House realizes that these are rules that we all must embrace, we all must live by, and that we all must have the spirit of those laws as well as the intent and also the administration that comes with those at heart. We're happy to reach out and to ensure that we not only adhere to the spirit of that but that we meet the administrative requirements around these in terms of spending limits and how we spend our money and who spends the money.

Madam Speaker, there are some other issues that have been brought to my attention as well. Again, it was mentioned by the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills about the agreement in principle, which was referenced again, which concerns me when there's specific targeting of a party or an individual or political movement in that case. That concerns me, that that was brought into this as well, when we really should be looking at this from a broader view of how it impacts all parties, all candidates, and indeed all Albertans.

The increase in penalties, I think, for the political entities that exceed spending limits is a positive thing. If you're going to break the rules, you need to be penalized for doing so. Many of those were laid out in previous bills, Bill 35 and Bill 32. We think that that's a good thing. That's a positive thing because sometimes you need to have appropriate penalties in place when that's taken into account.

We also have some questions, I have some questions around the associated party issue, associated registered parties. You know, it often is brought up in this House, curiously, that many of us belong to parties that have individual registrations and brands and entities across this country. Some people think of us as the same. In the past there's always been confusion between the Conservative Party of Canada and, previously, the Progressive Conservative Party and now the United Conservative Party, but we are individual and separate entities, Madam Speaker. One thing that is constantly mentioned in this House is that the NDP Party is just one party nationally. There is one party. You hold one membership. I have some questions around that in terms of how that will be addressed, how that will be applied, and whether there will be any blurring of those lines not only with a similar brand and maybe some similar policies, although those seem to differ often in application across this country. There may be disagreements, but in essence you have one party that is representing that.

I wonder what would happen in a year that you have a federal and a provincial election at the same time, with the same registered umbrella party that is actually in play in both of those. What if the federal election was before the provincial election, Madam Speaker? Would that mean that the spend of that federal party, the value of the brand that might accrue positively – in this case it might be negatively, but if it was positively, would that be considered as an associated party? That spend could in reality benefit the provincial party when the federal party is spending money on billboards and advertising and mail drops for their candidates.

Let's be honest, Madam Speaker. Many of our constituents are not that clear on the separation between provincial and federal politics. I hear it all the time. I knock on doors, and people say, "Oh, we have memberships for this, and we have memberships for that," confusing provincial and federal parties. Of course, in the NDP's case there is no confusion because you only have one party. So where does that come in? Is the membership somebody who chooses to buy a membership in the federal NDP, and part of those funds goes back to the provincial NDP? Where does that start out? When somebody runs an advertisement, when somebody says, "Support your local NDP," is there a blurring of that? Does that create an associated party relationship? Again, what if we were in a situation where a provincial election were called in the same calendar year and just after a federal election? That sounds a little bit odd to me, a little bit blurred and a little bit associated.

9:30

That concerns me, and I certainly would ask that question to the minister and to this government on what the intent and what the application of that would be. Will that be left up to an Election Commissioner which was not selected unanimously by this House? Madam Speaker, there are lots of things for us to consider in this bill, and the associated party one certainly is one that concerns me greatly.

But I think the main thing that we have to consider here is that fairness, the fairness and the transparency and the accountability that I would generally sort of assume that everybody in this House wants to adhere to. They want to do the best. They want to do what's right by their constituents. I believe that a hundred per cent, and I believe they want to be fair as well. Everybody wants to win an election fair and square by working hard, by talking to their constituents, by sharing their ideologies and their policies and their goals with their constituents, and by doing so in a way which respects the limits that are put in place.

Madam Speaker, it does take energy and effort and commitment and dollars to run an election, and I think we owe it to Albertans as well – we can argue over whether these limits are the correct limits

or not, but if we all have to play by the same rules, I believe that that will serve the purpose that we want, which is fairness. However, democracy does take a lot of work. It takes a few pairs of shoes to wear out for a good election. It takes a lot of door-knocking. It takes a lot of effort. It takes a lot of volunteers. It takes a lot of commitment from all of us. Any of us that have run those hard elections and not spent zero dollars and not knocked on no doors and not printed no brochures – those of us that have done that know how much work it is.

Having only been through my first election in 2015, trust me; I gained a lot of respect for anybody who runs for public office at any level in this country. I respect the commitment not even of those that win but of those that compete, who choose to compete and put themselves out there for public service. We'll see that again in the coming election, next year. I respect everybody for stepping forward and working hard and trying to earn the support of their constituents.

That, Madam Speaker, is actually the essence of the democracy we live in, and we need to respect that commitment that they put into that and respect the fact that they step forward and do their best, whatever that might be. Some people may want to knock on doors nine hours a day and some three hours a day and some three hours a week. Some may want to have brochures of various sorts. Some may have signs, and some more borrow their leader's signs. Some may host coffee events. Some may stand on street corners doing Burma-Shaves and waving signs in the morning to get people's attention. Those are always fun when it's nice and cold out in the morning. Don't forget to wear your gloves when you're doing those.

But, Madam Speaker, that's the essence of the democracy we live in and the opportunity for us to work hard and to be fair and to honour not only the spirit but the letter of these laws. That's where the letter of these laws is important, that they empower us to empower democratic society, that we have the resources required to reach out to our constituents, who can vote freely in any way they want in a secret ballot – I know that that's a unique concept in some circles in this House; secret ballots are not honoured across all platforms in this province at this point in time – so they can go in and they can actually say something and do another. They can have a sign on their lawn and do another. They can not have a sign on their lawn and tell somebody that they're not going to let anybody know how they're going to vote and do what they want when they walk into that polling station.

That empowerment that we give people is called democracy, the essence of what our forefathers and those who sacrificed before us in two world wars. The men and the women that fought for us – and many sacrificed their lives so that we can have that democracy in this country. I think sometimes that we take that too much for granted and start worrying about getting into the weeds of: can we spend \$12 on a sign, or can we spend \$6 on this, or can we have a coffee party?

Again, Madam Speaker, it's about fairness. It's about limits. It's about a level playing field and not stacking the deck. There have been some issues raised here of concern about whether we are stacking the deck on this one, whether there's a card being pulled from the middle or whether there's a joker being put in there as well to try and tee this up in a way which skews it for or against one political entity or another. That should not be the intent of this. The intent should be fairness. But the intent should also be there to allow for democratic participation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Are there any members wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.



**Mr. Hanson:** Yes. That's a very difficult one to remember. Anyway, I'd just like to ask the hon. member. I was listening to his speech and just wondered if he'd have any comments. You know, this was specifically directed at the two legacy parties of the UCP, but in the event that two parties, say, the government and, say, the Liberal Party or the Alberta Party, decided that they would combine forces and not run a candidate in a specific riding to make it easier for one of their candidates to win over, say, the United Conservative Party's, could that be seen by the Election Commissioner as collusion and maybe in the same light that they're looking at the combined legacy parties of the UCP?

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you to the member for his very thoughtful question. That is a good question about this whole associated party issue. I do have concern about that because I think that in the past, if I'm not mistaken, in the last provincial election, we did have someone who actually sought the nomination from two different parties, so that would imply that there was some sort of agreement to run a single candidate. That is a concern for us because we know that some of the parties have not actually fielded candidates in all constituencies in past elections.

What if they chose to do that again if they didn't have candidates across the board and they chose to actually support one another in that election, through intent or through an agreement or through funding, that they would support or not support direct finances in various directions? Would that associate them enough? Even if that was in one constituency only, would that associate them enough that there was collusion, collaboration, association? That's a good question, Madam Speaker. To the member through you, that is a good question.

A question that we have for this government is: what's going to happen in those? Who is going to adjudicate that? Is it the Election Commissioner? Are they going to come in there and go: "That looks a little too cozy. We're going to call that associated." Maybe that's what should happen. I know our party is intent on and will have candidates in 87 constituencies, but we know that's not the case for all parties. So where do they decide – we're hearing it, actually, in the provincial election in Ontario, that there's collaboration between the Liberal and the NDP parties there. What is their elections commissioner going to say about that? What if that was Alberta, Madam Speaker? What if that was Alberta? Would that then mean that the two combined parties could only spend \$2 million? That's an interesting question.

I know that the hon. member said that we have two legacy parties, but we have committed firmly that we will, right from the get-go, as part of our original agreement in principle – that was something we committed to Albertans, that we weren't going to try and circumvent, we weren't going to try and triple down on this. That was a commitment we made coming together as a party. Now, that could be put into law here, and that's fine if that's the way it is, but we want to make sure that this is actually not just about the UCP and our two legacy parties, that it will be equally and to the letter of the law applied if there were to be collusion, collaboration, association between other parties in this province, Madam Speaker.

9:40

I think that there's an opportunity here for us to reflect on the letter of the law and the intent of the law and then, most importantly, the application of the law. The application of that law is really where the rubber hits the road in this province, Madam Speaker. I just would caution all of the members in this House to think about how this might impact them. We're happy to work by these rules, but be sure that the letter of the law, the impact of the law will be something that is borne by all of us. And then the application of it:

not just the letter and the principles but the letter of this law will need to be appropriately adjudicated and administered across all parties. That is something we all need to be certain about while we're drafting legislation and approving and passing legislation of this sort, that we understand the implications of it and we are all willing to live up not only to the letter and the spirit but to the application of this law.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

To the member through the Speaker: I'm concerned about that as well. I'm concerned about what this is going to look like. We've talked about: what if the policies of parties are similar? You know what? There are lots of principles of democracy which apply.

Thank you to the member for his questions. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other speakers on the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to talk about Bill 16, the one that is entitled, at least, Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018, as some of my colleagues have mentioned, a boutique piece of legislation presumably born out of fear that the Official Opposition will do something that they've promised they won't do. I'm not sure how even under the current rules, without this legislation, any Chief Electoral Officer would let that happen. Nonetheless, the government saw fit to put this into legislation. Ultimately, one of the most interesting things about this is that it's kind of a bit of a window into the minds of the government, that the Official Opposition is in their heads in a serious way in that they would pass a piece of legislation designed to do what probably cannot be done in any event.

It really is the continuation of several pieces of election finance rules that the government has put in place. Unfortunately, because they just can't get it right, they keep creating unintended consequences. They have to go back and try to mop up the mess that they made before and then go back again and try to mop up the mess before. This is the – I don't know – fourth or fifth iteration of them trying to mop up, not getting it right the first or the second or the third time. So here we are again, with this government trying to create what they weren't able to create the first two, three times around, though at least the last time they had two or three years in order to sort it out, but that wasn't enough, so here we are. They're back.

Madam Speaker, here's what's interesting and consistent, unfortunately, across this NDP government in so many of the things that they attempt to do and the things that they say. In many cases what the big print giveth, the small print taketh away. That's pretty consistent across much of the legislation that this government has and many of the things that they do. The most obvious example of that here is that while they seem awfully earnest and awfully concerned about collusion, they took the time to create an exemption for collusion. No. You can't actually make this up, Madam Speaker. It's right in there. They've made it so that if three parties – for example, the NDP and the Liberals or the Alberta Party – decided to share the 87 seats across the province, saying: we'll run in these 50, you run in those 40, and you run in those 50 ...

**Mr. Schmidt:** That doesn't add up to 87.

**Mr. McIver:** I know it doesn't add up to 87. Thank you.

The fact is that the example is that if they took the 87 seats and said that somebody will run in 50 and somebody will run in 30 and somebody will run in seven, that somehow wouldn't be collusion. You actually can't make this up, Madam Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** You are right now.

**Mr. McIver:** It's in the legislation, folks. The member is saying that . . .

**An Hon. Member:** It's not in the bill.

**Mr. McIver:** "It's out," says the minister. That's a good thing because that is something that we cannot have. We cannot have the ability for collusion if the government doesn't want collusion. I'll take the minister's – the earlier draft that I saw had it in there, okay? Fair enough.

The fact, Madam Speaker, is that we're going to support this because there is no fear in our minds that we're going to try to combine spending between the parties. As my hon. colleague said, if the government legislation had just allowed us to put the parties together in the first place, then this wouldn't even be an issue. We would be happier if indeed we were able to do that. It would certainly be simpler for the taxpayers to administer through the Chief Electoral Officer's office, it would certainly be easier for any government of the day to keep track of it, and it would certainly be easier for our party, with the two legacy parties that were unable to fold into one, to keep track of it all. So this would actually benefit the taxpayers, benefit the government's side, and benefit the opposition's side if the government had indeed just made it possible to merge the three parties. That would really make all of this a lot more simple, less expensive, easier to administer for everyone.

Now, there are things in here, again, that are fine. The government felt that some of the fines weren't high enough. They increased them. No problem. Limiting election advertising by government and third parties during writ periods for the most part is fine. I think that if I don't mention it – I'm happy for the government members to mention it – there's at least one example from the previous government where there was a school announcement in the middle of a riding by somebody that was the Education minister, and I think we've agreed on all sides of this House that that was inappropriate. It was wrong. It happened. There's a piece of this legislation that, frankly, I agree with, that is an improvement.

While we're going ahead with this, we are trying once again to get to the point where there aren't any unintended consequences, where hopefully on the third or fourth attempt the government has got this to the place where they won't wake up the morning after it's passed and decide that they need to change one more thing. I suppose that will be a good thing because the election is approximately one year and two weeks away potentially. I appreciate that the legislation says March, April, or May next year, but I guess in my mind, Madam Speaker, I'm making the assumption that a choice for the government might be the last Monday in May next year. That's what I'm going on. Of course, the government might make a different decision. Well, there's only one person that has the authority to make that decision, as it should be, and that is the Premier. That is as it ought to be. The Premier of the day is the one that gets to make that decision.

The point is that even using the last Monday in May next year as the example of when the election might be, we're just over a year away. It's probably time, for the sake of Albertans, to know what the rules will be because out of 4 and a half million Albertans or 4.3 million Albertans, roughly, a large number of them, of course, are eligible to run. We don't know how many will, but the fact is that all the ones that are eligible to run probably have a reasonable expectation to know what the rules are going to be ahead of time.

9:50

The Chief Electoral Officer has a reasonable expectation to know what the rules will be ahead of time because the commissioner in

that office is going to need to put administration in place to make sure that the election is run in a fair, consistent way that's not open to interpretation as to anything that isn't fair. All I'm saying is that that will be easier to do if those people charged with this responsibility know what the rules are, that they have to actually put in place and apply, and can put the fail-safes and the checks in place so that that can happen. So I am one of the ones here, as I believe are many of my colleagues if not all, that is hoping that the government is satisfied with their third or fourth attempt at getting this right so that they don't have to come back in the next session, with a little over half a year before an election has to take place, and try to do this one more time.

Here's the thing that is open to interpretation that the government may want to think about: what conditions, what rules? In fairness, perhaps – and this is a good question – the government may want to think about what are the rules that constitute an associated registered party and, again, if it were exactly the same policies, exactly the same rules, and how consistent. How much the same is it going to have to be? In fairness, there may be policies in the next election that every party running agrees on. One might be that everybody might say: we're in favour of getting the pipeline built. I think there's a pretty high probability of every party in the next election saying that they're in favour of that. So if every party says that, I would say that that's probably not grounds to consider the parties associated on its own.

I have a great deal of faith in the Chief Electoral Officer to make good value judgments for us, which is what they are charged with doing and what they get paid to do, but it is, in my view, still to a large degree open to interpretation. I would be interested if the government side, when and if they choose to take the floor here, might let us know what discussions, if any, they've had with the Chief Electoral Officer and, if indeed they have, whether the Chief Electoral Officer has given any hint or clue or idea or a direct statement on what would be considered similar policy or program or policy statements that would deem registered parties associated. That's something that, in my mind, the government should have done and they may well have done.

I have no recollection of them saying that one way or another, but when one of them gets on their feet, I would be interested in hearing from the minister or some other representative from the party on what indeed the Chief Electoral Officer has said on this topic, because it is one that I think all members of this House should be concerned with, all Albertans should be concerned with. Their democracy is important, and I expect that that is something that probably members from all sides of this House will probably be in agreement with. To have confidence – having been here long enough to have been on the winning side of an election and on the losing side of an election, in either case and in all cases it is important that the public, when they watch the late news or open up their newspapers the next morning or check the social media feed or whatever way they get their information, has confidence that the persons announced as the next government in 2019 actually got the most votes, actually won in a fair, equitable, well-refereed, well-run election.

It's my sincere hope and, really, my expectation and belief that all members of this House feel the same way, that if any of us win or lose the next election, there won't be any doubt about the conduct, the fairness, the way the election was done. Of course, then the people in government will have a true mandate to govern, as this government does. No matter how much we disagree with them – and we disagree with them a lot – the fact is that they won the most seats and earned the right to govern for the past three years and one more year to go. So it's equally important that when the next time – and, indeed, there was a previous government that won, I don't

know, 13 or 14 in a row and each time had a mandate and had the right to govern, and we'll go through that really important process again next year.

Madam Speaker, it is, I think, of utmost importance that we get this right. In my opinion, just based on the timing of when the next election is likely to be, I think it's important that this probably is the last electoral rule change bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)? Grande Prairie-Smoky.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes. I was just listening to my colleague here speak on this issue, and I think it's important that we have an opportunity to have an open discussion on this and have an opportunity to know, you know, what the government's plans are and why. I think we need to have that opportunity to have further discussion, and I hope that maybe my colleague could kind of continue on in his thoughts there and maybe just cover a little more ground in that regard.

Thanks.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Calgary-Hays.

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to my hon. colleague. To my hon. colleague: I've tried to ask some questions during my time on my feet and have given several invitations to the government side to speak. Hopefully, the minister or somebody on the government side, before this debate is done, will speak because it's important that we give confidence to Albertans that we know what we're doing, that we've got a good process, that it'll be fair. I think it's important that we give confidence to Albertans that, in my view, I hope this is the last electoral bill only because of the timing. Again, we're now to the point where once we go into the fall session, it will be less than a year before the next election according to the election laws here in Alberta. Consequently, it's high time that we start writing things in cement instead of sand in terms of, again, giving those people charged with running the election the confidence that they know what the rules are and they know what they're doing.

It's also good to talk this out in this bill for that reason so that if there is some tweak, some amendment, some improvement from any side of the House that we could make to the rules, it's certainly my wish that this is the time to do it. To me, it doesn't matter whether those changes come from our side of the House or the government side or any of the other independent members as long as it makes the election better. If there's one place where I believe all of our interests in this House do align and ought to align, it's in having a fair, equitable process that all Albertans could have confidence in and know that on the day after the next election, those people that are announced as the winners truly do have a mandate from the people to make rules about how Albertans live.

That's why it's my hope more members of this House will stand up, talk about this, express their views. Again, regardless of the fact that we disagree on a lot of things, if on something so fundamental to what we all do here we all talk with a spirit of making the legislation better, of making the elections more fair, more transparent, giving Albertans more confidence in all of that, then we all win. Whether we win our seats in the next election or not, we all win if that election is part of a process that we and all Albertans can have confidence in.

10:00

It gives confidence across Alberta if we do that. Indeed, it gives Alberta, in my view, more respect across Canada and across the world if we can make sure that it's a jurisdiction where everybody

feels good about the elections we have here and that when the government of the day is dealing with people, whether it's from another province or a state or another country, they know that Alberta is a place where democracy is protected by a strong set of rules, and that when a government official visits with someone from another country, another province, or our own federal government, they know that the persons were elected in a system that gives the people the utmost of confidence, the utmost of faith that the people's voice has been heard.

A year and two weeks from now, roughly, we'll all be fighting to take each other's jobs away, which is a proper and legitimate part of the process. I think it's in all of our interests to do everything that we can to push for the rules at that point to be as fair, as transparent, as honest, as clear as they can be.

Madam Speaker, I sincerely hope that I hear from more members of the House about this because, again, this may be our last chance with this bill to make it as fair as we can. We ought not miss that chance.

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

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to rise today and speak to the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act amendments. I've appreciated the thoughts that have been brought forward so far by the members across the aisle. We've had some good discussion, some good debate, and I appreciate the opportunity to respond to some of the concerns that have been raised by these members.

I would note that one of the concerns that had been raised by members across the aisle is that responsibility for enforcing this act and indeed for making assessments as to who would constitute an associated party and other aspects of this would fall to the Election Commissioner. Now, members across the aisle, Madam Speaker, have been indicating again this morning their dissatisfaction with the individual that has been selected to serve as the Election Commissioner. Again, as often occurred during the debate on the appointment of this individual, they have indicated that they fear this individual may have some form of bias. They have expressed concerns about the history of that individual when he served with the Alberta government previously as the Chief Electoral Officer. Indeed, the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek this morning expressed that he is concerned that the issues that are contained within this act and the aspects that would be enforced would be decided by an individual not unanimously selected by this House.

Now, I would note, Madam Speaker, that when the gentleman, Mr. Lorne Gibson, who has, I understand, now gone through all the necessary requirements to begin his service as our Election Commissioner here in the province, served as the Chief Electoral Officer for the province of Alberta, the decision not to renew his contract – in other words, to cease his work as the Chief Electoral Officer for the province of Alberta – was not unanimously selected by this House. In fact, that decision fell along extremely partisan lines, with all opposition members voting against the motion to not reappoint Mr. Gibson and all members of the government voting for. This is something we have seen before, and indeed the circumstances around that were somewhat concerning.

There have been many comments about Mr. Gibson's history with the 2008 election, an election, I would note, approaching which he made six requests over the course of 16 months for the government at the time to appoint the returning officers necessary for him to begin to do the work of enumeration and prepare for that election. Those were all ignored. Sixteen months, Madam Speaker. This is what members of the opposition would wish to use against this individual to indicate that for some reason he was going to be

biased or not be able to make prudent decisions. Indeed, at that time it was the view of many outside of this House and, certainly, the view of members of the opposition at that time that the decision that was made not to renew Mr. Gibson's contract was where the real hint of bias lay. So I would suggest that those concerns are being somewhat overstated.

In this case I think that Mr. Gibson is, in fact, in a very good position. Indeed, he made 180 – wasn't it 180, Mr. Deputy Chair? – recommendations on how we could improve our electoral system here in the province of Alberta. The majority of those have been implemented since, Madam Speaker. This is an individual who has great knowledge and understanding of electoral law, electoral financing across Canada and indeed has been called into service in numerous jurisdictions across this country and is respected greatly for his knowledge and understanding. I cannot think of a better person to make these sorts of judgments, to make these sorts of decisions, and indeed I am quite comfortable placing these directions in his hands.

Now, the members across have also expressed their concerns that they don't believe we should be bringing in any legislation or making any decisions that are targeting any particular party. Indeed, Madam Speaker, again, I think back to that debate on the Election Commissioner and how members opposite spent the majority of that debate bringing forward amendments specifically singling out that particular appointment for unique treatment compared to the process used with any other officer of the Legislature.

Now, their argument was that they were merely looking out for transparency for Albertans in line with the spirit of the law. Indeed, Madam Speaker, that is all we are doing with this legislation. This legislation simply provides for the spirit of the law to ensure that no parties would attempt to circumvent that intent to provide transparency for Albertans, to provide Albertans with the assurance that when the elections law says that no political party would incur election expenses more than \$2 million, that indeed that is the case. Members opposite have said that they agree with that. They have no problem at all with that provision. They indeed say that, you know, they themselves have taken steps to ensure that in the process of creating the party in which they now sit, they would not do so. So I don't see that we have any basis, then, for disagreement on this legislation.

It's fantastic that they've taken that step, and now we will ensure that any future parties in this province that choose to take a similar step will abide by similar rules. I think that's something all Albertans would support. I think that's something the members of my constituency, the folks that I am here to represent, would ask that we do. Indeed, I'd say that it's probably not appropriate, Madam Speaker, to simply say that we'll just trust any groups in the future that might choose to do that, that we will trust them on their goodwill. I've certainly heard frequent expressions from across the aisle about how much they trust our government in terms of making decisions that they feel are not going to be biased. I think it's fair and prudent that indeed in bringing forward this law, we would ensure that there are no loopholes outstanding that would allow any parties to circumvent in the future.

Indeed, when we look at the history of this province, Madam Speaker, we know that in the past there have been particular political parties which have sought to circumvent at times the elections laws that were in place. There was a time when there were particular political parties who took donations from places that they should not have been taking them from: public institutions, municipalities, universities, others. Thankfully, elections law was enforced in those cases, and those amounts were forced to be repaid. But we need to ensure that we do not leave loopholes for people to

exploit, and so far, from what I've heard this morning, all members of this House agree on that point. There is no disagreement there.

So I think it's fair that we move forward with legislation to ensure that we're going to have these protections in place for Albertans. We're all – and all members of the opposition spoke this morning to say that they are in favour of transparency, that they have every intent to respect the intention of the law, and indeed we want to make sure that for every political party going forward, for any examples in the future, anything that may occur, that will also be the case.

Now, members have also mentioned, you know, their deep concern that perhaps somebody might consider parties with similar policy platforms to be associated. There was a comment that perhaps, well, the Alberta Party, the Liberal Party, the NDP could be considered associated or that parties in a coalition could be seen as acting collaboratively. Indeed, Madam Speaker, that is why this has the Election Commissioner with the ability to make that decision and make that ruling.

**10:10**

It was referenced that members have indeed run for a position in this House under the banner of multiple parties. That was my opponent in the last election who ran with nominations for the Alberta Liberal Party and also the Alberta Party, had both symbols on her signs. I respected that decision on the part of that individual and her choice to represent both those banners. Certainly, if this legislation had been in place and we had had an Election Commissioner at the time, then I could have approached him and said: "Hmm; I have a concern. Is this appropriate?" and he would have investigated. Indeed, the legislation also provides that that individual herself could have had the opportunity before making that decision, before holding that press conference, before producing those signs to sit down with the Election Commissioner, much as many of us often do on occasion with the Ethics Commissioner, to discuss and say: "Hey, I have this opportunity. Is this appropriate?" I think that's reasonable and clear, Madam Speaker.

Certainly, if there was the opportunity, if there were parties within the province that wanted to act collaboratively in terms of where they put their candidates or that sort of issue, they have that opportunity to sit down with the Election Commissioner, who has some clear criteria, and discuss and determine whether or not he would consider those parties to be associated, and he would be able to instruct them to act accordingly. Should they choose not to act according to that recommendation, he would have the option then to press appropriate penalties.

There have been some concerns raised about, I guess, some elements of the particular things that are put forward here in terms of the criteria to determine whether a party is associated. Now, just to be clear, Madam Speaker, it states here that the criteria that would be considered would include whether the parties have common leadership, political programs, or policy statements. Note there: common leadership. So do they have the same folks on the boards of both parties? Do they have the same people making the decisions, the same people serving on both constituency associations, that sort of thing? It's not just a question of whether or not they both happen to support a carbon levy or whether they both happen to support a flat tax. There are more criteria than that involved. It's not that simple a question.

Whether or not one party controls another: that's a fairly strong statement, Madam Speaker, and that would be something that the Election Commissioner can very clearly investigate and determine.

Whether parties have the same advertising material and branding: for example, again, the individual whom I ran against in the 2015

election indeed had election signs which contained branding of two parties, so the Election Commissioner would consider that criterion alongside all of the other criteria.

Members this morning have been talking as if one single criterion would be enough to consider parties to be associated. There are multiple criteria here, Madam Speaker. Again, we have an Election Commissioner who has a deep understanding of electoral law, has written instructional guides for multiple jurisdictions across this country, and indeed has provided education in multiple jurisdictions to individuals ranging from elected officials all the way down to volunteers on the ground. He is making himself available under this legislation to be able to sit down with any individuals who have concerns about whether or not they may be considered to be associated parties, to have that discussion with them and to help provide them with clarity before any action is taken.

Then, of course, you could also take a look at the final criterion that we have here, the nature of agreements and interactions between those parties.

That is a robust set of criteria, Madam Speaker. For myself, reviewing that, I have every confidence that an individual with the kind of training and knowledge and background that the Election Commissioner has would be able to come forward with a fair and prudent ruling, provide that advice, sit down and work with the individuals involved, help them to determine whether or not they may be in contravention of either the spirit or the letter of this law.

As I said, Madam Speaker, I think all Albertans want to ensure, when we have our next election, that things are conducted fairly, that things are conducted evenly, that there is indeed transparency on the part of all Albertans, and that indeed promises that are made are upheld, indeed that all of our commitments to transparency and how we work together and how we spend the money which is donated to us by Albertans to express their political views is used appropriately and indeed that we continue to maintain the kind of opportunity and accessibility to the democratic system that we now see following that 2015 election, where for the first time in a very long time in this province money did not decide the vote of the people of Alberta.

Now, in my view, that's resulted in some very good change. I understand that members opposite may not agree. We have disagreements on many areas of policy, but I think we can all agree that at the very least there is far more opportunity for democratic participation by all the people of Alberta than there has been in this province for many years. That is because of prudent changes that have been brought forward over the course of the last couple of years by the minister responsible for democratic renewal lowering those spending limits, lowering the campaign contribution limits, bringing these much more in line with other jurisdictions, much more within the reach of the average, everyday Albertan.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under Standing Order 29(2)(a) the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm very pleased to be able to rise now and ask the Member for Edmonton-Centre about a couple of curiosities that have arisen while listening to the debate on Bill 16. One of them arises from the comments and claims from the UCP opposition members who've been speaking, including the last member who spoke, asking whether this legislation was needed or not, in the light of their founding document, that promised not to do what this legislation would prohibit them from doing, that being that an associated party would be subjected to the spending limits of a single party.

It occurs to me, Madam Speaker, that placing that restriction or making that promise within their founding document is a clear

admission by the Official Opposition party that all Albertans might have a concern that this would be a problem if indeed associated parties were to combine assets and to circumvent the spending limits. I wanted the Member for Edmonton-Centre to perhaps comment on that curiosity of mine and tell Albertans whether he feels that it is really an admission of concern by the opposition party within their founding agreement that this really is a problem that needs to be addressed and should be formally addressed in legislation such as we're doing now in Bill 16.

Secondly, another curiosity that I had revolves around this principle of unanimous consent. As we all know, majority rules for most decisions of this House. Once the House or a committee of this Legislature has made a decision by majority, we expect as parliamentarians that we will respect that decision and not necessarily in the case of an appointment to a position shoot the messenger because we don't happen to like the appointment that we may have voted against in a committee or in a Legislature and therefore smear the reputation of an individual who may be taking on a position that he's been appointed to even before the appointment is made official.

I'm wondering if the Member for Edmonton-Centre could comment on those two curiosities of mine, the principle that indeed the UCP Official Opposition does in fact admit freely through their founding document that they are addressing a problem that needs to be highlighted and regulated by legislation and, secondly, whether or not this unanimous consent requirement that's implied by the opposition is really something that should be opposed and we should be highlighting the respect for our parliamentary institutions and allowing the majority decisions in committee and in this House to be respected when it comes in particular to appointments of legislative officers.

Thank you.

10:20

**The Deputy Speaker:** Edmonton-Centre.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker and to the Member for Edmonton-McClung for that question. Certainly, again, I appreciate and I have heard the concerns of the members opposite that this is legislation that is particularly aimed at a particular party or that it might be targeted to a particular group. But, again, I would simply note that it is important that we protect on all fronts our democracy here in the province of Alberta to ensure that no groups have the opportunity to circumvent the letter or the spirit of the law as it's brought forward to protect the people of Alberta and ensure we have fair and balanced elections.

I would note, again, along those lines, Madam Speaker, that members opposite have expressed concerns about the structure of the federal NDP and the provincial NDP. Certainly, I respect that there is a different model by which our party operates than theirs. I would note that generally at the recent UCP founding convention they certainly had a large number of members from the federal Conservative Party both speaking and participating and very actively part of that, but I wouldn't look at that in any sense and consider them to be associated.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? Drayton Valley-Devon.

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 16, Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018. Wow, what a title. I rise today quite happy to speak in favour of this Bill 16 with some reservations. I see Bill 16 as in a long line of legislation that has attempted to make our

system of democracy better, more transparent, more open, more accessible to the citizens of this nation and this province.

Madam Speaker, electoral reform is not new. Perhaps one of the strengths of the British parliamentary system of government is that it has allowed itself over its many centuries and its long and storied history to be amended and to be changed and to be improved upon.

Madam Speaker, there was a time when in our nation a property requirement was necessary in order to vote. That was not unusual. There were many democracies at the time that had the belief that in order to be able to participate, you needed to have attained a certain stature, a certain amount of financial and fiscal responsibility. I remember a story of one individual who had voted in an election. Because he had a certain amount of property, the primary piece of his property being a donkey, he was allowed to be able to vote. In the next election he had fallen on harder times. He had had to sell the donkey. He no longer had the donkey, and he was no longer allowed to vote. The question that he brought forward was: who voted in the first election, myself or the donkey? [interjection] Yeah. I didn't want to use that word.

You know, electoral reform has a long history in our province and in our country. At one point in time you had to be the right sex. I can remember growing up and having a great-aunt that lived to be 103 years old who could remember what it was like not to have been able to vote because of her sex. I think we've understood and we would all support in this House the evolution of our democracy to include people of both genders.

First Nations at one time in our nation did not have the right to vote, and I think our endeavour to have moved forward on that has been a positive thing.

At one time, Madam Speaker, we did not have a secret ballot. The abuse of that was obvious to everyone, so we moved forward on that.

I think that, to the credit of this House and of this Legislature, we have come together many times here to talk about how we can make our system of government better. This bill, Bill 16, addresses perhaps another issue that we need to pursue. It will have my support but not without some concerns and some reservations. I think we can say, as the hon. members have said today, that all of us support balanced legislation that will protect the voters and that will pursue accountability and transparency so that the results of any election, present or in the future, will reflect the will of the people.

Madam Speaker, we know that this Legislature has addressed in this session Bill 32, An Act to Strengthen and Protect Democracy in Alberta. In that act we passed rules on procedures that govern elections and by-elections. We established the new and independent office of the Election Commissioner. We addressed third-party advertising. We've addressed political action committees by setting new spending limits and time frames. We've set some guidelines regarding expenses. I believe that we have made some positive steps towards making our democracy more efficient and more fair so that it is addressing, truly, the will of the people when we go into an election.

I believe that I need to look at Bill 16 here in that spirit of co-operation. I believe that it does address some reasonable concerns. The United Conservative Party has always supported transparency. We've always supported accountability in election law. We're a little frustrated sometimes when legislation has to come back before this House four and five times in order to try to get it right. We should be able to get it right, better the first time. Perhaps we need to do a little more consulting or a little more thinking before you bring legislation before the House, but that's fine.

We're now stuck in a situation where we have Bill 16. Maybe it should be no surprise to the United Conservative Party that the

government doesn't trust us and doesn't take us at our word. But when we placed into our agreement in principle that we would respect and adhere to the single-party registration and live under the \$2 million spending limit, we placed that in there in all sincerity and good faith. But what it really highlights, Madam Speaker, is what this bill should really have been about. Bill 16 should really have been willing to address the heart of the matter, and that is that we have a problem when parties decide to merge in this province. There's no vehicle by which that can be done. So we are now looking at Bill 16, which addresses some of the results of what we've had to go through but hasn't really addressed the issue or the problem.

We pursued the path that we did in order to bring conservatives together. It was out of not desire but necessity that we pursued the path that we had to in order to unite. So we can stand here before you today, and we can say that we will support this bill. We don't believe that it's necessarily the best way to govern, to have boutique legislation, as one of the other members has described it, that sort of targets the opposition. That is concerning. We would just, I guess, at the end of the day, argue that if the government were willing to pursue the real problem, we wouldn't need this kind of boutique legislation.

We brought up some concerns about some of the qualifiers, Madam Speaker, about which you will deem that parties are associating: common leaders, common policies and programs, common materials. On the surface these things sound fine. It's when you try to apply them. It's the application.

**10:30**

What about the fact that it's often in our very flexible form of democracy for parties to be able to not compete against each other, to choose not to? Does that cross the line, Madam Speaker? By choosing to put forward just a single candidate or maybe even no candidate so that a third party would have a better chance at winning, is that kind of co-operation now transgressing this piece of legislation?

Madam Speaker, we have many parties. It's one of the differences between, say, our traditional Westminster parliamentary form of democracy and, say, the American form of democracy. We can have four, five, six, seven parties that are running for office within our multiparty system of democracy. That means that sometimes the differences between parties may not be on policy but may be on the personalities of the leaders. Sometimes their policies and their practices can be very similar and may simply be a difference between the regions of the country or the regions of the province.

We're leaving ourselves open, Madam Speaker, for decision-making by the Election Commissioner when, really, I believe those decisions should be made by the people at the ballot box when they vote. I'm not sure that it should be up to a single individual or to the government to be making decisions about whether parties have too similar policy platforms. At the end of the day, this should be in the hands of the people.

Just simply because they support a carbon tax or they have a similar policy on high debt and deficit – and some of the members have brought up that as much as we have chosen not to organize our political parties where the federal and the provincial parties are one party, the New Democrats have. That's fine. There are some problems that come with that, Madam Speaker, in the minds of Canadians, when they try to differentiate what is a policy from the federal side that's impinging on the provincial side, but we believe that that internal kind of organization should be left in the hands of the political parties involved.

But this piece of legislation draws that into question. Are you one party, and will this piece of legislation now think of you as being an associated party, of crossing the lines of provincial legislation, of political parties? Madam Speaker, will an Election Commissioner conclude that parties that are simply and merely co-operating are now associated parties?

You know, there have been times, Madam Speaker, in the history of our country when under great duress our political parties have eliminated the political lines and have actually come together in what we call union governments, where party lines are completely set aside in order to address the issues of the day; for instance, in World War I under the pressures of world war. Governments come under crises and come under times of great stress. Should the Legislature of Alberta ever decide that in order to co-operate, in order to address the problems of this province, we need to form something of a more formal union between the opposition and the government, are we now contravening our own pieces of legislation? These are some of the concerns that we throw out as needing some consideration, understanding that, at the end of the day, we will be supporting this piece of legislation.

Madam Speaker, last session Bill 32 created the Election Commissioner, and the Chief Electoral Officer spoke about the lack of consultation over Bill 32 and the unintended consequences that could be had as a result of that piece of legislation. I guess we would argue that to a certain degree Bill 16 is poised to do the same thing. The question that we would ask is: just how much consultation have you actually done with the Chief Electoral Officer? We know that there are times when we've accused the government of having a poor track record when it comes to consultation, and I think the question is worthy of being asked in this House today as to how much consultation has actually occurred with the Chief Electoral Officer over Bill 16. That's a part of our job as the Official Opposition, to ask these questions and to see what the response of the government is. I've yet to hear anyone on the other side of the House tell us just how much consultation they did on this bill. Who did they talk to?

We will support this bill because it puts into law what we are already willing to do in practice – we've stated that clearly, Madam Speaker – but that doesn't mean that we support the fact that this bill is targeted specifically to the Official Opposition.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? Grande Prairie-Smoky.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's just interesting listening to the comments on this Bill 16, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018. You talked a little bit about how this was, you know, making changes to Bill 32 and cleaning up some of the things that obviously had been missed when they brought that forward. I just wondered if you would like to continue a little bit more along those lines. I think you covered quite a bit of ground as far as the associated parties and how there seems to probably be a little bit of opportunity for whoever is making these decisions to kind of make their own judgment call on what's considered associated and what isn't. I know the Member for Edmonton-Centre seemed to think that it was spelled out so clearly, how could anybody go wrong? But I actually think that there's a lot of ambiguity there, that it will be up to the Election Commissioner to make some decisions there.

I'd just like to see if you want to comment a little bit more along those lines. Thanks.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Drayton Valley-Devon.

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think all of us in this Legislature would agree that, at the end of the day, the decisions of political parties, the platforms of political parties, the political alliances that are made in the Westminster parliamentary system of democracy, how it functions – it does have to be driven by the people. I think that's one of the real advantages of our system of democracy.

I mentioned previously, earlier, that we've seen a long history of evolution when it comes to our system of Westminster parliamentary democracy. A strength of that system has been its capacity to evolve and to change and to address the issues of the day, but always, always, always at the heart of that has been the fact that this is driven by the people and the desires of the people. We must make sure that we have legislation that protects this democracy but does not handcuff this democracy, that allows for the will of the people but doesn't constrain the will of the people. That's a delicate balance, and it's one that sometimes takes a few generations to figure out.

10:40

I think that both sides of this House have been willing to have discussions on spending and finance and how we want to see that reasonably constrained but not to the point where it constrains or stops the people from being able to express their will, whether that's through the support of a particular political party or whether that's through third-party advertising. You cannot constrain and pass legislation that disallows the capacity of the people to speak, to communicate, to coalesce around ideas and political parties, and to make decisions.

We understand that because there was a lack of legislation allowing for political parties to be able to merge, we had to use a process that essentially creates two legacy parties and a third political party, that we now call the United Conservative Party. It would have been so much easier if we'd had legislation that simply would allow the people through their membership in political parties to democratically make the decision to come together if that's what they choose. It was never the intention – and we've placed it clearly in our agreement in principle that we were not prepared to wiggle out of the \$2 million spending limit, that we would have abided by the principle, and that we would have, Madam Speaker, followed the intent and the spirit of the law. I'm not sure . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and speak to Bill 16, Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018, subtitled An Act to Strengthen and Protect Democracy in Alberta. Obviously, there need to be checks and balances on spending and donations.

I guess the disappointment from my side has been that when given an opportunity to reduce the impact of political action committees, the government still hasn't made any attempt to reduce spending of unions, corporations, other than individuals, which therefore will continue to have a major influence not only on third-party advertising but potentially on policies and programs of this government. As we put forward under Bill 214, we were wanting very much to stop that practice and stop the ability of political action committees to inordinately influence media and public opinion, and we were looking for more there.

I was hoping that in this amendment we might see a much stronger attempt to reduce PACs such as this government seems to be associated with – Progress Alberta, Project Alberta – again,

garnering increasing amounts of money from unknown sources inside or outside the province, including unions and, potentially, corporations. None of that is here, of course.

This simply focuses on the capacity of the new election officer to investigate whether two or more registered parties are associated and collaborating on advancing a political agenda, and of course this is important. One would not want to see parties that are extending the spending limits, garnering more power as a result of colluding, and therefore once again influencing unduly the electoral process, subverting democracy in that sense. This is important, but it pales in comparison to the soft-peddalling on the political action committees, the so-called dark money that continues to build as we head into this election year.

While we certainly will be supporting this bill, it adds another dimension, an important dimension, to preventing collusion and enabling the Election Commissioner to investigate and to prevent this kind of collusion. It doesn't go far enough, as far as we're concerned, in terms of the ongoing expansion of the dark money in this province, some of which this government is, of course, aiding and abetting by not addressing in a serious way the funding and financing of political action committees.

That's all I need to say, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)? Grande Prairie-Smoky.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was just listening to the previous member speak here, and he talked about concerns with unions and financing and campaigns and that sort of thing and the money that unions spend on politics in Alberta. He talked about the dark money and how this government is aiding and abetting this dark money by not covering issues like this. I just wanted to see if he could expand a little bit more on that issue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Calgary-Mountain View.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, thanks, Madam Speaker. I think we were very clear in our bill proposal, before it was superseded by this government's softer bill, that we wanted to ensure that there was no undue influence by nonindividuals. Under the original Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act, that was amended a couple of years ago, it was very clear that political parties could only receive donations from individuals. Somehow that wasn't good enough in terms of this government's amending of the financing of political action committees. It's disappointing because we know that there are at least a couple of political action committees that appear to be associated with this government.

Some of the examples that we have seen in the past, both in the United States and in Canada, where the tremendous influence, in the United States particularly, these big corporations have had on U.S. elections has been very, very disturbing – and it's ironic that although this government has been critical of that kind of influence, they have failed to actually put teeth into the PAC control legislation.

Although they are standing up for individual rights in many cases – in relation to farm workers, for example, and to women seeking help with their health care – they don't seem to be prepared to stand up for individual rights and responsibilities in the election financing area and, in fact, seem to be enabling the restrictions on free speech if you equate funding with access to media and greater influence on individual rights.

Presently there are no limits when it comes to donating money to third parties or political action committees. The sky is the limit. We propose that the \$4,000 limit annually be applied also to political action committees. That was not accepted by this government. In

fact, the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act doesn't even define what a political action committee is. We found that to be problematic as well. It's now going to be up to the Chief Electoral Officer to define that and what constitutes the unacceptable activities of a political action committee in advertising.

In summary, we're confident that our bill would have stood up to any Charter challenge, and we would have been willing to fight this in court if necessary. Unlike the NDP, we purposely did not prohibit the kinds of activities that PACs can engage in. Instead, we chose to make them subject to contribution limits and greater disclosure requirements and prohibit them from receiving union, corporate, and out-of-province donations. The NDP's Bill 32 simply doesn't go far enough, and this legislation had an opportunity to amend some of that but fails to do that.

It's obviously welcome that the fines for contravening this act have jumped from \$10,000 to \$100,000. That certainly should discourage collusion, but it says nothing about, again, what political action committees are doing behind the scenes, quite apart from the writ period, where they're limited to \$100,000 of spending. So we think there should be some more serious attention to the whole dark money issue.

Once again I would call on the government, if they're serious about undermining dark money in the electoral process and if they're serious about confronting their own complicity with dark money in relation to Progress Alberta and Project Alberta, to make it clear to Albertans that you stand on the side of openness and accountability.

10:50

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak to Bill 16? The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Now, I've been listening to the debate this morning on Bill 16, Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018, and one of the most interesting things, I think, that happened this morning was listening to the Member for Edmonton-Centre get up and talk about Motion 16. He talked so much about it that I wondered if he was confused whether we were on Motion 16 or Bill 16. Regardless, Motion 16 is the appointment of Lorne Gibson as Election Commissioner. Probably one of the most interesting things that I noticed is that all this discussion on Motion 16 – the government, when we were debating Motion 16, time-allocated us. They shut down debate. They cut down the opportunity for us to speak on Motion 16, yet the government comes in here today, and, of course, what do they want to talk about? They want to talk about Motion 16. Well, we wanted to talk about it, too, but of course that opportunity wasn't given to us to the fullest extent that we would have liked.

You know, we were talking about this Motion 16, and he talked about the idea of not renewing this person's contract when he was previously employed by this government. It wasn't supported unanimously. Of course, we know what happened there. The contract wasn't renewed, and then this individual sued the government. Now, of course, any time that anybody sues a person – in fact, if I was sued by somebody that was previously working for me, I think I would think seriously about whether I would want to rehire that person. Obviously, that's not a very good indication of goodwill shared back and forth. But this government, of course, thought that was just fine.

Now, when we talk about singling out – I think the Member for Edmonton-Centre talked about that. We're talking about how this bill has kind of singled out the United Conservative Party. But when



we talked about Motion 16, when we wanted to have Lorne Gibson's wages on the sunshine list immediately, the government said that, well, this singling out of him was horrible. There's just, you know, a little bit of hypocrisy going on here, where they say that singling out the Election Commissioner is horrible but singling out in this situation is just great. This is just the way it has to be.

Now, I also wanted to talk about this one part here: constituency associations for registered political parties must file their annual return statements on March 31 of each year regardless of when a party becomes registered. Currently if a party registers in the four months leading up to March 31, a constituency association would not be required to file their financial statements until the deadline for the following year, which could mean that there are CAs that could have unfiled financials for up to 19 months.

You know, that somewhat makes sense, that they shouldn't have that amount of time to file their financial statements. But, of course, when we were talking about Motion 16 and we wanted the person that was to take the dark money out of politics on the sunshine list, which the government, of course, opposed, which is in itself fairly bizarre, I would say, one of the problems was that this person won't hit the sunshine list as it is presently for probably 16 months. So here we have the government bringing forward legislation that suggests that 19 months is too long for a constituency association to record their finances, but for somebody to hit the sunshine list after 16 months: I guess that's fine. There just seem to be disparities everywhere we go here.

Now, there were accusations, I guess, in previous elections and everything about things that were done wrong and different financing things, and the Member for Edmonton-Centre said that the election law was enforced, fines were levied, people were punished, and we went on. But, of course, that's supposed to be the job of the Election Commissioner, and there hasn't been an Election Commissioner yet. So it did point out the fact – it's good to see the Member for Edmonton-Centre at least admitting that even before this Motion 16 was passed, we still had laws being enforced and fines being levied. This isn't anything new, as they kind of allude to, that this is something new. Like I say, I just see some really strange things going on here this morning.

Now, the Member for Edmonton-Centre also talked about the coalitions and how in one of the previous elections somebody had run under two parties. Actually, it was three parties. It was actually the Liberal Party, the Alberta Party, and the Green Party. We look at these kinds of coalitions and how three parties could have one candidate run under them. I guess that does maybe spell it out a little more clearly as far as where the Alberta Party, the Liberal Party, and the Green Party sit on the political spectrum as far as the things that they believe. Obviously, they were very, very like-minded, or they wouldn't run the same candidate for the three parties.

I guess I wonder. You know, they talk about these associated parties and how that's all going to work. Of course, the Member for Edmonton-Centre talked about the person that he ran against that was representing two, as he said, three, as it was, parties. I could see that maybe he's a little concerned about the possibilities of re-election if it happens again, I would guess. Now, when I look back at previous elections, probably at least five or six elections in the past, the New Democrats got between 12 and 19 per cent of the vote, and then in 2015, of course, they got over 50 per cent. This member may have a very good chance of being re-elected in Edmonton-Centre, but obviously history has shown that the NDP hasn't had a real stronghold in Edmonton-Centre. So, obviously, when the government is working on these different issues, you always wonder why. Why are they concerned about some of these things? I guess it becomes more apparent as you look at past history and look at how things might be affected going forward for them.

Now, it talks about the criteria of association. Of course, I look at this, and I see some pretty vague things as far as what's considered associated and what isn't. I think the Member for Edmonton-Centre did mention, you know, that maybe – I don't know if he was really meaning this or not – one indiscretion was okay, but maybe two is bad. Or is three real bad? At what point do we get to the situation where any kind of association becomes an issue to cause problems?

Now, if we look at the past B.C. election, of course, what we've seen there is that after the election there was a coalition. So what I wonder is: in a situation like that, where two parties get together after the election, where does that fit into this legislation? That's a pretty deep association. Now, did that happen before the election, or did it happen after the election? Was it all predetermined? Had they colluded before, or did they make all the decisions afterwards? What's the penalty for this kind of association if it's deemed to be improper? Let's say that this legislation was in British Columbia, and we have a situation where two parties come together and form government, and then it was found out that they had colluded beforehand. Would this legislation mean that they would not be government anymore? Would they hold another election? Would it just be a fine, and you carry on? I think that there are probably a lot of questions that could probably be answered here or at least investigated.

11:00

Madam Speaker, when I look at Bill 16, I mean, this makes amendments to Bill 32, that was just passed last fall, so obviously there were some shortcomings in Bill 32, and now we're here to correct those shortcomings.

I also look at this situation here, where there is an exemption for parties that establish noncompete clauses in ridings – so if the Alberta Party and the Liberal Party agreed to run or not run competing candidates in Edmonton-Centre – but that's going to be pulled out now, is my understanding. So already we're amending the amendment act. I would probably suggest that if this government, I guess, keeps going down this road, we'll be amending the amended amendment act in the next session.

Again, I want to get back to this, that under this legislation the newly appointed Election Commissioner would be able to initiate an investigation on his own at the request of the Chief Electoral Officer or at the request of an elector or a registered party in order to determine if two or more registered parties are associated. Now, if two parties are found to be associated, they must share the \$2 million spending limit for a single party. Of course. That makes sense. A variety of factors will be used to determine if parties are associated, but parties do not need to meet a set number of these qualifiers in order to be deemed associated. So they don't need to meet a set number of these qualifiers. Again, there's all sorts of vagueness here.

If registered parties have the same leader, executive director, or person in a position similar to an executive director or CFO, they could be deemed associated. If they share common political programs, policy statements, or advertising and branding material or if one party controls another, they could be deemed associated. It's getting right down to similar policy statements, which, of course, on the left, you know, there could be a lot of similar policy statements. They all seem to like the carbon tax. They all seem to like spending money. They all seem to like taxes, the more the better. I would say that there might be a lot of similarities there.

The Election Commissioner will also take into consideration the activities of the registered parties and their registered constituency associations and candidates, including the extent to which the registered parties have been involved in electoral

campaigns or made public statements in support of any other registered party . . . or of a candidate of any other registered parties.

So I guess this Election Commissioner is going to have to be reviewing all the public debates and all the printed material and all the different interactions that go on during an election to see if there's any kind of association between parties.

Madam Speaker, it's good – I mean, we want to have fair elections. We want to take out any kind of improprieties with elections. I think that in a democracy we owe it to ourselves and we owe it to the people to have fair elections, where there is accountability and transparency in and out of election periods. It's not just during election periods. We need to have that at all times: democracy, accountability, and transparency, three very important things in the political process.

Now, what does seem odd are some of the things that this government is concerned about and some of the things that it's not concerned about. One thing is that we still haven't in this Legislature passed Bill 12, and that's something that's very important. Now, we're not supposed to have an election for a year, and as much as it is important to have, you know, fair and accountable and transparent elections – that's very important – even more important is the 14-day deadline on the pipeline. We have Bill 12, which is supposed to exert pressure to get the pipeline approved, and we're still sitting here talking about other things over and over again before dealing with probably the most important legislation of this session. I don't know if anybody could disagree that the pipeline is the most important issue facing Alberta today, and it's got a deadline. It's got a timeline. But, again, we're sitting here day after day talking about many different things when we should have been focused on making sure that Bill 12 passed.

We're a little concerned about some other issues, too, of course, with this bill. We're concerned about the difficulty that might be posed in the campaign return filing with separating out regular contributions and contributions specific to a by-election in instances where a donation was not specific by the donor but was received during a by-election period. I think we've all had that opportunity where we've taken in cheques during a time period where we're not sure and the person didn't say exactly where that cheque was going to go, so then we have to make a determination . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

**Mr. Hanson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm sure that you were not quite close to finished there, but I'd just like to bring up that the Member for Calgary-Mountain View was talking about dark money in politics. He made some brief references to unions and that but kind of concentrated on PACs. I know that we've talked about this on numerous occasions in the House, when the government has been trying to stack the deck with their elections bills that they've put through, numerous bills over the last couple of years. One of the things that I'd like you to comment about – and I was hoping to get the Member for Calgary-Mountain View's opinion on it – is that when we talk about PACs, we're talking about individuals that support a particular political movement, and they give their money freely to support that movement. When we talk about unions and the Alberta Federation of Labour, if I'm a member of a union that's associated with the Alberta Federation of Labour and I happen to be a Conservative, \$1.25 every month of my union dues goes to support the Alberta Federation of Labour, that supports anything but conservative views.

I'm just wondering if you might want to comment on that, that basically it's a forced donation to support a party that I don't support. You know, if we want to talk about dark money, I think that maybe these unions should be getting permission from their membership before they distribute that money. So if you want to talk about democracy and fairness, I think maybe we should do that, right? I just thought maybe you'd like to finish your comments and if you wanted to delve into that dark money hypocrisy that we've talked about here and expand.

Thank you.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you very much. Yeah. It's actually an interesting topic you've brought up, of course, with unions and how they spend their money and that sort of thing. Now, just to give you a bit of an example, my son is a schoolteacher. He teaches in Hillside high school in Valleyview, and he does a great job there, of course. He coaches the football team and that sort of thing and, of course, teaches in the classroom, too. I think it's probably alarming to him to think that part of the money that gets taken off his cheque each month actually goes to campaign against his dad, whom he supports. He supports my political endeavours. I have to think that that's very frustrating for him to see that. We see that these people that are working under these conditions with unions don't have a say in how that money gets spent. I think there are some, you know, issues there of what's considered dark money, what's considered fair, what's considered right when this sort of thing is happening.

Now, of course, the members on the other side are chatting away over there. They're not too happy about that. I guess they feel that that's okay. I'm not sure. But I'm sure that if money was being taken from your cheque and directed to a political party that you don't agree with, I think you would probably feel that that's not quite fair and not quite right.

Madam Speaker, there are a lot of things we can do to make things better in Alberta as far as making things fair and more transparent and accountable with elections. On this side of the House we're in support of all of those. It only makes sense that we do the best we can to make things just as good as possible.

**11:10**

Of course, this government every time we turn around is lacking transparency and they're fighting transparency. We've seen, like I was saying earlier about Motion 16, where we wanted to see the Election Commissioner's wages hit the sunshine list immediately, and they think that waiting over a year is the best way to go. So the person that's supposed to get dark money out of politics: their wages will not hit the sunshine list for over a year after they're hired. There are things like that, of course, that are alarming about what this government is doing. I think transparency, fair elections are a top priority, for sure. We need to be doing that, but of course this government seems to fall short just about every time we turn around on this kind of thing. Consultation: no such thing. Transparency: they have a really hard time with that. In fact, they seem to fight it just about any chance they can.

Madam Speaker, I think that's about it for now. Thanks.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

**Mr. Yao:** Why, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is an honour and a pleasure to rise today to speak on Bill 16, Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018. Amendment act. Wait a minute. Didn't you just run a bill through just last term? Aw, jeez. You guys just keep throwing out legislation. Then you have got to keep on going back and fixing it.

Now, fortunately, you have us here to help guide you in these things, but it is also good that you guys admit that your bills are all flawed and that they need to be rejigged. But at the same time, it is disappointing when our preference would be to talk about things like Bill 12, which really will have timely implications with the issues that are going on in British Columbia and with Prime Minister Trudeau. God knows what he's doing right now. Hopefully, he's going to help with that pipeline.

But back to Bill 16 here. This legislation makes a variety of amendments to Bill 32. You know, with Bill 32 you did make sweeping legislative changes to the rules and procedures that govern elections and by-elections here in Alberta as well as establish a new independent office of the Legislature in the form of an Election Commissioner. The last bill, Bill 32, also addressed the issues of third-party advertisers and, to some extent, the political action committees by setting spending limits and time frames as well as guidelines regarding those expenses and what those entities can spend their funds on.

But with Bill 16 here it seems that in particular you've just targeted the agreement in principle which amalgamated our two former parties, the Wildrose and the PCs. It's necessary. If I understand correctly, it wasn't anyone's intent on this side, but if it's to clarify some certain things, then I can respect that.

I mean, certainly if we look at the definition of what "associated registered parties" are under the legislation, the newly appointed Election Commissioner would be able to initiate an investigation on their own or at the request of the Chief Electoral Officer or at the request of an elector or registered party in order to determine if two or more registered parties are associated. Yeah. If that doesn't target us, I don't know what does, really. If these two parties are found to be associated, they must share the \$2 million spending limit for a single party.

A variety of factors will be used to determine if parties are associated, but parties do not need to meet the set number of these qualifiers in order to be deemed associated. If registered parties have the same leader, executive director, or person in a position similar to an executive director or chief financial officer, they can be deemed associated. If they share common political programs, policy statements, or advertising branding material, if one party controls another, they could be deemed to be associated. I get all that.

The Election Commissioner will also take into consideration the activities of the registered parties and their registered constituency associations and candidates, including the extent to which the registered parties have been involved in electoral campaigns or made public statements in support of any other registered party . . . or of a candidate of any of the other registered parties . . .

when deciding if parties are associated. That's terrific. You are trying to define what happened with our two legacy parties as we turned them into one, and you want to make sure that there are no shenanigans with any spending that's associated with these former, legacy parties.

I can respect that, but, again, you know, as the good doctor from Calgary- . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Mountain View.

**Mr. Yao:** . . . Mountain View. Thank you. Yes, not the good doctor from Edmonton-Whitemud but Calgary-Mountain View there. He did point out just some of his concerns around dark money, or so-called dark money, and he's right. A lot of that has not been clarified. Certainly, organized labour has that ability to collect money and to spend it in such ways that would support one political

group or another, as we've seen in every election. It'd be interesting to see, especially in this next election that comes up, what all the advertising is all about, who is spending money on that advertising, who sponsored those ads.

It would be interesting to see what happens in the next election and where a lot of the advertising does come from because that \$2 million for a party to advertise itself is not a lot. Good thing we don't have – you know, they could never afford a commercial during the Stanley Cup playoffs, never mind the Super Bowl or anything like that. Certainly, they might go and get some radio ads. I know from my neck of the woods that people aren't as interested in politics, so they don't care to hear a lot of the advertising. A lot of those folks probably won't mind if there's less advertising and that sort of thing. Again, I'm curious to see what happens in practice after these bills are all passed and how our next election will look.

Democracy, accountability, and transparency: that's what this government preaches when they talk about drafting these bills, but again that transparency, that accountability disappear when the loopholes are left in for things like organized labour to advertise accordingly for one side or the other. That is disappointing. Some might even call it hypocritical. There are all sorts of concerns around there. You know, we've been trying to teach you guys about transparency and accountability in our democracy. Certainly, that is a reflection of all of our speeches as we try to educate you folks. I hope that at one point you guys will have that epiphany, and the light bulb will go off. I don't see those light bulbs, just very dim-bulbs right now.

**Mr. Ceci:** Hey.

**Mr. Yao:** My apologies to you, sir. I would never say that.

The agreement in principle: that is what makes up the United Conservative Party when they amalgamated the Wildrose and the Progressive Conservatives, and it was created to honour the spirit of the law. The United Conservative Party never had any intention of taking advantage of a multiparty structure spending limit, but the NDP: you know, you don't feel that we're onboard, and that's a shame. You chose to legislate this issue, but again you missed out on some other ones. That is disappointing.

The increase in penalties for political entities: you're bringing in those new penalties in line with penalties set for third-party advertisers, which were laid out in Bill 32, so I can certainly respect that.

**11:20**

Again, it would still be nice to hear more from our stakeholders regarding the provisions that require parties to include contributions relating to general elections and by-elections in a quarterly filing to the Chief Electoral Officer in addition to a campaign return within six months of a general or by-election. I'm curious to see how much more work my CA personally will have to do. You know, everyone who volunteers on my association works long and arduous jobs, 12 hours a day. With commuting and that, it's a 14-hour day, and they'll do one-week stretches. Some run four on, four off. Others run one week in, one week out. Some work two weeks in, a week out. So I hope that my team can handle the extra management of paperwork. It'll be interesting to see.

Most importantly, there will be a by-election up in the Fort McMurray-Conklin area, and I do look forward to that. I see that our government side picked out a candidate who has a name, a reputation already, so this is their most high-profile candidate. I'll be curious to see what kind of advertising will get put in there for this person. Yeah. It'll certainly be an interesting perspective on

things, to see how many resources are allocated towards that by-election.

But just so you guys know, every single rule and law that you have put in has hurt my town of Fort McMurray, has hurt the people up there dramatically . . .

**Mr. S. Anderson:** Not true.

**Mr. Yao:** . . . from personal taxes to – oh, the Minister of Municipal Affairs says that he hasn't hurt Fort McMurray. I would question you on our municipal taxes that we're about to get the shock and awe from, and I challenge you to talk about that at the door with the constituents that you are trying to get to support you.

Through the Speaker, Madam Speaker, I would ask that the government side, certainly when they are campaigning up in Fort McMurray, knock at all hours of the day and that you ask those questions about municipal taxes and ask about what the people of Fort McMurray feel about all the internationals being chased away from our region. There's a lot of disappointment there. It's interesting. Yeah. So we'll see how it goes here.

Now, election finances and contributions disclosure statutes: again we're going back and fixing legislation that you guys already put in. You've done that a few times now. You keep on retracting things and going forward.

Even yesterday, when I was asking the Health minister about the doubling in cost of a structure, the answer she gave wasn't very valid. She just simply said that the timelines were doubled and that they were budgeting for places, for many years for a project that is getting built. I still have questions around how she answered that. But, again, you know, how you guys build infrastructure is a prime example of how you guys work on your bills. You just ramrod these things through but then realize all the errors and mistakes that you made before or how you underestimate things, and then you have to go back and re-evaluate. All these decisions that you're making: these things are costing Albertans a ton of money, a lot of money. To build that lab, that's going to cost a substantial amount of money, \$600 million. That is disappointing.

Now, the noncompete clauses that you said that you pulled out: that is good to see, that you pulled them out, because again that demonstrates a level of collusion. We're happy that you agreed with us in identifying that allowing two parties to do noncompete clauses with each other is suspicious and shady, for lack of better terminology. That is the stuff that we want to see out, and it is important that we do so.

Now, I do have some questions around what the Election Commissioner could constitute as similar political programming or policy statements because I see a lot of overlap respectively within all the political parties. Quite honestly, at the core of it all, we're all Albertans. We're all Canadians. There are some values that are very similar. We don't have any anti-Semitic comments in our stuff like the government side does, certainly, but . . .

**Mr. Schmidt:** Whoa. Point of order, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have a point of order.

#### Point of Order False Allegations

**Mr. Schmidt:** Under 23(h), (i), and (j). The member opposite just accused us of having anti-Semitic statements in some of our policies and platforms. You know, honestly, the things that come from that man's mouth are enough to drive a person to drink, but that takes the cake, Madam Speaker. I demand that the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo withdraw those comments immediately

and apologize to everyone in this House for accusing us of anti-Semitism.

**Mr. Yao:** Madam Speaker, I was simply referring to the Leap Manifesto, but I recognize that they state that they've dissociated themselves from such a document, so perhaps my comments were inappropriate, and I withdraw them.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Did you wish to expand on that?

**Mr. Yao:** I wish to apologize for those comments associating them with the Leap Manifesto and those comments that were in there. My apologies.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Can I speak again?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Go ahead, hon. minister.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Madam Speaker, you know, to link the Leap Manifesto to anti-Semitism is such a giant leap. We've seen some pretty huge conclusions jumped to in this House, but this takes the cake. There's no way that we can link the Leap Manifesto to anti-Semitism, so I humbly ask that the member withdraw his statements about anti-Semitism and apologize for implying that we are an anti-Semitic people.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Calgary-Hays.

**Mr. McIver:** With all due respect to the hon. member, the member has apologized and withdrew the remarks. It's over. I know that the hon. member would love to stand up and verbally beat somebody with a stick, but the fact is that the hon. member has apologized. The hon. member withdrew the remarks. Madam Speaker, with all due respect, that's normally the end of the issue here although I can see that the hon. members would love to drag this out. I know he had to apologize and take back some remarks this week, which he did, and I will say that this side left the issue alone at that point, which is the right thing for him to do at this point.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I do agree that, yes, it's usually an apology to the satisfaction of the House. I was sensing some concern, however, from the majority in the House that perhaps that apology wasn't clear enough. However, I think we've accepted now that the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo has withdrawn the comments and has apologized to the House, and we will move on.

You've got a few minutes to continue.

#### Debate Continued

**Mr. Yao:** I've lost my spot now. Let's start all over here, shall we? Amendments to Bill 32, An Act to Strengthen and Protect Democracy in Alberta, again, this bill that you introduced last fall which made sweeping legislative changes to the rules and procedures that govern elections and by-elections here in Alberta. As well, Bill 32 established that new, independent office of the Legislature.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), the hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. While I was listening to the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo up until the very last couple of minutes, you know, and preparing the comments that I was going to make in response to his speech, I was going to congratulate him for raising the level of discourse to which we're normally accustomed because at least he didn't accuse socialists of

eating dogs. Unfortunately, he drove himself into the ditch just a couple of minutes before he ended his speech. Unsatisfactory apologies notwithstanding, I would like to offer some comments on what we've heard from that member with respect to this bill.

**11:30**

First of all, I guess the overarching theme that we've heard from every member opposite is that this seems unnecessary because the United Conservative Party, in signing their memorandum of understanding, put their hand on their heart, you know, and promised to be good citizens and respect the \$2 million spending limit. Of course, we know the value of the promises that the Leader of the Opposition makes to anybody, including his own members.

**Mr. McIver:** Point of order, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Go ahead.

#### **Point of Order Language Creating Disorder**

**Mr. McIver:** Right away the hon. member, shortly after talking about the importance of discourse under 23(h), (i), and (j), leaps into avowing false motives to another member of the House and saying things that are designed to create disorder in the House. You know, the hon. member is right when he says that discourse should improve around here. He himself had to apologize and take remarks back just this week, and a member of our side did. It's not acceptable for all sides, and this member, having been already chastised and required to take back remarks earlier this week, should know. I would ask you respectfully, Madam Speaker, to ask the hon. member to live up to the standard that he is promoting.

**Mr. Feehan:** Madam Speaker, I find the point of order here absolutely ridiculous. He's indicated that this speaker applied false motives, but we know that that's not true. We know that the Leader of the Opposition promised to disclose his contributions and failed to do so. We know that the Leader of the Opposition said that there was a grassroots guarantee, and then, when it was inconvenient, he immediately withdrew that grassroots guarantee. This is not false motives. This is a statement of fact.

I think that we need to, you know, stop using points of order here to display outrage about things that we know to be true just to protect members who are making ridiculous statements in the House and are being forced to withdraw them. Instead of addressing the issue of whether or not something wrong indeed was said here, he brings up issues from another time, and he continues to stand, against the orders of the House, while I'm speaking. What we're seeing here is a complete disregard of the rules of this House, a use of this section of our code of conduct in order to waste time and in order to display contempt not only for yourself, Madam Speaker, but for this whole House.

I would like them to stop doing this now, and I would like them to get back to debate and get back to the agreed-upon conversation that we're having. If they want us to have a debate about the behaviour of their leader, then I'm happy to have that debate. I'm happy to put the facts forward. But that is not what they're doing. They're just rallying against things in order to waste our time, and I do not respect them in doing that, and I wish them to stop. They have 20 seconds left, and I'd like them to finish their 20 seconds.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, we still have a lot of work that we need to get done this morning, so in the interests of trying to move on, I will say that I had some very deep concerns about the accusation that was levelled. I was concerned that perhaps the

apology wasn't clear enough for the House, which is why I allowed a little bit of discussion on that to try and clarify that. I think it's incumbent on all of us to be aware of the language coming out of our mouths, that we are never accusing another member or party of having any kind of anti-Semitic policies in the things that they're doing. We know that that is simply not true. I would caution members to never go in that direction, please.

Now, that being said, I would also caution all members to please be aware of the things that you're saying and how you are levying comments regarding individuals in the House. Let's move forward and try to be a little bit more respectful of one another.

Go ahead. Please continue.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and . . .

**Mr. McIver:** Is this still the point of order, Madam Speaker?

**The Deputy Speaker:** We're done with the point of order, and we're moving on.

**Mr. McIver:** Okay. Are we not done with 29(2)(a) as well?

**The Deputy Speaker:** We're still under 29(2)(a).

**Mr. Schmidt:** I still have time under 29(2)(a), correct?

**The Deputy Speaker:** You still have three minutes and 20 seconds.

#### **Debate Continued**

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the interventions from the Member for Calgary-Hays. I suspect that deep down he really enjoys this kind of back and forth as much as I do, so I'm glad that we have the opportunity to spar in this way. It certainly livens things up around here.

My original point, though, in response to comments that were made by the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo and comments that I heard from other members who got up to speak in regard to this legislation, was around the idea that we on the government side should just trust them. My earlier comments were designed to indicate that there isn't a really high level of trust, I guess it's fair to say, in what the members opposite intend to do.

That's why we brought forward this legislation, Madam Speaker, because we've observed a repeated pattern of behaviour of maybe not following through on their intended promises. That's why it was concerning to us and concerning to the people of Alberta that we hold them accountable, that we bring forward legislation that actually forces them to do what they said they were going to do. You know, if they were given the opportunity to do so voluntarily, we've seen before that they wouldn't necessarily do that, so I think that's why it's been important to bring forward this legislation and deal with this.

It's concerning to me, Madam Speaker, the number of times we've heard the members opposite get up and say that they would never do such a thing. You know, when somebody goes to such great lengths to say that they won't do something that they don't intend to do, I certainly ask myself the question, as do many members on this side and many people out there in the province of Alberta: why is it that they're working so hard to convince us that they would never do such a thing?

You know, I'm glad. I think that they have decided to vote in favour of this legislation although it's not always clear from their speeches whether or not they intend to support this. So we'll see, Madam Speaker, when they do vote, whether or not they actually support this. But it's important to provide this insurance to maintain

the integrity of the democratic system and to make sure that we have responsible finance laws that are respected by all parties and create a level playing field between all parties that are contesting elections in this province.

I'm glad that we're able to bring forward this legislation and deal with it. You know, the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo then proceeded to veer off track a little bit, accuse the minister of . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

**Mr. Feehan:** I'd just like to move that we adjourn debate on this bill at this time.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 11:39 a.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Anderson, S.                      Fitzpatrick                      Malkinson

Carson	Hinkley	Miller
Connolly	Horne	Miranda
Coolahan	Jansen	Piquette
Cortes-Vargas	Kazim	Renaud
Dach	Kleinsteuber	Rosendahl
Dang	Larivee	Schmidt
Drever	Littlewood	Shepherd
Eggen	Loyola	Turner
Feehan	Luff	

Against the motion:

Fraser	McIver	Smith
Hanson	Pitt	Yao
Loewen		

Totals:                      For – 29                      Against – 7

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

**Mr. Feehan:** Madam Speaker, given the time and the work completed this morning, I'd like to make a motion for adjournment until 1:30 this afternoon.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 11:56 a.m.]

## Table of Contents

Prayers .....	1105
Orders of the Day .....	1105
Government Bills and Orders	
Second Reading	
Bill 16    Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Statutes Amendment Act, 2018.....	1105
Division .....	1122

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

For inquiries contact:

Managing Editor

*Alberta Hansard*

3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 St

EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E7

Telephone: 780.427.1875