



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday morning, December 4, 2018

Day 58

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Fourth Session

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Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (UCP)
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (NDP)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
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Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (NDP)
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Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (NDP)
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Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Conklin (UCP)
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Gray, Hon. Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
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Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (NDP)
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Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (UCP)
Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (UCP)
Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (NDP)
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
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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)

Party standings:

New Democratic: 53 United Conservative: 26 Alberta Party: 3 Alberta Liberal: 1 Freedom Conservative: 1 Independent: 2 Progressive Conservative: 1

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Chair: Mr. Coolahan
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Schreiner

Cyr	Horne
Dang	McPherson
Drever	Turner
Ellis	

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. Sucha
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Coolahan	McPherson
Dach	Piquette
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Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Goehring
Deputy Chair: Mr. Smith

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Fraser	Renaud
Goodridge	Shepherd
Hinkley	Swann
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Miller	

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

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Standing Committee on Private Bills

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Anderson, W.	McKitrick
Babcock	Rosendahl
Drever	Stier
Drysdale	Strankman
Gill	Sucha
Hinkley	Taylor
Kleinstauber	

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Ms Fitzpatrick
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Carson	Loyola
Coolahan	Miller
Cooper	Nielsen
Goehring	Nixon
Gotfried	Pitt
Hanson	van Dijken
Kazim	

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Carson	Nielsen
Clark	Panda
Gotfried	Payne
Hunter	Renaud
Kazim	Turner
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Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

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Babcock	Loewen
Clark	Nielsen
Dang	Panda
Fildebrandt	Payne
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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

10 a.m.

Tuesday, December 4, 2018

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Deputy Speaker: Good morning.

Let us reflect. During this past week, throughout AIDS Awareness Week people around the world took time to remember lives lost and forever changed by AIDS. Let's take a moment today to reflect on ways we continue to support and help those persons who are living with HIV and AIDS along with their families and loved ones.

Please be seated.

Orders of the Day

Government Motions

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

Amendments to Standing Orders

22. Ms Ganley moved on behalf of Mr. Mason:
Be it resolved that the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta be amended as follows. Standing Order 61 is amended by adding the following after suborder (2):
- (2.1) Notwithstanding Standing Order 3(1) and 4(2), (2.1) and (3), if at the time at which the Committee of Supply must rise and report in accordance with Standing Order 4(3) there are fewer than 15 minutes remaining in the time allotted for consideration of the interim or supplementary estimates then under consideration by the Committee, the Committee of Supply, subject to suborder (2.2), shall continue its consideration beyond the normal adjournment time to fulfill the time allotted for consideration of the estimates.
- (2.2) If under suborder (2.1) the Committee of Supply does not fulfill the time allotted for its consideration of the interim or supplementary estimates within the 15 minute period immediately following the normal adjournment time, the Chair shall interrupt the proceedings and call on the Committee to rise and report without question put.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much. By way of explanation, Madam Speaker, I can indicate that this is a minor change aimed at closing a loophole whereby a three-hour allotment of debate in Committee of Supply could find itself unfinished, with the supply schedule or vote potentially delayed as a consequence of a minor interruption or minor delay at the beginning of Orders of the Day for that sitting day.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: This motion is debatable. Any members wishing to speak?

Hearing none, the hon. Deputy Government House Leader to close debate.

Ms Ganley: So closed.

[Government Motion 22 carried]

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

Committee Referral for Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act

30. Ms Ganley moved on behalf of Mr. Mason:

Be it resolved that:

1. The Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Families and Communities and the committee shall be deemed to be the special committee of the Assembly for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive review pursuant to section 14 of that act;
2. The committee may without leave of the Assembly sit during a period when the Assembly is adjourned or prorogued;
3. In accordance with section 14 of the Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act the committee must submit its report to the Assembly within six months after beginning its review, and that report is to include any amendments recommended by the committee.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the Government House Leader I move Government Motion 30.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Government Motion 30. I rise with some concerns that I have in regard to the special Standing Committee on Families and Communities. I appreciate that work is being forwarded to the committee from this Assembly to debate and explore. My concern is that this particular Committee on Families and Communities hasn't met since April 27, 2018. That's a significant amount of time since this committee has last met, and there have been a number of things that have come forth to this committee that could have been dealt with.

In particular, on August 24 I sent a letter to the chair of the Families and Communities Committee asking for a review of the Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act, or the PCHAD Act. This is in response to the feedback that I have from a constituent of mine. Her name is Lisa, and she approached me because she's had some personal experience regarding this act and been touched very closely by it and has highlighted a number of problems that she feels need to be addressed. She doesn't have the solutions, Madam Speaker, but given that this act hasn't been reviewed in 12 years – it took effect in 2006; it is now 2018 – and there are a significant number of changes that have happened in society in the last 12 years, I think that all members of this Assembly would agree that this should be or is an important review that needs to happen.

This particular Committee on Families and Communities hasn't been doing any work over the summer. There's been no legislation before it. There's been nothing. There's been no meeting, yet when I asked for a review on August 24, 2018, I received a response from the chair on September 4. In my opinion, that would be a timely response.

I'll just read the letter that I sent to the committee, and then I would like to read the response – this is important – and then I will have more to say. I am writing to the chair of the Standing Committee on Families and Communities.

I am writing to request that the Standing Committee on Families and Communities consider a review of the Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act.

Constituents have reached out to me with concerns that the legislation needs to be updated in order to better support families with children suffering from drug addiction. In particular, it may

be worthwhile to explore options to better encourage long-term rehabilitation.

The concerns I am hearing would not be limited to residents of Airdrie, as drug addiction affects many individuals and families throughout the province.

As you are the chair of this committee, I thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Madam Speaker, I know that you know that we are facing a crisis in this province not only with the increase in opioid addictions, but children's mental health issues are on the rise, and many are not able to access treatment. Times have changed, and legislation should change with it.

The response that I received from the chair I will also read.

Dear [Member for Airdrie]:

Thank you for your letter of August 24, 2018, recommending that the Standing Committee on Families and Communities (the "Committee") conduct a review of the Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act (the "Act"). I will provide a copy of your letter, and this response, to committee members for their consideration.

Side note: again I will remind you that the committee has not met since April.

Comprehensive statute reviews are mandated through legislation or a referral by the Assembly. The Act does not provide for a statute review in this case, however, much of what you would like to be accomplished could... be achieved by reviewing the subject matter through an inquiry, public meeting or review of a related regulation. If committee members are interested in pursuing work involving this... matter I would encourage them to speak to you directly to find out more information about the issues involved. You may also want to speak [with] the Ministry of Health, which has responsibility for the Act, if you have specific suggestions for legislative changes that [may] be brought forward through a Bill.

Thank you for... [your] time to share your concerns with the Committee. Should you have any questions please contact the Committee office.

Madam Speaker, the letter very clearly states – and so also does this Government Motion 30 – that the Assembly may direct the committee to review legislation. The government has done so, and they've chosen not to do the PCHAD review and direct it to the committee for review, but they've chosen the Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act, which is a very important piece of legislation. But I'm saddened to hear that in this day and age the Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act is not top of mind for the government, in particular to review in the Assembly.

10:10

I also wrote to the Health minister on behalf of my constituent, who wrote back to me in a very confusing manner. I could read the letter into the record, actually, and I will, and then I will highlight the concerns that I have and again why this review is important.

Thank you for your email [and] your experience with the Protection of Children Abusing Drugs... Act program.

The PchAD Act took effect in 2006, allowing parents and legal guardians to apply for protection orders from the Courts wherein their children under the age of 18 can be taken to a protective safe house for up to 10 days, even if they do not want to go. This 10-day period provides children with a structured and protective setting in which to begin detoxification, which can be extended for five additional days with a second court order. The time spent in the protective safe house also allows counsellors a chance to assess substance use and offer treatment recommendations to follow once they have been discharged from the program.

Please know that improving the substance use and mental health treatment system is a priority for our government. We

released Valuing Mental Health: Next Steps on June 27, 2017 in response to recommendations from the Valuing Mental Health: Report of the Alberta Mental Health Review Committee. The Ministry of Health worked with government and community stakeholders, including people with lived experience, to develop 18 actions that build upon and support the good work already happening on the front lines.

And this part is very important, Madam Speaker.

While I appreciate your invitation to meet to further discuss your experience with the program, my schedule does not permit me to do so.

I wonder what the minister is doing.

I encourage you to contact...

I actually won't say the name.

... [the] Director of Child, Youth & Family Initiatives, Community Seniors, and Addiction & Mental Health... to discuss your concerns.

Madam Speaker, I don't know what could be more important, first off, than meeting with a parent who is going through extreme hardship. The family is in utter chaos. All she wants to do is make it better for those that will go after them. That's all she wants to do. This family is thinking of other people and trying to help, using their experiences to do that.

What an important step this Assembly could have taken today or in the last six months, while the Standing Committee on Families and Communities wasn't reviewing any legislation. Review of PCHAD could have taken place while members of this Assembly on that committee were on summer vacation. We could have been working hard for our constituents and making use of this committee, Madam Speaker, and I know – I know – that there are other members of this Assembly that surely agree with me. There have been conversations amongst the members in regard to this legislation. I know, if I could be so bold, that every single member in this Assembly has had a constituent that has reached out to them with their concerns, with children going through a life of drug abuse and various other issues. These parents just simply want to help, and this Assembly had the opportunity to do so.

So I'm very disappointed, Madam Speaker, that the government has not chosen to take an opportunity to do the right thing for families in our province and, in particular, for children who are facing a very difficult future. I don't know what the answer is to strengthening the PCHAD legislation. It's been highlighted in here that perhaps the 10-day period that allows for children under the age of 18 to be taken into a protective safe house needs to be changed and reviewed. It's been suggested as such. There needs to be a longer time of assessment and treatment of the disorder. I would like to highlight that on behalf of my constituent for the members of this Assembly. I would hope – and I would encourage the government to consider this as a review, at a future date, through this committee. Hopefully, the Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act will move through quickly, and we can get to some other important work as well.

Thank you for your time, Madam Speaker and to members of this Assembly.

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

Dr. Swann: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I speak in support of what the previous member was raising. As part of the mental health review I heard lots of concerns about the protection of children addicted to drugs, the PCHAD Act, and wrote letters to both the minister and to the chair just in the last month about the critical need to review PCHAD. It's not working as it could and should for a number of reasons. There are many issues, including

the length of time, the process of going through court, the lack of wraparound services when people are in this position, the lack of real, I guess, concerted efforts around helping young people with a life-and-death situation.

Notwithstanding that this is not necessarily focused on this particular motion to refer, I hope the government will take this opportunity to refer the PCHAD Act to committee for review. That's based on a number of mental health professionals that continue to contact me to say: "It needs to be reviewed. It needs to be updated. It needs to be changed." I just want to get on the record to support the awareness that this act hasn't been reviewed in 12 years, and it needs to be. There's a tremendous momentum out there in the health care community to make this act work better on behalf of children and families with addictions.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Any other members wishing to speak to the motion?

Mr. Ellis: Madam Speaker, I just want to take a moment to echo the last two speakers. As someone who has understood the positive effects of PCHAD, in my policing career I've had the ability to effectively use that piece of legislation in order to help a child get into some form of start on a recovery road. However, I think, as I've discussed with previous members in this House before and as the previous speaker from Calgary-Mountain View had indicated, this piece of legislation hasn't been reviewed in about 12 years and, certainly, I think, requires some assistance to make it better.

One thing, certainly, from my experience in dealing with somebody who is an addict is that, you know, a 10-day assessment sometimes is not enough. I wish I could tell you what that number is, Madam Speaker. However, that's where that committee comes into play, to help us better understand from the experts in the field what that specific number is. In my experience, when dealing with the kids that I've had to help out, of course, by using that piece of legislation, sometimes they spent that 10 days really just surviving the 10 days, with the full intent to continue down a negative path of addiction.

Certainly, I would like to thank the Member for Calgary-Mountain View and the Member for Airdrie for bringing up some very important points in regard to sending this to a committee, which, I think, would be able to bring in all the necessary experts to help strengthen that piece of legislation, which I believe, at the time of conception over a dozen years ago, was one of the first, if not the first, bills of its kind in Canada. Again, Alberta was leading the way when it came to this important piece of legislation, and I know that we as Albertans can make this legislation better.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Question or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to the motion?

Seeing none, the hon. Deputy Government House Leader to close debate.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the comments from all around the House today. I think they raise some interesting issues. Certainly, it would never be our intention to delay a review. In fact, the motion itself is intending to create a review of an act, an act that we are reviewing as a result of an amendment that I actually accepted, being the minister who sponsored this initially.

10:20

I think the members raise excellent points, Madam Speaker. You know, I think all of us in this House have a deep desire to move the province forward. We've done a number of reviews of acts. We had the opportunity recently to update labour laws that hadn't been updated since 1988. Certainly, I've started looking at the Police Act, which also harkens from 1998. I think the members are absolutely correct. There's certainly a lot of progress to made in this place. I think we have made some of this progress over the last three and a half years, but I guess I would concur with their comments and say: much done; much more to do.

With that, thank you very much.

[Government Motion 30 carried]

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 30 Mental Health Services Protection Act

[Adjourned debate December 3: Ms Goodridge]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Madam Speaker, thank you so much for allowing me to speak to the Mental Health Services Protection Act. I rise on this Bill 30. You know, there's a lot to be said in regard to this particular bill. Regarding structure and importance of a bill of this magnitude, I certainly understand the importance of it and it certainly is, without doubt, complex.

Now, our Health critic has done very much due diligence in reviewing this bill. You know, that's not easy in this Assembly, where bills sometimes are introduced very quickly and swiftly through the House, which obviously to me has always been a bit of a concern, especially when there are these, we'll call it, possible unintended consequences when bills come in and out so quickly, which is why it's always important to consult with the necessary stakeholders, either before or certainly if anything is ever referred to a committee. Then you really have that opportunity to bring in those necessary stakeholders in order to assist with strengthening a bill of this magnitude.

I have a few stories I wanted to touch base on, and I will get to my notes on this. You know, there are so many fields that this particular bill touches on when it comes to counselling and people who are peer supports and advocates: people that provide spiritual faith guidance, as an example, rehabilitation, problem-solving. As I've stated before, I'm certainly for structure and understanding that there is an accountability portion to anything, really, that we do. I certainly have a concern, questions that I think will be reasonably brought up in Committee of the Whole, which of course has to do with those people that do peer support. Many of them who do that were at one point in time former victims of addiction, some of whom themselves are going through the process.

I myself have an acquaintance who was a constituent, who has reached out to me. We've stayed in touch over the last four or five years. His name is Sheldon. He's a very nice young man. He's one of these fellows, you know, that had a great job, had a beautiful family, had the house, had the car, had everything going for him, but sadly he fell into the depths of addiction and drug abuse and lost it, lost everything. When I had the fortune in this House of passing Bill 205, the pill-press bill, and the work that I've done in regard to the fentanyl crisis, he reached out to me.

Over the last few years, obviously, he's been struggling in order to find work, work in a field that he had been in before, which, I

believe, was the oil and gas industry and which, sadly for him, he's been unable to find over the last several years. Through conversations I've had with him, he's trying to get involved in helping others, addictions. Now, he himself struggles, right? However, on a positive note, he always updates me as to how often he remains clean and sober, which is very important and a struggle that many of these people have to go through every day.

What I love about him is his enthusiasm to help others. It has become very infectious. You know, we've had great discussions regarding the fentanyl crisis. We talked about cocaine addictions, crack addictions, crystal meth addictions, and, obviously, fentanyl, carfentanil, heroin, all of these drugs that have sadly plagued our society.

You know, he sent me a note not too long ago, and he was really excited that he was getting an interview with an addictions advocacy group for people on active addiction. It's very much harm reduction based. He's doing this not because of his qualifications in the oil field; he's doing this because of his experiences as an addict and what he has overcome in order to help others, to help guide them.

One of the things that I've certainly experienced in my time dealing, again, with people with mental health and addictions – I guess we'll stay on the addictions topic at the moment – is that when you're trying to help somebody with that addiction, a lot of times the respect comes from those who have walked the walk and talked the talk. Not everything can be derived from the person who has that doctorate in the field of whether it be counselling or addictions. However, sometimes the best experiences and the best help can come from those who are in the peer support area.

As we relate it back to the bill, which has to do with the Mental Health Services Protection Act, certainly, those who have the experiences that provide huge value to those people who are going through the addictions themselves currently, I wouldn't want to see them prohibited in any way from helping people that are going through those struggles. We can include, of course, the mental health portion of things as well, Madam Speaker. Anyway, he provides what I consider to be a huge value, and I wouldn't want to see him or anyone like him having any sort of barrier to prevent them from helping others who are also going through any form of mental health and addictions struggle.

10:30

I think of another lady who has reached out to me. She herself was an addict – sadly, one of her kids became an addict who became very much lost within the system – again somebody that I have maintained contact with over the last several years. I'm proud to say that she's a very vibrant lady who has really pulled things together. She is providing support and helping people who are also going through mental health and addictions issues, and while doing that, she is providing support for her daughter, who herself has become a mother. I think it's important that she be allowed to continue her work that she's doing as a peer support for people not only in the community but within her own family.

As I worked downtown, Madam Speaker – this is in Calgary, of course – for about two and a half years and then also worked as a judicial interim release hearing officer in the jails for also, again, two and a half years, I dealt with many people, and I would say that, well, pretty much the vast majority of them had mental health or addictions issues. I saw the benefits of places such as the Mustard Seed, the Centre of Hope – what are some of the other ones that were downtown? – the Salvation Army, as an example, even one of our detox areas in Calgary called the Alpha House. You know, many of these people that are working there do what they can to help people. They provide coaching and, again, that peer kind of

support. Some of them themselves had been in the system, and they've lifted themselves up through the assistance of others, where they've got a job, again, helping others. I certainly wouldn't want to see any sort of a barrier for them in regard to this bill.

As my friend and colleague from Fort McMurray had indicated, this is a very complex bill, and I think it's important that we have the ability to analyze all components of it to make sure that there are no unintended consequences and that there is achievable buy-in from all stakeholders involved. Again, in Alberta specifically – and every jurisdiction has different little nuances – there is so much good work being done by so many different organizations, and I would not want to see any one of those good things being done by people from northern Alberta to central Alberta to southern Alberta have an unintended consequence of somehow being precluded from doing the good work that they're doing because of a bill that may not have been thoroughly thought out.

Again, Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the bill that's coming in. I understand the structural component. I certainly want to make sure that people themselves have – you know, I think that there has to be some form of structure, that there has to be consequences sort of as part of making sure that not just anybody, I guess, can do this. However, we also must appreciate and understand those services that are being provided throughout Alberta. There's just so much great stuff, and I just wouldn't want to see anybody precluded from doing some of the great stuff that they're doing.

If I may add, what I've found, too, is that – we're talking about essentially maybe a college that's potentially being created – we have to understand the nuances of the people who sometimes face these mental health and addictions problems. Some of them, sadly, in the throes of their addictions have fallen in to trouble with the law, and some of them may have criminal records. I certainly wouldn't want to see any of them precluded from doing the good work that they're doing as they've turned their lives around in order to help others within the community.

Madam Speaker, I just would like to add maybe a story that really just comes to mind from a gentleman that was downtown in Calgary. Sadly, I think he's still on the streets of Calgary, and this is going on probably about at least 15-plus years now. This is a gentleman that, sadly, fell into the throes of schizophrenia. You know, I myself had dealt with him, and . . .

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Hearing none, any other individuals wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 30, the Mental Health Services Protection Act. There are two parts to this bill – I think it's important to recognize that – one part being the piece around licensing of treatment facilities, and then the second piece being around the creation of the college. I am pleased to see especially, in addition to my comments from this morning in regard to the PCHAD legislation, that there is some action being taken by this government in regard to improving mental health services in this province.

Madam Speaker, I have a constituent named Mike. Mike is a constituent born and raised in Airdrie. We actually grew up together. Mike went through a significant battle with mental health and addictions. If you ever have the opportunity to meet Mike, he has become this fantastic advocate in our community and this wonderful speaker. He does this spoken word piece, and he does it in various avenues throughout the community. He's recently started

to go into the schools and speak to those high-risk youth in our schools about the life he's lived, how he got there and the challenges that he had and the challenges that he still currently faces. He's wonderfully open about it, and he's making such a difference and having such an impact on the people that meet him everywhere he goes.

Mike was actually recently the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's true grit award. I wrote a letter of recommendation for him to the Lieutenant Governor, and I know that a number of community leaders in the city of Airdrie also very proudly spoke for him in regard to winning this award. He is an individual that is unforgettable, and I truly believe that he is changing lives in a way that most people will never be able to, Madam Speaker.

He is everywhere in our community. Just this fall he completed the fourth annual unmasking mental health event in Airdrie, that brings families together around Halloween time. They dress up, and Spider-Man always comes, and there's face painting and lots of candy. It's a great event.

10:40

He raises money for various charities in our community, and he does so with a smile on his face. This year it was particularly challenging for him because he was receiving his true grit award on Friday here in Edmonton and then Saturday was his event, that's become quite a large event in Airdrie. But he was able to manage those things and be very successful with that and get it done despite the freezing cold weather that happened at that time.

Airdrie is pretty proud of Mike and the work that he's doing in our community, Madam Speaker. But Mike never went to postsecondary education. He doesn't have a degree. Yet he's having an impact on so many different people: young people, high-risk youth, adults who are battling addiction. This is a guy that you can phone at 2 o'clock in the morning, and he will answer the phone, and he will come over and talk to you. He has saved many lives. I know that Mike has been to houses at 2 o'clock in the morning for friends that were trying to kill themselves. Mike has been there, and Mike is able to have these sort of real-life conversations with these people, that are impacting their lives and are saving lives.

It's just absolutely wonderful to see. I'm so honoured to know Mike and to hear of the work that he's doing in our community, not just from him, but you hear it from everybody else. My concern, Madam Speaker, with this legislation is: does this limit Mike's ability to be able to help those around him? Does this limit his ability and the ability of others to participate in peer support groups, peer support settings unfacilitated? I would have some questions surrounding a lot of those things.

I know a great man in this province. His name is Theo Fleury. He's a former hockey player for the Calgary Flames, Madam Speaker. There are many in this province that know him and his story quite well. He facilitates these peer support groups, and I have yet to actually see in this legislation if this is now going to be shut down. That's the concern that I have: will Mr. Fleury and will Mike in Airdrie still be allowed to run these groups that are having an impact? I've been able to participate, just sit in the corner and see and hear what this is doing in people's individual lives. So I do think of Theo and Mike when we talk about this type of legislation, and that needs to be addressed by the government, absolutely. I'm certain that the Minister of Health will respond under 29(2)(a), hopefully, and address those concerns for myself and for my colleagues and for Mike and for Theo and for many others who are making a difference in our communities in that regard.

Madam Speaker, as you may know, there are many former addicts that are the ones that are paying it forward and facilitating these types of activities, and if this legislation hampers that in any

way, shape, or form, we are doing a disservice to those in the industry and to those that struggle with addictions and mental health. I don't think that's the intent of this House, but that does need to be addressed because we are at crisis levels in our province when it comes to help, whatever you might call it. It's trauma specialists, on this end, that have really specific training, and then there's Mike who helps people, and there's AA, Alcoholics Anonymous. Those are people that have just been through it, that have come together to support each other, and it works for a lot of people. A lot of these peer support groups work for a lot of people, and this is the point I'm trying to stress here today. So I hope that the government can address that for me as we move forward.

I do have some concerns around the process for treatment facilities and sort of the red tape and the regulation that could bog down these very, very slim financial operations, that we know don't always have the manpower or the dollars to get this paperwork done. Is this going to bog them down? I actually think it's very important to have quality when it comes to treatment of mental health and addictions, Madam Speaker – and I applaud the government for addressing that – but there are some concerns for a lot of these organizations that deliver these services that do not have the ability to hire somebody to do the paperwork. So what does that look like? I think there are a lot of questions that these organizations have around that.

Those are some of the things I will address here in second reading of Bill 30, the Mental Health Services Protection Act. I ask that the government consider Mike and consider Theo and people like them that are doing good work in our communities and, hopefully, not limit their ability to pay it forward, to give back, to make a difference, and to save lives for our constituents and the people in our communities.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I did respond to some of the same line of questioning last night, but I'll be happy to do so again today just to provide that clarity and assurance that this is in no way about peer support programs or other types of programs where they aren't indeed selling themselves as counselling therapists or addictions counsellors. Definitely, 12-step programs and peer support programs, whether they're faith based or not, such as AA, as has been mentioned, or NA operate outside of residential treatment facilities and operate outside of classifying themselves as health professionals. They are certainly providing a service that is health related, but they're doing it from a position of lived experience. We really want to honour their expertise, and this is in no way to limit that.

This is about providing assurance to people that are often in some of their most vulnerable positions, when they're reaching out for help, living through substance use issues and asking for help for themselves or for a child or another loved one, for example, Madam Speaker. It's incredibly important that we give them the assurance. For somebody to call themselves a therapist, they have to actually have some kind of oversight training and expertise through a college.

The other piece that it does, of course, is that by bringing people who are counselling therapists or addictions therapists under a college, it creates that assurance to the public that they are held to a high standard around things like the bill we just passed earlier this session, around protecting patients from sexual assault, sexual misconduct, and being able to revoke a licence for somebody to practise in that field if they've engaged in any of those inappropriate

behaviours. Today if that's the case with somebody who calls themselves a therapist, we don't have those tools. By passing this legislation, there will be oversight, there will be protection, and that's important for patients. It will indeed not impact services that are provided through peer support and mentoring as it's so important, as mentioned by the hon. member and many others.

I just wanted to give that extra clarity that this is not about peer mentors. This isn't about people with lived experience who provide an important service to their community and help people living through their substance use. This is about people who call themselves addictions counsellors and addictions therapists and making sure that they're held to a high standard, that they're working with the public in a way that we would all be proud of, and if they're not, that they don't have the ability to continue doing that work, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Airdrie.

10:50

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just a follow-up question. I'm seeking clarification on the creation of the college and those that are regulated under that. This may not be a question that you can answer. But when a college is created, for third-party insurance purposes to be eligible, there needs to be a college and a number that insurance companies can process, which is great. I actually think that's a good step forward to improving access to quality mental health treatment and will address a number of various concerns because financial barriers are certainly one of those, and there are many with third-party insurance that would like to access a marriage counsellor or addictions counsellor, those types of things, and may be able to do so with the creation of the college. Have you had any conversations with third-party insurance companies or the college itself? Will this be a further step down the line that is considered? Speak to that, please.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, hon. member. Well, that college hasn't been created yet. Because this is an area where there is no existing college or oversight per se, we aren't in a position to be able to liaise with them on those questions, but should the bill be passed, then regulations will be created to support the creation of a college. Those are the exact kinds of things that government, the college, and the people of Alberta can work through. It usually takes about a year to set up a college from scratch, so these are the kinds of questions that will be worked through to make sure that we not only protect patients but also find ways to increase access.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Airdrie.

Mrs. Pitt: Right. I still have time. Is there any response from, particularly, Alberta Blue Cross that this is something that they're considering or see as a good step forward? Could you speak to that?

Ms Hoffman: Yeah. For Blue Cross, through the government programs that are public access programs, definitely we work with them on making sure that we have a good scope of services available. Then with private insurers, of course, they have a responsibility to the owners of those plans to make sure that they consult with them on those pieces. I regularly meet with Blue Cross and so do officials from my department to talk about the public plans and the . . . [Ms Hoffman's speaking time expired]

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, the hon. minister to close debate.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker and to my colleagues for their engagement in this important discussion. When Albertans access substance use treatment or mental health services, they should absolutely feel safe in doing so, and Bill 30 aims to ensure that Albertans are able to access these professional mental health care services in a safe, regulated environment.

We've heard this call from many in the field. Focused consultations were held in the summer in both Edmonton and Calgary, and there was an online survey available to members of the public in addition to that. Of course, there are many very well-run facilities with dedicated caregivers throughout our province, and for them this bill will formalize standards and policies that already exist. It's important, I think, that workers be recognized and have the recognition of their expertise.

Albertans have needed this kind of help and have shared stories about facilities that offered services of questionable value, in some cases were even unsafe. At the announcement we referred to the 2007 fatality of Taylor Argent. Taylor was a young man, a very young man. After struggling with his substance use, his family admitted him to a facility that they assumed had safeguards, oversight, and protections. What happened to Taylor at that facility was heartbreaking. He consumed a poisonous substance – it was stored unsecurely in an unlocked shed – and he suffered for many hours before he was finally taken to hospital and later died.

In 2010 there was a fatality inquiry by Judge Hunter. It recommended that the government set up minimum standards of care at these facilities and that they be licensed and inspected on an ongoing basis. These recommendations were ignored by the government of the day and by successive Conservative governments as well.

In 2018 we decided that it was very important that we act on this. We committed to introducing legislation in our throne speech to ensure safety, quality care at private treatment facilities, and we're proud to deliver on that promise for the Argent family and for every Albertan who accesses this kind of care. We did this because we know how important it is for Albertans to trust that they will receive quality services from appropriately trained professionals in a safe environment.

I have to say that I wish this legislation was passed in 2010 following the fatality review. I actually wish it was passed before 2007, before Taylor was in this facility and any other person who suffered in an unregulated environment and assumed that there were these protections and safeguards. But I am very proud that our government is taking action to make sure that this can't continue, that we protect those who are accessing services in these facilities and in other areas in the community.

I'm very grateful that so many members of the public and people who work in these fields have reached out to us to work with us through this process and make sure that we have the very best protections for patients and make sure that Albertans get the kind of care and assurances that they deserve.

Thank you, hon. colleagues. I look forward to this bill proceeding.

[Motion carried; Bill 30 read a second time]

Bill 32
City Charters Fiscal Framework Act

Mr. McIver moved that the motion for second reading of Bill 32, City Charters Fiscal Framework Act, be amended by deleting all the words after “that” and substituting the following:

Bill 32, City Charters Fiscal Framework Act, be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship in accordance with Standing Order 74.2.

[Adjourned debate on the amendment December 3: Mr. McIver]

The Deputy Speaker: Any members?

Mr. McIver: I’ve actually got a minute and a half left or something, right?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr. McIver: Okay. The amendment was to refer this to committee because it’s a fairly complex bill, as I stated. I really think that it’s worth taking a look at. Obviously, it affects the two largest cities, and it affects all Albertans, of course, because if 53 per cent live in the two largest cities, then whatever dollars, assets, things that go to those cities are unavailable for the rest of the province. So it really is important to the whole province and not just to the two major cities. It’s a fairly complex change to what we do now. As such, I think it would be responsible to take a look at it together. Particularly, as part of Bill 32 there are a lot of changes to the way that land-use approvals will happen in the future, dedication of land during the approval process.

I hope everyone will support this.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Any other members wishing to speak to the referral amendment?
The hon. Member for Little Bow.

Mr. Schneider: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It’s always a pleasure to rise in this building to discuss legislation that is important to all Albertans. Of course, today is no exception as we discuss Bill 32, the City Charters Fiscal Framework Act.

Now, I’m prepared to cautiously support Bill 32 at this point, for the moment. It talks about city charters and how the funding would work and has been going on for some time now in the background. I support it for the moment and look forward to hearing some of the questions that we ask being answered, I’m sure. The minister is usually good at that. We’ll see what happens as we approach Committee of the Whole stage.

Anyway, I was watching the Legislature on TV last night – I know it’s hard to believe that you’d sit here most of the day and then go home and watch it on TV – and I saw the Member for Calgary-Hays make a referral motion. Now, I support that motion. Like he just finished saying, this is a very complex piece of legislation, so I certainly concur with the fact that having a committee look at that would be a good idea.

Bill 32 proposes to enshrine in legislation a funding framework for the cities of Edmonton and Calgary that will replace the current municipal capital funding regime. Now, that municipal capital funding regime is known as the municipal sustainability initiative, that we always called the MSI. That deal was reached with input from all of the municipalities, by the way, back in 2007.

I believe the Premier of the day – I think it was Stelmach – initiated the MSI way back then and left Alberta municipalities with \$11.3 billion over 10 years as a support for local infrastructure

priorities and a way to build strong, safe, and resilient communities. He left the Alberta municipalities with that much money, but he left the municipalities themselves to determine how much money would be handed out and who would get how much money. That seemed, to me, to certainly be a fair way to do things, a fair way to have the money administered. In my days as a councillor we certainly were appreciative of the fact that we were eligible and able to receive money from the province. That was certainly my opinion.

11:00

Now, as I recall, governments between then and now have toyed with the length of the years that that municipal sustainability initiative money might be paid out to municipalities. At any rate, the two largest cities in Alberta will, when this deal comes to fruition in 2022, no longer be receiving municipal sustainability initiative funding from the provincial government. No municipality in Alberta will actually be receiving any funding because that grant is set to be completed by that time. Now, I have to say, because it has recently come to my attention, that it sounds like the minister is certainly working with the Rural Municipalities of Alberta and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association on developing a replacement model to the municipal sustainability initiative. I’m certainly not aware of any details of such an agreement yet, mostly because, I suspect, there are no details yet.

Now, Madam Speaker, Bill 32 is the Edmonton and Calgary funding model that, of course, replaces MSI. It was way back in ’07, when I was elected for the first time to a rural municipal government – and the announcement had already been made before I took office – but I recall the municipal sustainability initiative being a very big deal for a lot of communities within our rural area. It was a big deal, certainly, for our municipality as well – don’t get me wrong – but there are a lot of municipalities in Alberta that have no way to raise money, over and above taxation, for capital projects. Believe me, MSI funding for those municipalities was and still is a very important part of their operations. It was the be-all and end-all of its time, I believe.

For the next minute or two on behalf of those area municipalities I will ask a question of the minister. I know that it has nothing to do with Bill 32, the City Charters Fiscal Framework Act, but it is a question on the lips of the municipalities from all over this province. We now have seen what is intended for the two largest municipalities in Alberta when the MSI funding ends in ’21-22. Fair enough. The two largest municipalities in Alberta, I think we all realize, have very different issues than the other municipalities in Alberta. But the question I’m hearing from some of the other 350 municipalities in Alberta is: what is the funding agreement or the funding legislation, and what will it look like for them in ’22-23? Cities and towns and rural municipalities are worried that the uncertainty about MSI’s replacement, whatever that may be, cannot help but leave a terrible gap or some kind of a breach in their capital budgets: water infrastructure in their municipalities, roads in their municipalities, fire protection in their municipalities. These are the questions that all municipalities in Alberta, certainly the municipalities that I talk to, are starting to ask questions about.

The funding for things like that is based at the community level, of course, and the Municipal Government Act makes it very clear that the responsibility for services like I just mentioned, which are needed to enhance quality of life in those municipalities, falls entirely on those municipalities. So, clearly, while it may be nice to see that the two biggest municipalities within the province seem to be looking forward with a degree of certainty to what their funding looks like in ’21-22 and onward, the other 350 Alberta municipalities are wondering what theirs will look like, and I can’t really blame them.

Just one final thought on that. All municipalities in the province initially, when it was rolled out in 2007, of course, just fell in love with the program. It was a source of money that they really were lacking. Actually, they have counted on MSI funding since 2007, so they more than initially liked the program. They fell in love with it, and they have come to rely on the funding offered by the province.

I've spent a lot of time at the AAMD and C conventions over the years, talked with other leaders from other municipalities, and we were all in agreement that we liked the program, that we liked the formula, and certainly everyone liked the money. But as the program moved through the years, what we found was that we could no longer count on the funding as it was when the program was started. The Finance minister and the Minister of Municipal Affairs pretty much decided what the funding would be in a given year, depending on what the other needs were in the province at the time, because MSI was a grant. Therefore, the funding became less per year, and the time to the end of the funding period was stretched out. What we find now is a program that was to end in 2017; we now see it ending in the '21-22 fiscal year.

I want to be clear that I'm not blaming any one government for the way the program is ending up, just relaying the thoughts of those that I've spoken to over the years with regard to the MSI program. The common complaint has been – and I'm sure that the minister has heard this as well – that municipalities wanted a legislated agreement so that their funding would be more predictable and stable. Anyway, I had to get that little thing off my chest. Rural municipalities are who I deal with; I've been listening to them for years.

But we are here to talk about Bill 32. This bill sets out to provide predictable infrastructure funding from the provincial government for a number of years to come to the two largest cities. Starting in 2022, both Edmonton and Calgary will split \$500 million in funding. After that point funding levels will be tied to provincial revenue. It will increase or decrease based on both a revenue component and a fuel component. In 2022 the funding arrangements consist of \$252 million from the revenue component and \$248 million from the fuel component. In subsequent years the revenue component increases and decreases based on the changes in total provincial revenues in the fiscal year three years prior. Now, that number will be excluding the carbon tax and any new fiscal policy changes. The fuel component, in contrast, increases or decreases based on changes in the number of litres of gasoline and diesel fuel sold in the fiscal year three years prior that is subject to taxation under section 4 of the Fuel Tax Act but does not include tax-exempt fuel as defined in the act. There's nothing complex about that at all; that's a joke.

For the revenue component of this financing deal, the formula for both cities, the formula for what each city will receive, is the same as the formula used for the municipal sustainability initiative funding. On page 8 of the legislation that formula, from what I understand, is the formula that has been used since the program was introduced, where the municipal populations of Calgary and Edmonton are determined in the fiscal year three years prior to the applicable fiscal year; where the aggregate amount of the education property tax requisitions to be paid by Calgary and Edmonton are calculated as of the day, in the fiscal year three years prior to the applicable fiscal year, on which the consolidated fiscal plan is required to be made public under section 4(4) of the Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act; and then the number of kilometres of open roads maintained by Calgary and Edmonton as of December 31 in the fiscal year three years prior to the applicable fiscal year, as reported to the Minister under section 577 of the Municipal Government Act. The revenue component ends up being \$252

million. Now, that represents how the revenue component of the deal works for the two cities, and it is represented on pages 8 and 9 of the legislation.

Now, the fuel component is just a little different. The city of Calgary's allocation is 55 per cent of each year's total fuel component while the Edmonton component shows them with 45 per cent of each year's total fuel component. Now, remember that the fuel component increases or decreases based on changes in the number of litres of gasoline or diesel fuel sold in the fiscal year three years prior that is subject to taxation under section 4 of the Fuel Tax Act. Of course, that doesn't include tax-exempt fuel as defined in the act. For the '22-23 fiscal year the fuel component funding for Calgary ends up being \$136.4 million and \$111.6 million for Edmonton, a total of \$248 million.

Now, to further complicate things for the tens of folks watching at home, there is also a transit deal that is part of this legislation, which will be paid with the carbon tax revenues. Starting in 2028, each of the two cities will get \$200 million per year to build out their mass transit systems, and it appears that this particular deal goes all the way out to 2041. Before that, however, the government will provide transit funding to the two cities that has been raised from the carbon tax to the tune of \$3 billion, which is to be paid out from the time of royal assent to 2027, or, to be more accurate, from fiscal year 2018-19 to fiscal year '26-27. Now, the funding is not to exceed \$3 billion, and that amount represents the total amount of money announced for funding to Calgary and Edmonton transit previously. This is, of course, to provide some sort of certainty that if government proposes changes any time from now forward, the legislation would have to go back to the House and through the parliamentary process right here, with input from the two municipalities.

Now, I think we can begin to see how complicated these formulas are becoming as we get further into this bill, which, from my standpoint, is another good support for sending this entire thing to committee for some fulsome research.

11:10

Also, it should be noted that despite some speculation by pundits when this was rolled out, there are to be no new taxation powers for either city, but there are some changes to taxing powers that already exist in the two cities. That shows up particularly around the discussion of off-site levies. Now, Madam Speaker, these types of levies are typically put on new developments in a city and used in order to help pay for things like fire halls, water, and sewer. I think I talked about that a few moments ago. However, I believe that if either of the two cities wants to put an off-site levy on something like a recreation centre, I believe that is to be allowed.

Something that isn't specified in the bill is whether the money will go to the municipalities with no strings attached or whether the province would have the final say on some of the issues with regard to the \$400 million, that I spoke about a moment ago, in transit funding from the carbon tax. Now, that's a good question for the minister and another reason for some more clarity, which again supports sending Bill 32 to committee.

Now, Bill 32 also changes eight important areas of city charters for Edmonton and Calgary. These are very important changes, in my opinion, and I'd like to discuss a few of them here. These changes, Madam Speaker, include allowing cities to establish their own debt and debt-servicing limits, meaning that the cities would have to obtain their own credit ratings. Specifically, the exemptions from debt limit regulations do not come into force until such time as the cities have approved the debt limit and debt-servicing limit policies and have obtained an external credit rating. Now, that's an important aspect, because we all know that some of these

municipalities – I'm not pointing at anyone in particular – simply aren't good at controlling their debt load compared to their income.

Additionally, the changes also establish a requirement for each city to hold public hearings in their respective cities on these changes, which can only be beneficial to residents and stakeholders residing and operating within those cities.

Well, I think my time is about to expire here. We did hear from build Alberta, that has some concerns, but we'll probably talk more about that as the legislation moves forward. Despite that, Madam Speaker, I'm considering the benefits of this new framework, and I hope that during the next stages of the debate any concerns that . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak on Bill 32. It's a pleasure to rise to speak on Bill 32, City Charters Fiscal Framework Act. I'm rising to speak on an amendment to refer this to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship to be able to bring some transparency and some accountability into the process. I believe an important aspect of our job here is to ensure Albertans are confident that decisions made here are done in a way so that true consultation is taking place and that the people that are impacted by these decisions have been able to witness those decisions and have been able to have input into those decisions.

With regard to Bill 32, City Charters Fiscal Framework Act, I believe the Resource Stewardship Committee is the right committee to review this and to bring some more transparency to this process. I believe that calling in witnesses such as the mayor of Calgary, Naheed Nenshi, to appear before the standing committee would certainly add a spark of interest around here to our legislation process. I believe Mayor Nenshi is a colourful character, and this would help to highlight the process that we're currently going through and highlight the decisions that are being made here. I would welcome having the mayor appear before a committee of the Legislature to give his opinion and his two cents into the process and be able to answer questions that others might have with regard to how best to move forward with a fiscal framework that will work for the two largest cities in Alberta.

I also recognize that the mayor of Edmonton, Don Iveson, essentially by his proximity to the Legislature has been able to be leading the charge on city charters and the fiscal framework required. I believe that Mayor Iveson's insights would be a very valuable piece on this legislation and that the Resource Stewardship Committee would allow this to be able to come out in the open and be able to be discussed in a very transparent manner.

Missing from Bill 32, I believe, is that we need to call on the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the AUMA, and their CEO, Dan Rude, and the chair, Mayor Barry Morishita from the city of Brooks. I wonder how the other urban municipalities throughout Alberta feel about the fiscal framework that is being proposed for the two largest cities and about the funding that the two largest cities have negotiated, or that has come forward, anyways, in this fiscal framework and about how that'll impact the other municipalities, the urban municipalities throughout the province, and about what funding deals those smaller urban centres can expect to get or possibly should get. I believe that these individuals that come forward from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association will help to have input into how we best move forward not only with Bill 32, but then we take a look at how to move forward with funding deals for these other municipalities.

I also would like to hear from the Rural Municipalities of Alberta, the RMA, to get an understanding of if they are comfortable with the funding framework that's being proposed for the metropolitan centres and how the metropolitan centres have been able to get these funding arrangements. I would like to hear from Mountain View councillor Al Kemmere, president of the RMA, and see what he has to say and also to see what other rural municipalities might want to say. Rural municipalities are facing pressures also. Now, the rural municipalities don't have stadiums and LRTs to look after, but they do have other things that are needing to have the assistance of the province to fund, their bridges and so on.

You know, we take a look at what has been transpiring in municipalities in the southern end of the province, Vulcan county, Lethbridge county. They're needing to try and understand how they're going to fund their culvert and bridge replacements. As many of these are reaching end of life, they have questions and concerns on sustainability going forward and how the funding arrangement for the cities, those metropolitan areas, is going to affect their ability. We saw Lethbridge county take an unusual step of imposing a head tax on the intensive livestock operations in their county, the feedlots. The specialized head tax for the intensive livestock operations was in order to help pay for some of these concerns that they have with regard to their crumbling infrastructure.

Now, this wound up in court, and I guess what's needing to be discovered here is what the special funding arrangement will be for rural Alberta. Will the water/waste-water infrastructure still be a separate application based on competitive grants in that they're applying to the province and never really knowing if they're going to be funded or not funded?

11:20

Bill 32, you know, Madam Speaker, is taking into consideration the current MSI, municipal sustainability initiative, funding program. That formula runs until '20-21. Both of our legacy parties, the Progressive Conservative Party and the Wildrose Party, supported MSI. The Wildrose, I know, worked for many years to try and find improvements to make MSI even better, and I believe that Premier Ed Stelmach and his government should be commended for their foresight in implementing the MSI funding model. The MSI funding model that we see in Bill 32, the way I understand it, is that that funding model was very instrumental and adopted into Bill 32. I believe the formula, although being quite complicated, was developed by the municipalities. Municipalities came together in negotiations with each other to come up with a formula that could be workable for all sizes of municipalities: large, medium, small, rural, urban. All entities had the ability to have input into how to move forward with the funding model.

The funding model I believe has worked well. Going forward, I think what I hear from my municipalities is nervousness about whether or not this year or next year or the years going forward they are going to receive the funding. This Bill 32, I think, tries to address some of that so that they can have some certainty in funding going forward.

In the development of the formula the two largest cities, the AUMA, the RMA, all put their differences aside and came to an agreement on how the MSI funding would be allocated. Now, like I said, the MSI wasn't perfect. While the formula is very good, the level of funding was not always predictable. We see that over the course of the original agreement, from 2007, I believe, the first 10 years or so, the funding that was promised was repeatedly reprofiled and extended over a longer period, where we now see Bill 32 recognizing the amount of funding under the MSI, the current program, stretching that out to years 2021-2022 and then the Bill

32 framework kicking in in the fiscal years after 2021-2022, essentially kicking in in the year 2022.

I think that one of the issues we have heard from municipal stakeholders, that I've heard from municipal stakeholders, is that MSI funding fluctuated fairly significantly from year to year based on the province's overreliance on nonrenewable resource revenue. I'm not exactly sure, but, to me, when I go through Bill 32, it looks like we have not necessarily been able to address that part of the concern. If I can find it here, we see in the calculations that it's the provincial revenue for fiscal years 3 and 4 prior to the current year to essentially describe what's going to be in calculations, provincial revenue. The only revenue stream, I think, that is specifically left out is the carbon tax, the carbon levy, that's currently in place. Otherwise, it still is susceptible to that revenue stream, possibly faced with significant fluctuation there.

Bill 32 attempts to address the issue of unfulfilled promises by legislating the funding aspect. This leaves much speculation as to why the government did not use a more stable revenue stream such as the corporate personal income tax revenue stream, which is somewhat more stable and is less susceptible to fluctuation. Those kinds of questions could be sought out and tried to be understood during committee work and to possibly come up with a better standard to work from for calculating the provincial revenue that would allow these municipalities to have some more level of certainty going forward.

These types of questions, I believe, we can find answers to if we send Bill 32 to committee. We can grill the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs to get the answers we need in a transparent and a very accountable manner. Madam Speaker, I hope that I have been able to elaborate a little bit on why the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship needs to see Bill 32 and why we need to hear from the mayors, Mayor Nenshi and Mayor Iveson, going forward. We also need to hear from other stakeholders like the AUMA and the RMA, the Rural Municipalities association.

Finally, I believe that we also need to hear from the department itself. The Resource Stewardship Committee can ask questions of the department to get the answers that they would need to feel confident that the formulas being described here and the revenue streams that are being anticipated to be used in the formulas are the right numbers that will give us a certain level of comfort, that the cities and all the municipalities, as we move forward with these types of arrangements, can all feel confident that they are being recognized as an arm of the province established by the province to help these communities to function and to govern themselves and also to take care of the things that their municipalities need to take care of in ensuring that they're providing the roads and the services necessary to their stakeholders.

I'd like to thank you, Madam Speaker, for granting me the time.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you to the members for their comments today. I appreciate that.

I'll be really brief, with just a couple of things about this bill and about what the members are talking about. We've done extensive consultation with the two big cities. We have also been and continue to be involved in conversations with the AUMA and the RMA about legislating a deal with them because it's something they've asked for for quite some time, to have sustainability and certainty. It's a promise we made, and it's a promise we will keep, as we are doing with the big cities.

Just a real quick point that the 340 municipalities and Métis settlements outside of the two big cities have been kept whole with MSI. It's in the budget. It is there until '21-22. So they have that certainty of that funding. The big cities, as Mayor Iveson has said, took a haircut of \$152 million a year each. So they've helped us get to our path to balance. We've worked with them on this. We wanted to make sure that we legislated something so that in the middle of their budget cycle they weren't worried about this going away, that they have certainty.

As I said, it's a promise made and a promise kept. Though I applaud the member's tenacity in wanting to send, I think, almost every single government bill to committee, unfortunately I will have to say that I am not in favour of sending this to committee.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment?

Seeing none, I'll call the vote.

[Motion on amendment to second reading of Bill 32 lost]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any further members wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs to close debate.

11:30

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to all the speakers so far for bringing up very valid points. I really appreciate it, and I look forward to Committee of the Whole, where we can have a little bit more of a robust discussion on this. I think it's a good bill, and I'm looking forward to, like I said, having that discussion.

With that, I will close debate.

[Motion carried; Bill 32 read a second time]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

The Chair: I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 28

Family Statutes Amendment Act, 2018

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'd just like to take this opportunity to address some of the additional questions that were raised at Committee of the Whole. One of the questions that came up was about what will happen when parties disagree as to when the adult interdependent relationship began or whether they are adult interdependent partners. This was raised previously in Committee of the Whole.

Of course, this is one of the issues that may potentially arise. The sort of pool of common property begins at the time when folks became adult interdependent partners. In most cases, I would say in the vast majority of cases, it's going to be clear, but it is possible that a dispute would arise. I want to reiterate again that in this legislation, if passed, in the event that parties are unable to agree on when the relationship of interdependence began or if one of them maintains there was no such relationship, it would ultimately fall to

the courts to decide the matter. There may still be some areas of a little bit of uncertainty, but the idea here is to create as much certainty for as many people as possible so that we can keep as many people as possible out of sort of high-conflict court matters. The courts will be guided by the Adult Interdependent Relationships Act in terms of answering these questions. That act has been in force for 15 years, so family law judges and lawyers are fairly familiar with it.

Another question that was asked, Madam Chair, was how people can prepare an adult interdependent partnership agreement. In order to be valid, an adult interdependent partnership agreement must be in the form set out in the adult interdependent partnership agreement regulation. In addition, there are a couple of rules around this. Both parties must be at least 16 years old or at least 18 years old if the parties are related to each other by blood or adoption because, of course, the adult interdependent partnerships act can take into account a few different types of relationships. Neither party can be in an ongoing marriage or have another adult interdependent partnership agreement. The parties must live or intend to live together in a relationship of interdependence. Finally, each party's signature must be witnessed by at least two witnesses.

The parties do not need to get legal advice in order for an adult interdependent partnership agreement to be valid. However, they may wish to get legal advice in order to better understand their rights and obligations. Entering into an adult interdependent partnership arrangement can be thought of as similar to entering into a marriage. We do not require couples to obtain independent legal advice before they get married although it's not always a bad idea.

Finally, with respect to custody issues a member also asked whether this bill would address custody issues for children whose parents are separating. Bill 28 addresses property division for unmarried partners and eligibility criteria for adult child support. Parenting arrangements, parenting time, child custody, and access issues are outside the scope of this particular bill. Madam Chair, these issues are addressed in the Family Law Act. The impact of that will vary in the individual cases, but the act, again, emphasizes the best interests of the child.

At the end of the day, one of the reasons for this act is that clear rules often shorten the duration of conflict, and that shorter duration of conflict will be very beneficial for the children of those

relationships, but the specific custody issues are addressed already in that act.

With that, I believe that was the answer to all of those questions. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to Bill 28?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The clauses of Bill 28 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 28.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? Say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed, say no. So ordered.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Seeing the incredible progress we have made this morning and the hour, I would move that we call it 12 o'clock and adjourn until 1:30 this afternoon.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 11:37 a.m.]

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