



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, June 17, 2019

Day 14

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature**

First Session

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Party standings:

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, June 17, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Hon. members, the prayer. Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our Queen and her government, to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to all in positions of responsibility the guidance of Your spirit. May they never lead the province wrongly through love of power or desire to please or unworthy ideas but, laying aside all private interests and prejudices, keep in mind the responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

Hon. members, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, and children of all ages, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by R.J. Chambers. I would invite you to all join in in the language of your choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all of us command.
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,
Il sait porter la croix!
Ton histoire est une épopée
Des plus brillants exploits.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Thank you. You may be seated.

Hon. members, welcome back. It's a pleasure to see all of you. I might just add that I particularly appreciated the tempo of the national anthem today. It's like we won a national championship in basketball or something over the weekend.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Joining us today, this afternoon, we have a number of schools from the constituency of Red Deer-South. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

I'm also very pleased to welcome to the Speaker's gallery this afternoon with a very, very, very warm welcome our very own Deputy Chair of Committees' parents, Dr. A. Don Milliken and Dr. P. Jane Milliken.

As many of you will know, there are a number of constituency assistants in the capital region, and I have the pleasure of introducing mine. From the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, Brenda Berreth and Alana Gibson are with us in the Speaker's gallery.

I'm also pleased to welcome constituency assistants for the following constituencies: Central Peace-Notley, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain, Strathcona-Sherwood Park, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, Lacombe-Ponoka. Also, guests of the Member for Banff-Kananaskis: Owen Neal, Ed Masters, Roger Grant, Chuck Collins, Wayne Peterson. Guests of the MLA for Highwood: Mrs. Sigurdson – I believe that's the lovely spouse of the Member for Highwood – also Michele Mason and Drew Mason. From the constituency of Calgary-Fish Creek: Tasha Schindel, Justin Gotfried, and Vanessa Siso. I invite you to all rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Members' Statements

Toronto Raptors' NBA Championship

Mr. Schow: We the North, Mr. Speaker, and board man Kawhi Leonard is king. Shortly after this House adjourned last Thursday, the Toronto Raptors won the NBA title and brought the Larry O'Brien trophy home for the first time in the team's storied history. This is a big deal for Toronto since it doesn't see a lot of championships come through town, especially if you're a Toronto Maple Leafs fan. But I digress.

The Raptors' playoff journey began on April 13, when they opened their first series with a loss to the Orlando Magic, only to come back and win four straight and advance to face a young, energetic Philadelphia 76ers team. Round 2 proved to be a real test, forcing the Raptors to a game 7 and the brink of elimination. It saw one of the most dramatic buzzer beaters I have ever witnessed. In the dying seconds Kawhi Leonard hoisted a high-arching jumpshot, while falling out of bounds over seven-foot Joel Embiid, that bounced around the rim for an eternity and finally went through the mesh, sinking the City of Brotherly Love, an odd title for a city that once threw snowballs at Santa Claus.

With that, the Raptors made the eastern conference finals for the second time in franchise history, to face the Milwaukee Bucks. The Bucks fought hard, taking two early games in Toronto. However, in four consecutive games the Raptors completed a stunning come-from-behind series win to advance to their first-ever NBA finals, setting up a historic faceoff with the defending champs, the Golden State Warriors. The final series tipped off on May 30 and, with it, a battle that would last six games, but on Thursday, June 13, the final buzzer sounded, and the score clock read 114-110 in favour of the good guys.

Bill Russell famously said, "This game has always been and will always be about buckets." Well, the Raptors got buckets, and the board man got paid. This is the first championship of what should be many more, and I couldn't be more proud of this moment. We the North, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We the North, indeed. I might just let the House know that I believe that the Member for Cardston-Siksika is the first-ever Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to also have been a professional basketball player.

The Member for Calgary-McCall.

Federal Bill C-69

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under our government we worked hard to fight for our energy industry and protect the environment because we know that creating jobs and protecting our land, air, and water is not a zero-sum game. Unfortunately, we have failed to see this kind of leadership from current provincial and federal governments. In Alberta this government has repealed the climate leadership plan and questioned whether climate change is real. Federally the government has demonized our province's industry and ignored the debacle that is C-69. These efforts to polarize Canadians are dangerous and disturbing.

This is why our government put forward a number of common-sense changes to improve C-69. This included exempting in situ projects, establishing common-sense timelines, and ensuring that the federal government cannot overreach into our provincial jurisdiction. We were pleased to see that the new government here in Alberta fully adopted our amendments. Unfortunately, the federal government didn't follow suit. They rejected the vast majority of these amendments just this past week, which is likely to

create uncertainty and unnecessary delays and put important projects at risk.

1:40

There is no question that this is a step backward for all Canadians. Mr. Speaker, while this legislation may create many jobs for lawyers, it will do nothing to help our industry. Our caucus stands fundamentally opposed to this legislation, and we call on the federal government to reverse this attack on Alberta's industry and workers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Ponoka Stampede

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would first of all like to thank the voters of Lacombe, Ponoka, and Blackfalds for trusting me to be their voice in the Legislature for a second term.

Now for a few minutes I will speak about Canada's largest eight-day pro rodeo, that happens every year in my constituency. No, not the Calgary Stampede, the Ponoka Stampede. Yes, it is the largest rodeo in Canada on the professional circuit. This year the stampede will award \$800,000 in prize money. It is one of the five largest payout rodeos in the world, and the pro bull-riding event is the largest payout single-day event world-wide. This amazing week-long event will be from June 25 to July 1. What a great place to celebrate Canada Day.

The first Ponoka Stampede was held in 1936. Today it is way more than just a rodeo. It's a week-long party, a rural cultural pilgrimage, and a community achievement. From the volunteers to the competitors and visitors that it attracts from across Alberta and the world to the beer gardens to the many chuck wagon races to the country music shows to the three-mile-long parade, it is a week-long western whoop-up. The Ponoka Stampede is far more than just a rodeo; it's an 83-year tradition.

I say thank you to the many volunteers for the hours they put in. Year after year they build the stampede into a bigger and better experience. The Ponoka Stampede truly reflects what it means to be Albertan: work hard, ride hard, play hard, hang on for a wild ride, and get back on every time you get bucked off. When times are tough, your community rallies behind you. That's the spirit of western culture and Ponoka. They are willing to put everything aside to put on a great show, Albertans coming together from all walks of life to create something truly special. Eighty-three years of tradition, 800 volunteers, 80,000 visitors, \$800,000 in prize money: you don't want to miss it.

Federal Bills C-48 and C-69

Mr. Guthrie: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the incredible disservice the Trudeau government has done to not only the people of Alberta but all Canadians with the rejection of the Senate amendments to Bill C-69 and the Senate's decision to proceed on Bill C-48. This is far from what the provinces, industries, indigenous groups, the chambers of commerce, and municipalities across this country were asking for. The federal government has demonstrated incompetence with this devastating legislation and lack of respect for this country.

Mr. Speaker, this is more than just an attack on the energy sector. This is an attack on Alberta. This is an attack on our constitutional right to make exclusive laws in relation to the development, conservation, and management of our natural resources, and the simplicity of this attack is not lost on anybody in this province. This House, our cabinet, and, to my knowledge, all provincial parties

stand united against this intrusion and the Trudeau government's attempt to shut down our way of life. This is something that is unheard of. It takes a significant act of aggression towards our province for all major political parties to stand together, unequivocally, against such a foe.

Mr. Speaker, this House will not stand idly by while such incompetence threatens Alberta and the entire country's well-being. Our UCP government will continue to fight for Alberta's resources – our resources – and our ability to develop, conserve, and manage them. I ask all members and all Albertans to reach out to their MPs in Ottawa and tell them this is not right. This is overreach. This is fundamentally egregious to our economy. We, united as Albertans, will not go quietly into the night. The Trudeau Liberals had better brace for impact because Alberta is ready to rumble.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Filibuster of June 5 to 6 and Political Discourse

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fallacies are mistaken beliefs based on unsound arguments. Last week, in particular, the government made several unsound arguments. I'll begin with the Member for Banff-Kananaskis. In her member's statement she declared that the opposition doesn't believe in democracy. Her logic for this is based on the fact that we filibustered Bill 2. She goes on to say that we "filibustered a campaign promise" and that that is disrespectful to Albertans because the UCP is government. Excuse me, Mr. Speaker? On this side of the House we stood up for workers' rights. We said no to reducing youth minimum wage. We said no to denying time and a half for working overtime. Her comments on June 13, 2019, are ridiculous. They are fallacies, unsound arguments.

There are several other fallacies that the UCP members promote. However, due to time constraints I'll bring forward just one further egregious fallacy. The UCP members like to say that since they won the election, all dissenting voices, particularly those of the Official Opposition, should be dismissed. Again, Mr. Speaker, excuse me? Pardon? This is the very essence of democracy. Opposition parties have a valuable role to play in shaping policy. We shine the light on concerns that legislation proposed may cause. Indeed, that is what we are doing in our challenges regarding Bill 2, a bill that picks the pockets of workers.

Mr. Speaker, I caution UCP members to not act arrogantly. Voices, including minority voices, deserve to be heard. In fact, this is a fundamental aspect of human rights. Just because you have the majority doesn't mean you trample on the rights of others. In addition, 45 per cent of Albertans voted for a party other than the UCP. That's a lot of Albertans. I encourage some humbleness. A government has a responsibility . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Northern Wildfire Evacuations

Mr. Rehn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While in my constituency of Lesser Slave Lake, visiting evacuation centres that welcomed thousands of individuals who were forced out of their homes – and as I flew over fires that now cover more than 260,000 hectares in Lesser Slave Lake alone, I was deeply concerned. I felt the uncertainty, and I could see the displacement. I could hear the chaos amongst the families at the registration centres and throughout my communities. It was just last week that constituents in Wabasca, Peerless Trout, and Bigstone Cree Nation were granted access to their homes after more than two weeks of evacuation. These are not

just constituents; these are families, colleagues, friends, and neighbours.

Reflecting upon the last month, I can only say thank you. Thank you to all the firefighters from across Canada as well as those from the United States who helped us in our time of need. Reflecting upon the U.S. Forest Service, they provided their own experienced, selfless, and brave individuals from Montana, Idaho, California, Nevada, Oregon, and Wisconsin. In total there are 219 Americans fighting Alberta fires. Each of them, along with the thousands of Canadian first responders, represents hope. They represent unity, and they represent an Alberta that's not going down without a fight.

I am particularly grateful to the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs as well as their staff for their relentless availability, maintaining open lines of communication with chiefs, mayors, reeves, and myself as well as providing assistance that assured comfort among evacuees.

Mr. Speaker, Les Brown once said, "Our ability to handle life's challenges is a measure of our strength of character." If such is the case, I am blessed to represent some of the strongest communities with some of the most vibrant character one can find. On behalf of these communities I would like to thank all of those who helped us in our time of need.

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader is rising.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give oral notice of Government Motion 21.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly express its support for the government in its efforts to challenge the federal government's attempt to impose a carbon tax on Alberta, which this Assembly views as a clear violation of provincial jurisdiction, including the launching of a constitutional challenge if necessary, acknowledge the negative impacts that the carbon tax has had upon the people of Alberta, including the increased cost to heat homes and run businesses in the midst of an economic downturn, and recognize that Alberta's oil and gas industry continues to be global leaders in emission reductions.

I also want to give oral notice of the following bills: Bill 11, fair registration practice act, sponsored by my friend the hon. the Minister of Labour and Immigration; and Bill 12, the royalty guarantee act, sponsored by my friend the hon. the Minister of Energy.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition.

Public Service Contract Negotiations

Ms Notley: Well, welcome back to the Premier. You know, over the last little while your ministers have been involved in quite the pattern of incorrect fact provision. For instance, your Minister of Finance claimed last week that your bad-faith bargaining bill merely imposes a delay in legally mandated wage negotiations with public-sector workers, but the bill actually contains an omnibus clause that allows this government to impose new contracts on these workers without ever returning to the Legislature. To the Premier: will you at least admit to Alberta's front-line workers that your plan is to do a lot more than just a little delay in negotiations?

Mr. Kenney: I thank the hon. the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Mr. Speaker, it's incumbent upon the government to respect collective bargaining rights as well as to respect the best

interests of taxpayers. Therefore, the only prudent and responsible way to proceed is to have the time to receive the complete information on the fiscal state of the province, which we'll be doing next month, when the MacKinnon commission reports back to government, after which we can make an informed and prudent decision about the way forward on collective bargaining agreements.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, the bad-faith bargaining bill's omnibus clause authorizes any regulations required to carry out the intent of the act, and it references the so-called blue-ribbon panel, the chair of which is on the record advocating for wage cuts to front-line workers like nurses, paramedics, and teachers. To the Premier: will he assure this Assembly and, through it, the people of this province that under no circumstances will he be seeking wage rollbacks from unionized public-sector front-line workers?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, we will not be prejudging the outcome of that eminent panel, which is chaired by a former NDP Finance minister, an NDP Finance minister, Dr. MacKinnon, who actually balanced budgets, which has long been the tradition for the NDP in Saskatchewan but certainly wasn't the tradition for the NDP in Alberta, that drove us from a \$13 billion to a \$65 billion debt and had us on track for \$100 billion in public debt, running the largest per capita deficit in the Dominion of Canada.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's bad-faith bargaining bill is illegal. His minister has hidden the fact that it tries to authorize wage cuts to be made in the backroom, and he will not guarantee the hard-working front-line workers of this province that he will refrain from taking money from their pockets. To the Premier: why didn't you come clean with Albertans during the election, that your \$4.5 billion tax gift to wealthy corporations was going to be paid for by cutting the salaries of nurses, ambulance drivers, paramedics, teachers, and many, many more?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, it's evident that the NDP anger machine still has not learned that after they raised taxes on job creators, revenues went down. The Alberta government collects less from businesses today than it did before the NDP raised business taxes by 20 per cent. Why? They punished job creators, who ended up creating fewer jobs. We're going to do the opposite. We're going to grow the economy so that we can increase government revenues, in part to ensure the future of high-quality public services.

The Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: So, in short, he kept mum about this plan during the election. No mandate there, Mr. Speaker.

Worker Overtime Pay

Ms Notley: This UCP government is also attempting again to pull the wool over the eyes of working Albertans. The labour minister posted a graphic this weekend claiming that workers will earn the same once he's through cutting banked overtime from time and a half to straight time. This minister either doesn't understand basic math, doesn't understand his legislation, or, worst of all, intentionally says things publicly he knows are incorrect. There's a word for that, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier: why won't your minister come clean on the fact that cutting people's banked overtime rate means they earn less?

Mr. Kenney: Because it doesn't, Mr. Speaker. The legislation is very clear. We're simply returning to the rules that existed throughout Alberta history until about a year ago. Of course, it will not affect

any employee who does not enter into an agreement with their employer with respect to banked overtime. It empowers those employees with additional flexibility in dealing with employers. It does not affect conventional overtime pay whatsoever.

Ms Notley: Well, it appears the Premier is doubling down on things that are not true.

The minister claimed his ridiculous math was actually verified by academics and experts but, strangely, did not list any of them, and he did not respond to questions seeking their names when asked by an interested public. To the minister: can you please list the experts and validators, or was that, too, a continuation of the pattern of regularly intentionally saying things that are full of incorrect facts?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, there have been no shortage of comments from labour lawyers and others confirming what is clearly black and white in the legislation, that this does not, contrary to the NDP's fear-and-smear tactics, affect in any way conventional overtime. Rather, it returns to workers the ability to negotiate voluntary agreements with employers to give them additional flexibility in how they schedule their time at work. We're empowering workers, and no one will be losing conventional overtime as a result.

Ms Notley: The Premier is incorrect. These agreements are not voluntary. He knows it.

Let me simplify this for the minister and the Premier. Before the pick-your-pockets bill a construction worker who puts in two weeks of overtime can take his family camping this summer for three weeks and get a paycheque every week. After the pick-your-pockets bill that construction worker will only get paid for two weeks on his camping trip and will have to have no pay in the third week – guess he's going hunting with the House leader – so a week less of pay. What part of this is too complicated for the minister or the Premier to understand? Would perhaps a meme help, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition clearly misunderstands the simple meaning of the bill, but I grasp that because the NDP understands economics generally, which is why they drove us into a jobs crisis in this province, with nearly 200,000 unemployed Albertans. Our economy shrank by 4 per cent under NDP mismanagement. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order!

Mr. Kenney: Average family incomes were down by 6 per cent under the NDP. Taxes were up; jobs were down. We're turning it around with our job-creation strategy.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has the call.

Gay-Straight Alliances in Schools and Bill 8

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a public servant I worked directly on the Education Act under previous Conservative governments. Under Bill 8, the government's act, the major pieces of policy in the original legislation have been shelved while the amendments the NDP government made to the School Act around school fees, superintendent compensation, and trustee code of conduct have all been kept. All that's left is an act to destroy GSAs and out LGBTQ students. Like my colleagues, I think this legislation is better described as Bill Hate. To the Minister of Education: why are you in such a rush to ram through an attack on LGBTQ youth while letting other pieces of the Education Act slide?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. I'm not sure what the MLA for Edmonton-Whitemud means when she said that the bill that we have proposed is nowhere close to the one that she worked on. Nothing has changed in the Education Act since that MLA worked on it. It was passed in 2012, amended in 2015, and I actually have a copy ready to go to print from 2016.

Thank you.

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

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Minister of Education would like to read her own bill, Bill 8, which significantly amends the Education Act as well as the previous versions – Bill 24, the School Act – and she'd see that changes have been made.

Thank you. The minister has said that critical pieces of the original Education Act, like extending the age of access, compulsory attendance, and other items will require further consultation before they're put into effect, but the minister apparently sees no need to consult further before destroying GSAs despite mounting opposition from students, teachers, and parents. To the minister: are you worried about consulting further before you take away the rights of LGBTQ youth because you know that the majority of Albertans don't agree with it?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. My office and I have met with numerous, numerous stakeholders, including students, parents, system administrators, trustees, and teachers – and I can quote many of them – who support the amendments that we're bringing forward, including the college of Alberta superintendents, who say that they believe Bill 8... [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, including the Minister of Education, we heard the question; we will hear the answer no matter how long that takes.

Hon. Minister of Education, if you'd like to conclude.

2:00

Member LaGrange: Thank you. Bevan Daverne, president-elect of the College of Alberta School Superintendents says, quote, CASS strongly believes Bill 8 demonstrates a willingness of the government to consider stakeholder feedback and to collaborate with education partners to support students in Alberta's world-class education system. We are looking forward to the opportunity to support them.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't sound like the minister has spoken to any LGBTQ students, but that's fine.

The Education Act that's before this House is not transformative; well, unless you're a queer or trans student. It is simply a vehicle to drive through an anti-LGBTQ agenda that this Premier has been working on for decades. Students will be outed, they will have no right to form an actual gay-straight alliance, and schools won't be held accountable for refusing to support GSAs. To the Premier. This clearly is not the Education Act. This clearly is not transformative. Why are you so determined to create a vehicle to harm LGBTQ youth?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Again, our government has been very clear. We oppose the mandatory parental notification for any student. We will have amongst the most comprehensive, which means that someone has to be on top I reiterate that we will have the most comprehensive protections for LGBTQ-plus students in Canada.

Thank you.

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much. What a timely statement from the Education minister.

On June 3 the Premier told this House and I'm quoting from *Hansard*, "Our government will maintain the strongest legal protections for gay-straight alliances of any province in Canada," and his cabinet ministers repeated it many times since. Yet late Friday afternoon the Minister of Education released a statement that says that Albertans "will have among the most comprehensive statutory protections for gay-straight alliances (GSAs) in Canada." Those two are very different things. Has the Premier read his Education minister's statement, and is he now ready to apologize for making misleading statements to the people of Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education is rising.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. The Premier and I are on the same page on this. We know that we will have the most comprehensive protections for LGBTQ students in Canada. Nova Scotia and B.C. have ministerial orders and policy, not statutory protections like we will have.

Thank you.

Ms Ganley: Last week this opposition tabled written proof that Nova Scotia, Ontario, and British Columbia all have stronger legal protections than those in Bill Hate. Now that they have been caught, the Education minister has conceded in writing that Bill Hate rolls back the rights of students seeking to form a GSA, taking us from the best in the country to somewhere in the pack. Has the Premier actually read his own legislation, or is he relying on the advice of people like John Carpay and the member for Drayton Valley-Devon to advise him on how best to take away the rights of LGBTQ youth?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. The opposition knows that regardless of how it describes it, the legal protections are clear and comprehensive under Bill 8, the Education Act, and our province's privacy legislation, FOIP and PIPA, which supersedes other pieces of legislation. It's time for the NDP to stop using these students as political props. [interjections]

Thank you.

The Speaker: Order. Order. We will have order.

Ms Ganley: Strong, stronger, strongest: I think you learn that in the third grade, Mr. Speaker. We know that there were 28 Alberta private schools due to lose their funding for refusing to accept gay-straight alliances, refusing to allow the words "gay" or "queer" in their school policies, and for developing GSA policies that were hateful or discriminatory. Schools that don't follow the law should not be funded. Accepting the rights of LGBTQ youth is the law. To the Premier: will you admit that the reason you're ramming through Bill Hate is because you want these schools to get a pass?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education is rising.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Once again, our government will have the most comprehensive statutory protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirited students, period. As far as the private schools, students attending private schools will receive the same protections under section 35.1. It is the law. They will have to follow the law.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain.

Highway 628 Capital Plan

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Highway 628 is a vital transportation link that runs in an east-west direction and connects the town of Stony Plain to the Whitemud freeway in Edmonton. Previous governments committed to a reconstruction of highway 628, a project that is of an extremely high priority to everyone in the tri region. However, after years of neglect resulting in unsafe driving conditions that have claimed many lives, this project remains unfinished. To the Minister of Transportation: what is the current status of this project, and can the residents of Spruce Grove and Stony Plain finally get this major transportation link completed?

The Speaker: The Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question and for his advocacy. We understand the importance of highway 628 to the local residents and commuters that use it. Approximately 5,000 vehicles a day use this road. This summer, as necessary, maintenance work will be continued to ensure surface and gravel sections of 628 remain safe for travel. The project will be considered along other important capital projects in the province as we go through our capital planning and budget process. [interjection]

Mr. Turton: To the minister: given that this government has committed to working with our First Nations communities to provide greater access to economic opportunities and given that a better, safer reconstruction of the highway will increase access to multiple urban centres, will the minister commit to extending highway 628 eastward past highway 60 to the Whitemud freeway in Edmonton, giving Enoch First Nation better transportation options for the benefit of their residents?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, I heard the member of the opposition calling to toll the road. We won't be doing that. What we will be doing is that we're committed to working with our First Nations communities on projects that will contribute to their success. We understand the importance of this project to First Nations communities and other citizens of Alberta that use this road. As noted, the project is under review. We will put it through our capital planning and budget process. This is an important project. We'll take it seriously, and when we make a decision, we will report the decision.

Mr. Turton: Again to the Minister of Transportation: given that the congestion on highway 16 is a barrier to a timely commute for the many constituents of Spruce Grove and Stony Plain who work in Edmonton and given that highway 628 in its current state is not at this point in time a safe alternative and given that this project has been a major issue for my constituents for a very long time, what is

this government doing to make sure that the reconstruction of this important highway is completed in a timely manner?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. member to know that safety is a top concern of our ministry. Based on what I just heard in the House, we will make sure somebody goes out and makes sure that is in safe condition today. The project will be considered in upcoming budget discussions. Our capital plan puts a high priority on safety among improving commute times and reducing congestion on highways across Alberta. [interjection] Even if the hon. member across doesn't care about safety, we do, and we'll look at it.

Alberta Energy Regulator Board of Directors

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, during the election the UCP made a bunch of promises, hundreds of them, actually. Some of them they're actually keeping, like rolling back protections for LGBTQ youth, but some of them we're not so sure of. One of the strange and petty pledges that they made was to fire the entire board of the AER. To the environment minister: what's the status of the board of the AER, and when will you be handing out their pink slips?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, it doesn't surprise me to see the opposition critic again making things up inside the Assembly from what I can tell. We will evaluate the AER. We're in the process of doing that together, the Energy minister and I. We will work together through that process to come up with a plan that works for Albertans. We'll have more to say about it in the coming weeks.

2:10

Mr. Schmidt: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would refer that hon. member to several points of order that he's made up in the past about me.

Given that the board includes Jack Royal, chairman of the Indian Business Corporation, and Chairman Sheila O'Brien, an experienced energy senior executive, and given that the new government is best served by the expertise and experience of their officials and given that the job of the AER is to make sure that we develop our natural resources responsibly, can the minister please explain what he has against all of these individuals, and was he simply planning to fire them to avoid criticism for not having a real plan to deal with climate change?

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will have a very different approach when it comes to the AER. We'll be working with the AER to help work with our industry. This side of the House is proud of the oil and gas industry. I can tell you what will not be happening. We will not be having people like Ed Whittingham, who the NDP put on the Alberta Energy Regulator during their time, who is anti oil and gas, anti energy industry, as the NDP was. Our focus, again, will be on working with our energy industry. We're proud of our energy industry. We're proud of our record, and that's where we'll be headed when we work with the AER.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that the work of the AER includes allocating and conserving water, managing public lands, monitoring industry activity, assessing environmental risk of proposed energy projects, and much more, to the minister: which of these responsibilities most offends you?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, all of those issues are important. None of them offend me. What offends me, again, was the NDP when they were in power putting people like Ed Whittingham onto

the AER. That's what offends Albertans. The NDP's record when it comes to defending our oil and gas industry is also what offends me. Luckily and fortunately, on April 16 Albertans chose a government that will stand for the oil and gas industry, that will stand with the people that work inside the industry. It's a big contrast to what we saw with the NDP government when they were in power.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-McCall.

Electricity Market Review

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I noted with interest that late Friday afternoon the government decided to pass the transition to a capacity electricity market. Fridays are not usually when government announces things they are most proud of. I wonder if this is yet another example of the government finding ways to pay for the big corporate tax giveaways out of the wallets of Alberta families. To the minister: how will spending your summer with industry insiders make electricity affordable and predictable for regular Alberta families?

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy.

Mrs. Savage: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We committed to a 90-day review of the electricity market, whether we stay with an energy market or go to a capacity market. Unlike the previous government, we are taking this time to consult with Albertans, to listen to Albertans, and to find the right balance and make sure we have an energy sector that is reliable, affordable, and is something that serves Albertans and their best interests.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are other opportunities to consult.

Given that the transition to a capacity market was proposed by the Alberta Electric System Operator and given that substantial work has already been done to ensure a smooth and orderly transition to a capacity market by 2021, can the minister explain why she is engaging in this last-minute political interference?

Mrs. Savage: Mr. Speaker, we are taking the time to consult with all Albertans, to consult with generators, to consult with distributors, and we are asking for an electricity system that is reliable, affordable, and attracts investment. We will take our time to get it right because we know that on many things the previous government took an ideological approach that was not in the best interests of Albertans.

The Speaker: The member.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was AESO who recommended that transition.

Given that the transition to a capacity market will ensure that Albertans have stable access to electricity and will increase our capacity to renewables and given that Albertans need access to affordable electricity, not a return to the chaos of deregulation, will the minister commit here and now to maintaining the electricity price cap?

Mrs. Savage: Mr. Speaker, the previous government cost Albertans billions of dollars in mismanaged electricity. We are taking our time to ask the right questions, to set up a framework that will serve Albertans best in the future based on affordability, reliability, and the ability to attract investment in electricity.

The Speaker: The Member for Drayton Valley-Devon is rising with a question.

Support for the Energy Industry

Mr. Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our United Conservative government campaigned on rebuilding the Alberta economy and on getting Albertans back to work. The NDP's record of mismanagement has led to a 10.6 per cent unemployment rate amongst my constituents. Drayton Valley-Devon was once a leader for Alberta's modern oil and gas industry but now suffers from economic devastation. My constituents want to see oil and gas workers back to work, the completion of pipelines to tidewater, and the chance for small, family-oriented companies to once again flourish. To the minister: can you outline for my constituents your short-term goals to revitalize our energy sector?

Mrs. Savage: Mr. Speaker, we have nearly 200,000 oil and gas workers out of work in our province. We have staggering decline in investment in our energy sector. In 2018 we had drilling activity decline in Alberta by 8 per cent whereas it grew in the United States by 18 per cent. We have a problem. Since taking office a little over a month ago, we have been relentless in taking steps to attract investment back with our job-creation tax cut, open for business, red tape reduction, and we're working with . . .

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

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many hard-working Albertans such as drillers, truck drivers, and mechanics, just to name a few professions, want to get back to work, the work that they love, and given that the innovation in energy sources like geothermal technologies is a big topic of conversation in my constituency, to the minister: is our government willing to take these innovative ideas into consideration as potential solutions for my constituents, and what steps are you taking to develop additional energy sources like geothermal?

Mrs. Savage: Mr. Speaker, we're excited about the potential for geothermal in Alberta. It's innovative technologies like geothermal that'll help diversify our natural resource potential. There are several companies here in Alberta that have expressed interest in developing this potential. Alberta is already a leader in drilling technology, and we know that we can be leaders in geothermal, and we are happy to work with any company that wants to invest here.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, given that Alberta is an energy province and given that one form of energy that is becoming increasingly important in the world is the production of lithium and given that Alberta has underground salt lakes from which lithium can be harvested, can the minister explain how this government can encourage a new industry such as lithium and help put people in my constituency back to work drilling for another Alberta energy product?

Mrs. Savage: Mr. Speaker, we're also very excited about the potential for lithium here in Alberta and understand that we have some very rich lithium brines in the Devonian formations near Fox Creek, Leduc, and Swan Hills. Encouraging investment in geothermal and lithium production is important for Alberta and important to diversifying our economy, and that's why we are taking steps to make Alberta the most competitive jurisdiction in all of North America to attract companies and innovation.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Mobile-home Owner Consumer Protection

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For years mobile-home owners have come to me with stories of sky-high lot rents and unaccountable management bodies. There are more than 30,000 Albertans living in mobile-home communities across our province. People purchase a mobile home with the belief that it will be an affordable way in to home ownership. However, the sad reality is that people are being priced out of their own homes because they can't afford to pay lot fees, which climb to upwards of \$1,000 a month. To the Minister of Service Alberta: will you commit today to launch a review of the Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Act?

The Speaker: The Minister of Service Alberta is rising.

Mr. Glubish: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question. Thank you to the member opposite for bringing up this important topic. We know that mobile-home tenants and landlords have different concerns than do those living in and owning other residential property. We are hearing Albertans' concerns and are taking their concerns seriously. We are continuing to consult and encourage mobile-home site tenants and landlords to forward suggestions for amendments to the current legislation to rta@gov.ab.ca.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that mobile-home residents do not have any recourse against their management bodies and given that in many cases their lot rents have become higher than the mortgage payments for the home itself and given that these residents want access to the residential tenancy dispute resolution service, to the minister: will you consider giving the residents some form of recourse that allows them to avoid the costs, intimidation, and time commitment of taking these matters to court?

2:20

The Speaker: The Minister of Service Alberta.

Mr. Glubish: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we have heard some concerns from the public, and we are listening to those concerns. I want to remind all Albertans, including the member opposite, that my door is open and I welcome discussions on this very important issue. It is also good to note that if someone wants to be added to the stakeholder list, they can also send an e-mail to the address I mentioned earlier, rta@gov.ab.ca. Our government is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all Albertans, so we will continue to meet with stakeholders and those with concerns to better understand this issue.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many of the residents living in mobile homes are seniors and given that I've actually heard from seniors who were trapped in their homes because snow and ice wasn't cleared by the responsible management bodies and given that many seniors living on fixed incomes are asking how they are supposed to afford the rising costs with no way to pay for them, to the Minister of Seniors and Housing: what are doing to assist these residents, and do you believe they deserve a review of the act to ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed?

Mr. Glubish: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to remind the member opposite that they had four years to act on this file, and if he's not happy with the current status, he should speak with his caucus colleagues. While he's doing that, our government will continue to meet and consult because we are committed to ensuring the safety and security of Albertans, including seniors. If the member has specific concerns, I would be pleased to meet with him outside of this Chamber to discuss this very important matter.

Bill 7 Consultation

Member Ceci: Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs why he failed to consult with Alberta's municipalities on Bill 7. His response was that he had given municipalities "a heads-up on the priorities of our ministry." Simply telling people what you're going to do to them is not consultation. Now, my caucus and I have been doing the consultation this minister skipped, and we're hearing that his priorities are creating a race to the bottom for municipalities. To the minister: why won't you actually start listening to municipalities and stop your race-to-the-bottom bill?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. In the last election municipalities asked us to give them more powers when it comes to offering tax incentives. We ran on this, and we were given a record mandate from Albertans to implement it. Since introducing Bill 7, we have had a lot of positive feedback from municipalities and business leaders.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: Thank you very much. Given that municipalities have expressed concerns to us about not being consulted and given that municipalities have raised concerns about how this might impact industry in places like the Industrial Heartland, which rely on regional co-operation between municipalities, co-operation that could be impacted negatively by this bill, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: did you avoid consulting because you don't understand how important regional co-operation is, or is it that you simply don't care?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Once again, we have heard from a few municipalities. This is coming from the Fort Saskatchewan mayor, Gale Katchur. She said: municipalities have been lobbying the provincial government to improve the competitive landscape for investments through an incentive program; the city of Fort Saskatchewan looks forward to working with the provincial government and our regional partners to develop this overall Alberta-based approaches to attract investment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Member Ceci: Well, seeing as there are 342 municipalities, Mr. Speaker, it'd be interesting to hear the complete list. Given that we've heard from municipalities who weren't consulted on this legislation and given that we've heard from municipalities who weren't asking for this legislation and given that we heard from municipalities who are worried about how this legislation might impact their municipalities, their ratepayers, and their industries, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: will the minister today table a complete list of everyone who has been consulted about this legislation and their feedback? If he won't, is it because . . .

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The one thing we will not take from the NDP is lecturing us on how to create a viable environment for our businesses to do well. We ran on the promise to reignite our economy, give our municipalities the tools that they need to make sure they attract businesses. That is what we have done. It's a promise made, a promise kept.

The Speaker: The Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Pipeline Development

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 24 the people of Alberta won. They won because the B.C. Court of Appeal ruled that British Columbia's ideological NDP government cannot impose environmental laws aimed at killing the Trans Mountain pipeline. Alberta has continuously been attacked by other jurisdictions and interest groups, and it's nice to see a change. With this win and a new government that is committed to building pipelines, Alberta's hopes of getting a pipeline to tidewater grow. To the minister. There is still a lot of work to do. How do you intend on getting pipelines built when we still face so much opposition?

Mrs. Savage: Thank you for that question. I would like to point out that it was exactly exactly five years ago today, on June 17, 2014, when the federal cabinet approved the Northern Gateway pipeline. The Northern Gateway pipeline, much like the Trans Mountain pipeline, at the time had the support of the majority of Canadians, not only Albertans but Canadians and British Columbians. But we know that that's not always enough to get a pipeline built, and that's why our government is taking a stronger approach to stand up and fight for pipelines.

The Speaker: The Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious that Alberta needs new pipelines in order for our energy sector to thrive. Given that numerous foreign interest groups sink millions of dollars into land-locking Alberta energy and given that the Alberta government has pledged to create an energy war room to take the fight to them and given that social media platforms these foreign interest groups use have been proven to be an uncontrollable platform of both good and bad information, how exactly does the minister plan to combat the barrage of negative attacks and the spreading of misinformation?

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy has the call.

Mrs. Savage: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is exactly why we're setting up the energy war room, to dispel the myths and lies about our energy sector. Governments have been far too complacent for far too long. We've already started to fight back, and we started that with the Trans Mountain Yes to TMX ad campaign. We launched our more assertive approach to fighting against C-69 and C-48. More recently I sent a letter to *National Geographic* dispelling the myths and the lies that were in their article, and we're setting up a public inquiry into foreign sources of foreign funding.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's our hope, of course, that new pipelines are in our future. Given that these pipelines are largely supported by the vast majority of communities in Alberta and British Columbia and given that a majority of First Nations have also shown their support and wish to be a partner in the

development of our resources, how does the minister plan to work with indigenous groups who are in opposition to the development of pipelines?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mrs. Savage: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the majority of indigenous people support the Trans Mountain pipeline. There are over 130 First Nations who want to be participants and want to purchase and have an equity stake in the pipeline, so we are taking steps to support these groups, to support indigenous groups that are pro development. We're doing that through things like our indigenous opportunity corporation, that will help them buy equity, and through helping to fund pro-development groups to litigate with our \$10 million litigation fund.

Artificial Intelligence Industry

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, Alberta is ranked third in the world for artificial intelligence and machine learning, and because of this, companies such as Google DeepMind have opened their first facility outside of the U.K. here in Edmonton, Alberta. Our NDP government recognized the critical timing of investing in AI, committing \$100 million over five years to ensure that Alberta remains a world leader. We clearly put a stake in the ground, sending a message to the world that Alberta is open for business when it comes to high tech and AI. To the minister of economic development: are you pulling that stake out of the ground, or will you commit to fully supporting the AI commitment we made?

The Speaker: The Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism.

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fixing Alberta's fiscal and economic problems is job number one. We support programs to get Albertans back to work, but Albertans deserve fair return for their money. Programs such as the Alberta investor tax credit is a program that we are taking a close look at to determine whether it's a good program for Albertans.

Mr. Bilous: I appreciate that the minister is not just cutting that program.

Given that talent is the most important element in determining where tech companies like Apple, Google, and Facebook will go and given that low taxes are not a factor in their decision without a talent pipeline, they will go elsewhere and given that our NDP government made a \$50 million investment in high-tech seats at postsecondary institutions, resulting in 6,000 more grads, to the same minister: what steps have you taken to ensure that we will continue to develop talent to attract these tech giants?

2:30

The Speaker: The Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism.

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government will not take economic lessons from the previous government. What we are doing to attract investment in artificial intelligence to this province is attracting all sorts of investment through reducing red tape, scrapping the carbon tax, and introducing our job-creation tax cut. That will continue to attract all types of investment to our province. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, we'll have order.

Mr. Bilous: Clearly, the minister has not met with these companies.

Given that under our NDP government we put Alberta boots on the ground in Silicon Valley to attract investment back home and to support Alberta companies and given that our government worked with Air Canada, EIA, city of Edmonton, and the business community to secure a direct flight from Edmonton to San Francisco, will the minister commit to continuing the incredible work we started or will she tell Apple, Google, Facebook, and Microsoft that Alberta is closed for business because this UCP government doesn't understand the tech industry?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism.

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The incredible work the previous government did of driving us on a path towards \$100 billion in debt, mortgaging the future of our children and grandchildren – the NDP drove Alberta into a jobs crisis. They drove investment out of Alberta. That's why Albertans elected this government, to get Albertans working again and attract investment to this province.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Manning is rising with a question.

Out-of-province Health Services

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A constituent of mine, Rajdeep, was on his way back to Alberta when he began to experience cognitive issues during a layover in Vancouver. He was moved to a B.C. hospital, but his condition became worse, and he is currently in a coma. Rajdeep's family requested assistance from this Health minister on May 15 to have Rajdeep transferred to Alberta. It is unacceptable that when Rajdeep's family asked this government for help, the Health minister's office said that they were unwilling to pay for an air ambulance or provide any assistance. To the Minister of Health: why didn't you do more to bring Rajdeep home to his family?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I thank the member for the e-mail that was forwarded to me. I am happy to continue to try to get answers for her constituent on that issue.

Ms Sweet: Well, given that one can only imagine the distress that Rajdeep's family was in, being away from him during this difficult time, and that there is precedence for governments to help cover the costs of helping Albertans to get home to be with their families and to get the care and support that they need and given that the compassionate thing to do was just to help this family in their time of need, without delay, again to the Minister of Health: will you do what you should have done from the very start and cover the \$16,705 bill that the family had to pay out of pocket to get Rajdeep home?

Mr. Shandro: I think, Mr. Speaker, what I'm being asked to do is adjudicate a specific claim here on the floor of this Chamber, and I don't think that's responsible. I'm happy to take the concerns of the constituent of the hon. member and to get answers for that constituent so that they can understand what happened.

Ms Sweet: Well, unfortunately, Minister, that's not good enough.

Given that the Health minister's office was made aware again of this issue on May 15 through my office and took eight full days to get back to my constituent's family, only then to decline them assistance, and given that I again personally followed up with the

minister last Monday, again asking for assistance for this family, to the Minister of Health: will you at least apologize to this family for the undue stress that you have caused given your inadequate and irresponsible response to this family?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, a process is in place in the ministry and within AHS to decide on these types of issues. I don't think it's responsible for a minister to be adjudicating on a case-by-case basis here on the floor of the Chamber. I'm happy to try and find the answers for this constituent.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland is rising.

Highway 60 Overpass

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The impacts of the economic downturn have affected all Albertans. In our area the largest impacts have been to the energy sector and also in the mining industry, a direct result of the NDP's premature phase-out of coal-generated power. The accelerated coal phase-out is not only killing jobs but it's also destroyed the tax base in the county of Parkland. Before the election there was an announcement for the construction of a highway 60 overpass, which would alleviate the traffic issues where a CN Rail line meets highway traffic. This overpass is vital to the industrial park's expansion, local businesses as well as fire and ambulance service in our area. To the Minister of Transportation: are you able to advise that the plans for the highway 60 overpass are proceeding?

The Speaker: The Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for the question and his advocacy. I'd like him to know that the planning and design are completed for the twinning project. There are about 15,000 vehicles that travel this stretch of highway 60 every day, and 25 per cent of that is trucks. I understand it's a high-priority project for the area. As you know, our government is currently reviewing all projects to determine funding alongside other priorities. I will report this project when we get done the budget and capital planning process.

Mr. Getson: Given that the former government ignored how large a local impact the accelerated, premature closure of those coal mines would be and given that the overpass would at minimum reduce the severity of the economic impact of that decision on the business community and serve as a much-needed access for those vehicles, will the minister confirm that projects such as the overpass that assist in the generation of revenue will take priority over the feel-good, cash-hole projects promised by the province's government on their way out the door?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, the thoughtlessness of the NDP government has caused needless pain all across Alberta but especially in coal-producing areas. I understand that this project is a high priority for the member and his constituents and that it has a positive effect on the vitality of the region. My department is working on securing the necessary lands for this project as well as relocating utilities before we can proceed further. I urge the hon. member to stay in touch on this one as we go.

Mr. Getson: Well, the minister has pretty much answered my question here, but this may be a little extra . . .

The Speaker: You can take a pass.

Mr. Getson: I might have to take a pass.

I really appreciate your answers, sir, and we'll get back to our constituencies. I want to ask if you would be willing to meet with the business owners out in the area as well as the county of Parkland to just bring them up to speed as well?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. You don't usually get reviews that good, so thank you. I will say, to answer the hon. member's question, that it would be my pleasure, at a time that you and I mutually arrange, to schedule a meeting with the good people from Parkland county and the good people from the Acheson Business Association, and we could talk about this further.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Corporate Taxation and Job Creation

Mr. Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 16, 2019, Albertans overwhelmingly chose to elect a UCP government on a mandate of reversing the damages caused by negligent and harmful NDP socialist policies. Will the Minister of Treasury Board and Finance explain how the job-creation tax cut will benefit my constituents in Sherwood Park and all Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sherwood Park chamber of commerce executive director, Todd Banks, recently expressed optimism about the government's business-friendly policies. He said, and I quote: in the past four weeks just talking to our membership, there's a feeling of optimism by members and their businesses that will trickle down into jobs. Our commitment to Sherwood Park and to all Alberta is to make Alberta one of the most competitive places in North America, attracting new businesses and bringing thousands of jobs back into this province.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Mr. Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Wow. That's great news.

Back to the minister. Given that government revenues declined when the NDP increased taxes, causing reduced competitiveness of small Alberta businesses, and given that their reduced competitiveness affected the ability of these small Alberta companies to gainfully employ young people and given that youth unemployment rose to staggering levels under the NDP, can the minister please expound on how the job-creation tax cut will bring opportunity back to our next generation of Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member was correct. In fact, when the members opposite were in government, when they raised corporate taxes, they actually collected less corporate tax revenue the next year. Under the NDP government youth unemployment rose to its highest levels in recent memory. The real minimum wage for far too many youth is zero dollars per hour. Bill 2 and Bill 3 will create opportunity and bring back employment and get our youth the much-needed jobs they need.

2:40

The Speaker: The Member for Sherwood Park.

Mr. Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. Given our promise that we will honour our platform commitment to get Albertans back to work and given that Alberta must compete nationally and globally to ensure prosperity here at home, will the minister please explain how the job-creation tax cut will make Alberta competitive again, nationally and globally?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the midst of one of the worst recessions in this province's history the members opposite, when they were in government, implemented a 20 per cent increase in corporate taxes and the largest tax increase in the province's history without advising Albertans, the job-killing carbon tax. Our government is reversing those policies. We will bring employment and opportunity back into this province.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds or less we will move to the introduction of bills. Those of you that may have other engagements, I encourage you to exit the Chamber expeditiously.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: Does anyone have a document to table? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite number of copies of an e-mail from a family in my riding concerned that the Premier and the government are headed down the wrong path about the environment, and they want to know what the plan actually is.

Orders of the Day

The Speaker: Hon. members, ordres du jour.

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 201

Protection of Students with Life-threatening Allergies Act

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville is rising.

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move second reading of Bill 201.

Someone can have a life-threatening allergy and not know it until they have a severe reaction. This was my experience with myself and my children. While I knew my allergies and their severity, I had no idea they had passed on to my children. Bill 201 was inspired by my own experience as someone who suffers from life-threatening allergies and as a mother of two children with life-threatening allergies.

My personal story is what drove me to create Bill 201. The first is my children's allergies, which developed at ages two and five, and the other is as an adult with a life-threatening allergy. I've had accidental contacts with allergens that have given me anaphylactic reactions. An incident that happened to me as an adult: I had eaten a small piece of chicken, thinking it was coated in bread crumbs, but it was actually coated in pecans. It was one of my worst allergies. I went into severe anaphylactic shock; unable to breathe, eyes and throat were swelling, and, very confused, was unable to give myself my own EpiPen. I relied on a stranger to help me.

Bill 201 will do two things. One, it will mandate the presence of EpiPens in our schools. This would be the first in Canada. Two, it would mirror many of the great policies from Ontario's Sabrina's Law.

The bill applies to schools governed by the School Act and the Northland School Division Act.

An EpiPen is a standard dosage of epinephrine. When someone has a life-threatening reaction, epinephrine is the only medication that can save someone's life.

The primary responsibility for a student's allergy is the student's and their parents'. I don't want anyone to think that there's a shift in responsibility from families to schools. One reason for schools to have EpiPens on hand is in the case that someone doesn't know they have an allergy and then has a life-threatening reaction. Another reason is for those students with an EpiPen at school that cannot reach it during a crisis. Sabrina's Law was named after a child who had an EpiPen in their locker but could not reach it in time.

The other part of my bill will follow Ontario's Sabrina's Law. It mandates that schools have anaphylactic policies to reduce exposure to allergens. It also mandates that schools have a communication policy to distribute information about life-threatening allergies. Additionally, schools will need to keep a plan for children with life-threatening allergies on hand. Parents are responsible for supplying the key medical information and keeping it up to date. Schools must have regular training for their employees. Food Allergy Canada has a free 30-minute online course for educators and for the general public. I think this would be sufficient as far as the bill is concerned.

Boards will have the freedom to develop what they consider to be the appropriate level of training. Some have been concerned about the level of training, but an EpiPen is a standard dosage and is generally self-administered. Anyone who has ever used an EpiPen knows that it's orange to the thigh, blue to the sky. Training should be enough that an employee could help a student with a life-threatening allergic reaction without taking time away from other classroom initiatives. Employees will have liability protection when helping a student. They will have peace of mind knowing they can help a child and maybe save a life without fear of legal consequences.

Consultation was done with groups such as the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Boards Association, Food Allergy Canada, and the College of Alberta School Superintendents. The Alberta Teachers' Association is supportive of the bill. We are on the same page with training being sufficient for teachers to help a child in need without taking away from other classroom priorities. The ATA also appreciates the fact that EpiPens are standard doses and are autoinjectors. They do not need to be medical professionals to offer students assistance.

Superintendents and boards have some concerns, which we think we've addressed. There are concerns about liability for boards and staff, but Bill 201 provides liability protection for employees that help save a child's life. As requested, boards will have the freedom to acquire EpiPens in their own way. There are concerns about the costs of EpiPens, but many schools have had EpiPens on hand. I've donated to my school in the past, as many other parents have. We will be working with nonprofits to help lower the costs as much as possible.

I've been delighted with the feedback from the education community. I've received letters of support from school boards, administrators, teachers, and parents across Canada. The feedback has been supportive because they feel that this is the right approach to making our schools safer for children. Many of our schools already have policies in place and are proactively looking after kids.

We just want to make sure that there is a standard across the province.

When my daughter was two years old, she had spent the day with her grandparents. We had no idea she had any allergies. She had never even had an allergic reaction in her life. On that fateful day my daughter was visiting her grandparents, and like many grandparents, they'd left candies and nuts out on the table. I picked her up in the afternoon, went home, and then came back in the evening for another visit. She ate one peanut that she found on the floor, and went into severe anaphylactic shock.

Luckily, because of my own allergies, I recognized the signs of anaphylactic reaction. I gave her medication, but she got worse. Repeated shots of epinephrine did nothing to stabilize her, and she began the fight of her life. We took her to the hospital. They gave her more medication to save her life as we went by ambulance from Vegreville to Edmonton. Her condition was so severe that at one point STARS was hovering above us, just in case we needed them for a traffic jam. None of the medication was working, and at one point I decided to hold her straight up in the air so that she could breathe easier. She was blue and limp. Her eyes and face were swollen beyond recognition. But by a miracle, the peanut left her system, and she started to get better.

2:50

I made a promise that day to my God that I would advocate for children with life-threatening allergies. In 2007 I joined an ASBA advisory panel for anaphylaxis. I worked with a parent who is anaphylactic and has children who are anaphylactic. I worked with administrators, teachers, and anaphylaxis Canada to make our schools safer for children with life-threatening allergies. This bill will help families avoid reliving my own personal experience.

I hope that the House finds this bill in the best interest of these children and that it will support it. Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to Bill 201? The hon. Member for Camrose.

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and speak in support of Bill 201, Protection of Students with Life-threatening Allergies Act. I want to thank my colleague the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for bringing forward this important piece of legislation. As someone who personally suffers from allergies, I understand the importance of being diligent about exposure to allergens and the critical need for EpiPens in the event of an anaphylactic reaction.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 201 is a common-sense piece of legislation. At the core of this bill is the protection of our children when they're at school. My hon. colleague from Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville has already shared with us the tragic events involving 13-year-old Sabrina Shannon in 2004. While it took that terrible event for Ontario to act, we do not want or need it to be the case here in Alberta.

Bill 201 has two key components, prevention and treatment. In terms of prevention measures, this bill requires all schools to put anaphylactic policies in place. This requirement ensures that steps are taken to reduce exposure to allergens from the outset. Parents must also provide schools with current and accurate information about their children's allergies. In turn, schools must put a plan in place for each affected student. This plan will include the nature of the allergy, avoidance strategies, and how to treat the allergy if needed.

The second critical component of this bill relates to the last point, treatment. This bill mandates the presence of an EpiPen in all publicly funded schools. While students with life-threatening

allergies tend to have their own EpiPens, they may not always be able to find or use them in an emergency. For example, Sabrina's EpiPen was in her locker when she needed it the most. As we know, the consequences were fatal. The availability of EpiPens in schools will ensure that teachers and staff are able to respond decisively to a suspected anaphylactic reaction.

EpiPens are simple tools that have the power to save lives. As mentioned previously, it's blue to the sky, orange to the thigh. We anticipate that training on the use of EpiPens will be straightforward, and we're giving school boards the discretion to set up training for their schools.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The bill will also protect staff from liability if they administer the EpiPen in good faith. As a parent myself I know the joy of parenthood also comes with a fair share of worry. Every day parents across Alberta drop their kids off at school. For parents of children with life-threatening allergies their worries are compounded by the lack of reliable treatment options if their children experiences an anaphylactic reaction. This does not have to be the case. Madam Speaker, advances in modern technology have ensured that our children should not die from an anaphylactic reaction. We know how to prevent them and, when necessary, treat them. It is unthinkable to me that a child living in Canada in 2019 could be at risk of dying from an allergic reaction in school. I imagine that this tragic reality is unthinkable to other members of the Assembly.

This is why I urge all of us to vote in favour of this common-sense and potentially life-saving bill.

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

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise today and take part in the first debate of the week on this bill from the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, the Protection of Students with Life-threatening Allergies Act. I'd like to thank that member for bringing this bill forward. I think this is an important discussion for us to have. Indeed, I guess, probably over the last decade, even a couple of decades, we've seen a rising number of allergies that children seem to develop early on in life. People can develop them later in life.

The severity of an anaphylactic reaction: I can only imagine what that experience is like. I've been fortunate, Madam Speaker, in that while I have a wide variety of food intolerances and a few medication allergies, I've yet to encounter any that for me has caused any form of an anaphylactic reaction. I can only imagine the fear and the anxiety that would come with that: feeling your throat beginning to close, beginning to lose your breath, not being able to breathe, not knowing why, and potentially not having anything on hand to reverse or stop that reaction. Certainly, we've heard some tragic stories of children and others who have lost their lives because they were unable to get treatment in time, so I think it's quite reasonable to sit down and have this discussion today and talk about how we can ensure that our schools at least may be a safer place.

Of course, as others have noted, Madam Speaker, and as has been discussed, we recognize that schools are places where children can be very easily accidentally exposed to a large number of things. Certainly, over the years we've developed a wide variety of protocols and other things in place by which schools try to protect students. We've seen some great advances in the food-production industry in labelling all products that contain nuts, trying to find a way to make products that do not in fact contain nuts. We've seen a wide variety of alternatives that have come forward to provide for children. Of course, schools have introduced a wide variety of

policies and approaches to try to minimize the opportunities for students who may be allergic to be exposed.

Even with that being the case, there are still opportunities and there are still occasions, as we've heard, where things can slip through the cracks and students can potentially be accidentally exposed to something to which they are allergic and find themselves in that situation of medical crisis. I think it's, again, appropriate that we look at ways that we can ensure that our schools are equipped, that teachers and other staff are informed, have a clear understanding of the dangers, how they can be averted, how they can be addressed if an allergic reaction occurs and, indeed, have a plan in place.

That may even be one of the more important parts, Madam Speaker. My understanding is that many schools have already taken this step. Indeed, we know that a lot of our schools are proactive. Our boards are proactive. They think ahead, so they plan for these sorts of circumstances. We know that there are schools existing now and boards that have already put procedures in place. They have procedures, and they know what steps to take if a child has an anaphylactic reaction. However, we recognize that that is not universal at this point, so it makes sense that we would put a system in place to ensure that all schools would take that prudent step and so that all parents can rest assured knowing that when their child goes to school, if they should be caught in that situation, there is a plan in place to address it. It makes sense. When you're dealing with a problem, you want to sit down, carefully think out the possibilities of the circumstances, and you want to carefully plan out, "What would be the best way for us to move forward?" and make sure you're putting a good and robust system in place.

As part of that, it seems reasonable as well to look at having each school have an epinephrine autoinjection device. Now, EpiPen is the common colloquial that's used. We recognize, of course, that that is a particular product name. There are some others, so I appreciate that the bill refers simply to the more generic so that, of course, the schools would have the opportunity to seek out what would be the most cost-effective epinephrine autoinjector to have on hand. That may be the EpiPen. It may be another brand.

Again, it makes sense that we look at working with schools to ensure that they would have at least one of these devices on-site so that, as has been noted by the member and by others, if a student should happen to forget theirs at home, if it's been misplaced, if it's in a locker and they're not able to give the combination because they're not able to breathe, not able to speak, the school would have something on-site to be able to assist them.

Now, when the last member was speaking, the Member for Camrose, I did note that she talked about one situation where a young girl died because her EpiPen was in her locker and that led to her death. Is that correct? The one thought that did occur to me on hearing that, Madam Speaker, is that it's also possible, I would imagine, that if the EpiPen in the school is at a location that is not close enough to where the student might be or if there's some fumbling or difficulty in accessing it, that also might not be able to occur, then, in time. Of course, I don't know the specific circumstances and how quickly it led to that situation for the young woman. That said, even if that is the case, the fact that the school has an EpiPen on-site would likely make it far more likely that that child would be able to be treated than not. Again, I don't think that would be any reason not to move forward with this.

3:00

But there are a couple of things that I have been thinking about with this, Madam Speaker. It's my understanding that there was not necessarily a great deal of consultation that went into bringing this bill forward. In many respects, I understand, this is what appears on

the surface to be a common-sense solution. Indeed, I think it is, as I said, a reasonable direction to move in. But what I always recognize and indeed I've recognized, you know, particularly in my work here but in some of my other lines of work that I've had before, is that often what appears to be a very simple thing on the surface may have complications to it that we don't necessarily understand or recognize. I think it's valuable in these situations where we have a proposal as legislators, where we say that this seems a reasonable step and this is something that we would like to see all schools implement, that we take at least a moment in some part of bringing this bill forward, in moving forward – perhaps if it doesn't happen before this bill passes in this House, assuming that it does, that even within the regulatory process there would be the opportunity to sit down with teachers, with school administrators, with medical professionals who work in schools, to talk with them about how best to implement this.

Of course, as I mentioned, we have schools that have already introduced processes and they already have protocols in place. So it would be worth while, perhaps, to sit down and do a review of those and be able to make a good recommendation to schools, then, on how they implement their own, or indeed to be sure that we structure it so the things that we are requiring schools to do are going to have the effect that we want them to have.

The other concern that I would bring forward, Madam Speaker, is that there's no provision for or discussion of, really, the cost of this in this bill. Ideally, in my view, if this is something that we as legislators are going to require schools to have and if it is indeed something that is there for student safety and it is there for the public good, then it makes sense to me that the government should provide the funding to cover it. You know, I've heard members talk about how they don't want to see that as a barrier, and I agree. I'd hate to see that be the reason for this not to be able to go forward.

I would note that in the discussions around this, the Member for Lethbridge-East did a quick calculation at the committee based on, I think – with numbers of about 200 students per school, 3,300, 3,400 schools, he estimated that it'd be roughly half a million dollars across the province. He termed that "a fairly minor cost." Respectfully, I think, yeah. I would agree with that in terms of something that's providing coverage for every school in the province, but that could, you know, be an unfair burden on some schools versus others, a school that has a thousand students versus a school that has a few hundred; that's a difference in cost and certainly a difference in funding that they receive from the province. Again, if we are imposing additional costs on schools, however small those may be, I think it's reasonable that the government then step up and provide funding.

Indeed, I've heard members talk about, you know, doing fund raising or nonprofits being able to step up and help, but we must remember, Madam Speaker, that many of those nonprofits also come back to government for funding and support because they are doing important and good work in the community. Unfortunately, in many cases I think nonprofits are having to step up to do work that government should have been doing in the first place. These are investments that previous governments have chosen not to make, whether that be around issues with housing, homelessness, mental health, addictions, and substance use. So I would prefer not to put another burden on nonprofits that are already doing important work in the community. I would prefer not to put parents in the situation where they have to do yet another fundraiser for their school. One of the things our government did was reduce school fees by 25 per cent, which is a very important step, and I'd hate to see further fees and costs being imposed on parents because of something we brought forward in this Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Edmonton-City Centre for his comments with regard to this bill and for his support for this bill. Maybe just to comment on those for a second. I do know that in the last four years I did have several conversations with people, one with a young lady by the name of Mrs. Nicole Borsato, who brought this to my attention. In the process of hearing that the hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville was putting this private member's bill forward, I took all of the information and all of the comments that she had provided to me and made sure that she had them. So there was at least some consultation that I know that went to the member.

You know, as a teacher for 30 years I'm glad to be able to speak to this bill, to Bill 201, the Protection of Students with Life-threatening Allergies Act. I believe that it's an important bill. Now, I know that as a teacher one of the things I believed was that in many ways I was not very well prepared to handle some of the medical issues that my students would sometimes be faced with in school, and over a 30-year period of time there were many. I can remember having a student that would, on a fairly regular basis, go through petite mal seizures in the middle of class. I can remember one day a student in panic knocking on my door, bursting through the door, and saying that somebody was dying in the parking lot, and it was a student having a grand mal seizure. I can remember one of the first subbing incidents that I ever had, a student sliding down ice and falling and a piece of ice literally slicing the leg all the way up the thigh. Basketball injuries galore from knees to ankles to ACLs to you name it to concussions. It wasn't until the last five years of my 30-year teaching career that we actually had to go through concussion protocol as coaches. I can remember one student having been hit by a car and other students running the student into the hallway, literally dragging her, and me having to say: "Whoa, whoa. Stop. You could be doing some real damage here."

I'm very pleased to be able to stand here today and speak to Bill 201 because I believe that it addresses one of those issues that as a teacher we knew existed, and that was that students with severe allergies could potentially die from anaphylactic shock. We knew as teachers that many of our students had allergies and that they could have a severe allergic reaction and that that could, at the end of day, you know, restrict their airways to the point where they really could not breathe and could face very severe consequences. As the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville pointed out, children with allergies struggle not only with the physical realities of having these allergies but with sometimes being teased and even bullied, so I believe that this is a bill that is well worth being brought before this House. It's aimed at protecting children with allergies.

By mandating the creation of policies and procedures to react to anaphylactic reactions within the school, I believe that it does a good job of balancing the various responsibilities of parents, who are their guardians, and teachers and school boards and school board officials with trying to make sure that when we have these children under our care that they have the capacity to be taken care of and that they are safe at school. Under this bill families will still bear the primary responsibility for making sure that schools know what is happening in their children's lives and know that this could be a problem and that they have the responsibility of communicating that to the school, that the communication of information pertaining to life-threatening allergies will allow for the schools to be able to better respond should anaphylactic reactions occur at the school.

I can remember starting every year off with a staff meeting where we would go through a list of the students that had various issues in

their lives, where one of them would be allergies, and where we would have to make sure that as teachers we knew who in our classroom had allergic reactions and could have an anaphylactic reaction and where the EpiPens were in the school and those kinds of issues.

Parents would bear the responsibility under this bill for communicating this to the school, and the schools will therefore bear the responsibility of making sure that they have the capacity to respond to specific students, and they would have the responsibility to maintain a file for each of these students detailing pertinent information like instructions from health professionals that may be attached to these reports. They'd have the responsibility imposed on the school that they would ensure that parents supply the allergy information upon enrolment. We know that in many schools, at least in schools that I talked with in Drayton Valley, these were common practices. I don't think it's asking schools, necessarily, to go too far down what they're already doing in many cases.

3:10

School boards would bear the responsibility under this act to make sure that they maintain an anaphylaxis policy and to ensure that each school has at least one EpiPen. I think that's a very important thing if they haven't done so already. While many school boards have, I believe if they haven't done it, that they need to do that. You know, this bill leaves enough latitude to the school boards to be able to prepare for this if they haven't been ready to do that yet. I think it's January of 2020 that it gives the school boards notice to be prepared to be able to deal with this issue so that they're not caught off guard by a sudden change of policy.

Anaphylaxis can be extremely serious. We know that. It's a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. Much in this law is going to mirror a law that was in Ontario called Sabrina's Law that was passed in 2005. Sabrina's Law was passed and improved prevention and recognition and then intervention in order to save students from suffering the same fate as an Ontario student by the name of Sabrina Shannon, who died of an anaphylactic reaction.

Sabrina's Law covers the following kind of things in this law. It was the first piece of legislation in the world aimed at ensuring that children who suffered from anaphylactic reactions were actually protected while they were at school. It was named after Sabrina, a 13-year-old who died of an anaphylactic reaction while at school. It's been copied in over 10 American states and, I believe, in one Australian state. In Alberta we are following suit with these examples.

It mandates the creation of an exposure prevention strategy. Schools will have to consider who in their school has the capacity to have a reaction, an anaphylactic reaction, and maybe have the discussions about whether they're going to be a peanut-free zone or how they're going to deal with these kinds of issues. It mandates anaphylaxis management training for school personnel so that the teachers within the school or the aides or the administrators would have some understanding about how to recognize an anaphylactic reaction as well as how to deal with it, where the EpiPen is, and those kinds of things.

It requires establishment of individual anaphylaxis emergency management plans so that every teacher would have an understanding of what those processes are, what the steps are that have to be taken should they encounter this in their classroom or out on the field.

Sabrina's Law provides immunity from lawsuits for acts done in good faith. As professionals we have to understand that they're teachers primarily, first and foremost, but because they have a duty of care and a duty of protection, they would be expected to intervene. They shouldn't be worried about whether or not there's going to be a lawsuit should they try to take action.

Bill 201, the Protection of Students with Life-threatening Allergies Act, mirrors these elements within Sabrina's Law. With various elements from the Ontario law being mirrored, our students can have similar protection to the students in Ontario.

In addition to the provisions which mirror Sabrina's Law, Bill 201 mandates that all publicly funded schools have an EpiPen on-site. Now, I think, probably, for most school districts and for most schools this is already being done. As a teacher of 30 years I know that for probably the last 15 years of my teaching career, at least the last 15 years, I believe that every school in the Wild Rose school division, especially in Drayton Valley that I'm aware of, had an EpiPen. We are all told where the EpiPen is stored, where we can find it if we need it. These were things that we just did as a matter of practice, a common practice at the beginning of the school year, so that we knew where everything was. We had that management plan so that we could work through it. I believe that probably for most school boards and for most schools in Alberta this is something that's already being done, but if it isn't, we now know that it's going to be mandated with this law.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm very proud to stand and offer my support to the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for her bill, Bill 201. I'm very proud to have sat in on the Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills Committee, subbing in for another member, and to have heard her very passionate defence of why she wanted to put this bill forward and what it means to her.

This bill really hits home for me personally as I, too, was a three-year-old going into anaphylactic shock at one point in my life. My very first time that I reacted to cashews, I was three years old, and I, too, was at my grandma's house. If there's one thing we can rely on grandmas for, it's that they always have really, really good snacks out. Unfortunately, I was allergic to what was on the table. Obviously, we didn't have an EpiPen available. I was three years old, and we didn't know. My grandma actually had to drive across town with a little girl in the back because she had no idea what was going on. Obviously, the regular signs of anaphylaxis were showing, but she didn't really know what she was getting herself into because I had never reacted before. Had she had an EpiPen, obviously everything would be much, much different. We weren't travelling from Vegreville to Edmonton, but we were definitely travelling from one end of town to the other. I continued to react a couple of other times, and what the doctors kept telling my family was that it will progressively get worse. You will have less and less time to administer an EpiPen or an injectable of epinephrine at any point. You will have less and less time because of the severity of the reaction getting stronger.

This bill is, I think, just integral within our schools. It's so important because, you know, if this is, say, the second or third time someone has reacted, you will have less time, and it's good to have one on hand. Now I, obviously, carry an EpiPen with me everywhere I go because, Lord knows, you don't want to react at any time. The nature of the job is that you're at different events, and you never know what you're going to come across. Now I carry my EpiPen in my purse, which is a lot more attractive than carrying it in a Winnie the Pooh fanny pack when I was in elementary school. Now I giggle about it because it was in all my school pictures. It was bright yellow and didn't really go with what I was wearing ever, but, hey, I was safe.

I was also bullied for that. When I was in school, I was known as the kid with the allergy: Michaela from whoever's class has a nut

allergy. I'm sorry I used my own name in the Chamber, Madam Speaker, but you don't want to be known as the nut allergy kid. I also think that this would reduce that stigma that's associated with allergies because in addition to that, the other parents weren't as kind to my parents either. This was a newer thing, anaphylaxis in schools, and some parents really took issue that they, you know, were asked not to send nuts to school. We're kids, we touch everything, we're not exactly the cleanest, and you don't want to send somebody else into anaphylactic shock because of crosscontamination. I'm very thankful to have had a wonderful secretary at my school who actually sat down with me at St. Michael's elementary school in Medicine Hat because she, too, has an allergy. She had an EpiPen, and she always kind of had my back. Actually, while I was door-knocking in the last election, I knocked on her door, and she said: hey, you're the kid with the nut allergy. So it still follows me today, but that's okay.

This bill would give many parents, grandparents, and people like the people in my family, I think, peace of mind sending their kids to school. This is a really relatively easy response. We face so many difficult decisions in this Legislature on the lines of partisanship, on the lines of what our constituents want versus what interest groups want. You never really know how to balance those things, but I think that in this instance this is very clear cut, common sense, and what I think the Member for Highwood in committee said, a no-brainer. I couldn't actually agree with that more because this is a very simple solution. Given that most of these schools already have EpiPens on hand, this is just legislation and a little bit of backup and peace of mind for those parents and grandparents and everybody else in between who maybe doesn't.

I actually had my most recent reaction a couple of days before our party policy convention in May. I will say that you do have less time. It was the night before. I had just finished some door-knocking for my nomination. I stopped to grab my favourite butter chicken, and all of a sudden, lo and behold, they had started putting cashew butter in their butter chicken. I didn't know that, so I took it home. I was eating it, thinking, "This tastes better than usual," not to know that, honestly, a couple of minutes later I would start to blow up like a balloon, with all the regular signs: ears running, nose running, sick, and could not breathe. I then drove myself to the hospital, which was not the best decision I've ever made. I didn't give myself my EpiPen because I thought: well, I'm still breathing.

3:20

This takes out that middleman. This takes the onus off the person having the reaction and makes it available to teachers, to support staff, to people who know, you know, that it's blue to the sky, orange to the thigh, whatever it is, that can administer that EpiPen and takes the stress off the student, who likely is very young, because they're still school aged. They wouldn't have to administer that themselves or be able to tell somebody else they were having an allergic reaction.

Like I said, I think this is a no-brainer. I mean, we're going to hear a lot of things in committee, in this House that are partisan and heated. This is one that's just in the best interests of Alberta students, Madam Speaker, and I really commend the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for bringing this forward and bringing us something that really will impact kids the day it's implemented.

Once again, you know, we talk about consultation a lot in this House, and I know, myself included, we ran on being a party that values consultation. I think the real stakeholders in this bill, in this particular legislation, are kids. They're kids like me. They're kids like the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville's children. They're kids that we all know and love and appreciate. Those are

the kids that would ultimately be better off knowing that there's an EpiPen in their classroom or down the hall.

So I would just encourage all members of this House to put partisanship aside, to think about this from a parent's perspective, from my perspective, from the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville's perspective, and to vote yes to Bill 201. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I really appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill, private member's Bill 201, Protection of Students with Life-threatening Allergies Act. I'll start by thanking the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for bringing forward an act to protect students as I think that that's a fundamental responsibility we have in this House as legislators, to pay attention and to do a good analysis of the needs of our constituents. That, of course, requires us to pay particular attention to the most vulnerable amongst us, in this case students, and to enact policies that will protect them, which I think are all very important socialist qualities. I'm very glad to see that they're bringing forward this kind of legislation in the House and speaking about, you know, the acts to protect and to seek out the vulnerabilities of the people who live in the province of Alberta and to make sure that the legislation supports the work that is being done for those vulnerable people.

I have some experience, as many of the members do, with, you know, dealing with people with allergies and the very serious and dramatic consequences of mistakenly being exposed to whatever allergen is there. I know that this is particularly often talked about with regard to peanuts, but many people know that epinephrine is very important for people with other kinds of allergies; for example, bee stings and so on. It's a very important medical device to have available in a school setting.

It really speaks to the values that we have here in the House, particularly on this side, where we seek to provide wide-ranging preventative health care services available to all Albertans. The fact that it's being particularly extended in this one narrow circumstance is quite positive, but I'd like to see it extended a little bit beyond that in time. But for the meantime I'm happy to support an act that at least takes a good step in the right direction with regard to, you know, universally available public health care in this province.

I worked for many years at Camp He Ho Ha, Camp Health, Hope & Happiness, just west of the city, and I had an opportunity in my adolescence to learn a lot about people with fragile health conditions. That included, of course, people with severe allergic reactions. Of course, being in a rural setting, in a camp setting, you know, it was not as carefully arranged as homes are in the sense that once you learn your child has an allergy, you can clear out your home for that. In a camp setting, of course, there are many different kinds of allergies and things are not necessarily taken care of in a way that is as safe. Peanuts or insects or other kinds of things are sometimes present whether you try to work in a preventative manner or not. As a result, we did definitely have a number of students who had very serious anaphylactic reactions to things out at Camp He Ho Ha and had to learn to provide injections on an emergency basis. I'm very happy to know that this is now being required in the schools.

I know that going through an anaphylactic reaction is both physically, medically dangerous and also emotionally draining. It's very scary to find yourself not being able to breathe and not being able to take care of yourself because of your own shock reaction. It's very important to have someone else around you who can

engage in the preventative health care that you require. I think that that's something that I very much would like to support in this act. I'm very happy that this act has been brought forward.

It does raise a couple of questions for me, however. Not in a negative sense; it provokes positively further thinking about the issue of: how do we protect the vulnerable amongst us, the children amongst us who have particular needs that may not be universal needs but are very important and specific to an individual? It speaks to a couple of things, I think, which are very important. The idea that we need to act as a society on behalf of others even when they may not affect us ourselves, I think, is a very important aspect of this kind of legislation.

I don't have any particular food allergies. I am clearly an omnivore. That's lucky for me. Just through some kind of genetic benevolence I don't have to worry about these kinds of things, yet I think it's very important that people like me are given the opportunity to act on behalf of others who do not have that kind of luck when it comes to their lives. Of course, I would love to see this government take on that kind of philosophical stance in general, where those of us who have the benefits of society and wealth and goodness of our biology are invited to and actually, in fact, through legislation are required to take care of others who do not have that level of luck in their lives.

I know, for example, that at Camp He Ho Ha we had on a regular basis kids come out who were learning to deal with their own type 1 diabetes and had been through a program at the Glenrose hospital, typically, and were now at a camp learning not simply to take their medications but how to do that when their life is not so structured and controlled as it often is at home, when suddenly they're at a camp where their exercise levels are very different, their access to foods is very different, where they're engaged in activities, staying up later than they might normally do or getting up very early or camping outside, where they're not sleeping very well, all of those kinds of things. They would frequently have reactions to either high blood sugar or low blood sugar requiring either some insulin or perhaps glucose on an emergency basis.

It speaks to me, again, about: how do we move this kind of a bill from being a bill about a particular approach to being a bill about a general approach to caring for others in society? This will be great for people with anaphylactic reactions. It does nothing for kids with diabetes. Now, that means I'm still in favour of the bill. Of course, I care about the kids with anaphylactic reactions. But it also speaks to the fact that we should be thinking broader. We should move up a level of analysis when we think of these things and not simply say: "I have a personal experience, and I need to have a drug. Therefore, we should make that drug available." We should go to that next level that says, "People need drugs, and they need drugs for various reasons, and as a society we should meet all of those levels of need" and not simply go on, "My personal experience has taught me I need a particular thing," moving away from the personal to the general.

3:30

I think it's important that we realize that this bill moves in the right direction and invites us to do the same thing with a variety of other things, for example, as I've mentioned, with diabetes. We have a great policy here for schools that will be required to actually have a policy and have implements necessary, medications and tools necessary, to respond to anaphylactic shock, but do we have the same kind of policy in schools with regard to kids who have diabetes? Do all the schools have glucose available? Do all the schools have insulin available? Are they teaching school personnel how to deal with those issues? Do we require them to have some kind of policy around these issues? That's the kind of moving up to

the next level that we have to talk about and not simply go on the basis of personalized experience to teach us what we have to do. We need to move to thinking about: what does this help us to understand?

I was very interested to see that in this bill there are a number of things that the government has made a decision to do. They have made a decision to require – it's very clear – every school and school board, including private and charter schools, to obey this law, which is very interesting because when it comes to GSAs, they're trying to work to not require the implementation.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member.

Mr. Feehan: I'm speaking to the principle here as opposed to the act. The principle underlying it is that we are making decisions about requiring schools to follow good policy.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my privilege to rise today and outline my support for Bill 201, introduced by the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. The intent of the bill is simple. It is to ensure that schools have the resources they need to prevent and treat allergic reactions and, by extension, to protect the lives of children who suffer from life-threatening allergies.

To contextualize this bill, I want to provide some key statistics about food allergies in Canada. According to the government of Canada 1.2 million Canadians may be experiencing food allergies, and they believe that this number is growing. They estimate that 6 per cent of children experience food allergies. These statistics put into perspective how prevalent food allergies are in our society. Given this prevalence we must ensure that we are doing whatever we can to protect our children from the risks associated with allergies. Intuitively, then, one of the first places we should address are schools.

This bill does three things to protect students with life-threatening allergies. The first and most obvious, it requires all publicly funded schools to have an EpiPen. These include francophone, private, and charter schools under the School Act and schools under the Northland School Division Act. As I'm sure members of this Assembly know, individuals can be allergic to a myriad of things. Worse than that, however, is that many are unaware that they have allergies in the first place. An EpiPen is proven as an effective tool to save the life of a person experiencing anaphylaxis. This is why it is so critical to have EpiPens in schools not only for the students who know about their allergies but especially for those who do not.

The second is that Bill 201 requires that parents work together with schools and create plans for students with severe allergies. The third is that teachers or staff who administer an EpiPen will not be liable to punishment if they do so in good faith. Parents are in the best position to communicate critical information about their children's allergies directly to schools, and given that children must spend much of their week under the supervision of teachers and school staff, those individuals are well positioned to prevent and respond to allergic reactions. To state the obvious, Madam Speaker, a child's allergies are with them wherever they go. Plans to prevent and respond to these allergies should be in place at schools, where children spend much of their time. To summarize, this bill ensures that schools will have an effective and available treatment option in an emergency, that plans will be made to avoid emergency situations to begin with, and that teachers can be free from fear when taking action during an emergency. The challenges of managing an allergy are difficult enough for adults, let alone children. Here in Alberta we want our children to go to school and be focused on what they learn. Our government wants them to be free to work

hard and play hard. The last thing we want them to be worried about is whether or not their allergies will flare up and whether anybody will be able to help them if they do.

Ninety-eight per cent of deaths occur when epinephrine is not administered within 15 minutes of an allergic reaction. Imagine, Madam Speaker, if your child was having difficulty breathing and their airways were swelling. Imagine then that they could be saved by a quick reaction and availability of an EpiPen. I am sure that everyone in this Assembly would be willing to do anything to save a child's life, and this bill will ensure teachers and staff can do exactly that. That is why I urge all members of this Assembly to vote in favour of Bill 201.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. As many have already done, I will just share some of my thoughts on this bill and also acknowledge the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for bringing this forward. Certainly, you know, her personal experience with her own allergies and the allergies of her children: obviously, that's a pretty scary circumstance for any mom, any parent. I really commend her for making a difference, bringing forward some important legislation that could absolutely save lives.

I just want to speak also, being a mom myself. I have three boys, and two of them don't have allergies, but my eldest does. Although EpiPens aren't sort of what he needs to be healthy, he does have very severe allergies. Certainly, when he was a young child, he would go outside and play in the grass and climb in the trees. Then he'd come in and his face would be all blown up, and he was having trouble breathing. We'd rush to emergency. It's kind of hard in the summer, when it's a beautiful day like today, to keep your kid indoors. As a person myself with no allergies, at first I didn't understand at all what was going on, so it was a scary time for me as a young mom. Unfortunately, we spent a lot of time in emergency throughout his childhood.

Mostly he just got oxygen because he had allergies to environmental things like grass and snow mould, to flowers, to trees plus to all sorts of animals: dogs, cats, birds, everything. So he really had a lot of challenges as a kid, and these kinds of allergens were triggers for him with his asthma. Of course, he was treated for asthma. Mostly the kind of treatment was different than this bill brings forward. He often needed to be on oxygen. Obviously, the allergen needed to be removed from his environment. Even though it's different, I certainly appreciate the challenges you face when your child is not breathing properly. It's a serious situation. So I certainly have some understanding and empathy for the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville as a mom myself who had a child with some severe allergies although in a different area.

Just to clarify – some folks know this – we have two brothers in this Assembly, but we also have a mom and a son. I'm the mom. I'm the MLA for Edmonton-Riverview, and my son is a page. It's not that son I'm talking about, just to clarify – he's my baby; this guy is much older – just so people aren't confusing them or asking him about his allergies, because he doesn't have any.

3:40

I guess I just want to also talk a little bit about: we know that private members' bills are not money bills, right? The government is not going to be paying for EpiPens in schools across our province. You know, they can't have money in them. So I guess I do have some questions just about that. I know that it doesn't seem like much. It's, like, \$150, \$100. I mean, there are a few different

approximations for how much an EpiPen costs. But who would bear the costs? That is a question about this bill. You know, a board may have several schools. You need one for each school. Of course, these pens do expire, so if it's not used in a year or so, then they have to be replaced. Then that means an annual cost. Of course, if they're used, they have to be replaced. These are just some of the questions I have about, you know, who is going to bear the cost for these EpiPens in every school in our province.

Just another question I do have, too, on one of the things I feel is a little bit unfortunate. Even though I certainly support it and think this private member's bill is important, it's always great to hear from people who have, you know, front-line experience working in schools across the province. Unfortunately, we weren't given the opportunity to have any consultation with any of these people. We could have spoken to school boards or even the Alberta School Boards Association, which is the umbrella organization for school boards across our province, or the Alberta Teachers' Association. They have an understanding of sort of what they do across all sorts of jurisdictions and about having best practices, you know, knowing what has worked.

In some areas, perhaps, this isn't in place, but in a lot of jurisdictions it is. So what is working well for that community that has these policies in place? It's just somewhat unfortunate that we're not having any consultations on this bill. There could be, you know, things that we wouldn't have even thought of yet that people may be able to have awareness of, and then that could be sort of dealt with, and some of the best practices could then be implemented across our province.

Of course, Alberta isn't the only province who has done some previous work on this. This has happened across our country. People have referred to Sabrina's Law. Many other jurisdictions, other provinces have brought that in. So I just want to, you know, be on record indicating that it would have been helpful because there are things that we may not know.

It could have made the implementation easier for the schools. You know, our schools, our staff are often very busy people. Having them develop a policy in a different way when maybe their existing policy actually fulfills a lot of what this bill says, so making sure that we're not making people do double work, that it's not redundant: these are just some things that I think would have helped if we did have some consultation, just to make it streamlined and smooth sailing and also to respect the professionals that are already involved in this, you know, for years, perhaps, understanding how these things work. There could be learning processes for other people who aren't having it.

Beyond just what's happening in the schools, through the boards and the Alberta Teachers' Association, is Food Allergy Canada or the Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. That also could have been a stakeholder that we consulted with that I would just recommend. I think that that, again, could have made it a smoother implementation.

But as I've said at the outset, certainly, I stand in support of this bill. We want to make sure that all students have access to whatever medical care they need. This is kind of a dramatic situation, of course, as we know that if children don't have an EpiPen or there's not one available, it could end their lives, and we don't want that to happen. So I certainly want to make clear that that is really crucial, that these EpiPens be made available in all the school systems, but just to reiterate, wanting to understand a bit more about, you know, who's paying for this. Are these the individual schools, the individual school boards, or how is that going to be managed?

Then just some best practices, like, what's the best way to implement this, because, of course, we can always learn from many others. It's just a wise step for the consultation process.

I just want to say, then, that certainly this protection of students with life-threatening allergies makes a lot of sense. It's just that those consultations would have been helpful, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak in support of this. I think it's a bill that's a very good idea. I think I have some lingering questions around it. As you'll no doubt be aware, it's often the case that when we do something, it can seem sort of obvious. On its face this seems like a really good thing, but the devil is always in the details, so it's always a question of implementation and how best to implement that and whether it has any further consequences, I think.

I think that probably the most important thing to note about this is that whatever the amount of money, the life of your child is inevitably worth considerably more than that, so I think that this is a great idea. I do know that there's a cost associated with EpiPens, but I think that that cost is probably going to be relatively minor, especially compared to – I mean, even the cost for every EpiPen in every school. If you can save even one life, I think it's worth it.

I think the question is going to be one of sort of training and implementation. For instance, in Calgary, certainly, there are some very large elementary schools. Up until recently there were some that were almost bursting at the seams, and the question is: "Say that you have an elementary school with 400 or 500 children in it. Do you just get one? What if that gets deployed?" Like, I don't know that we know how long it takes to order a new one, so do you have two in the school just in case there's a second allergy? I think some policies around that would probably be useful, some sort of conversations with teachers, with students, with staff at schools, and with parents about how this would be implemented. I think that, unfortunately, when things go wrong, they tend to seem to go very wrong all at once. You know, if you have these and they're available, it's worth having a policy about: "How are teachers trained? How are staff trained? What's said to the students?"

You know, for instance, I know that when I went to school, they used to have lots and lots of lunch supervisors, but we've sort of over time cut back on that to a certain degree, so you don't have as many of those folks around. So if a student sees another student have an allergic reaction to something on the field, say, at recess, when kids may be sharing snacks – even though I understand that these days they're not supposed to do that, I suspect it sometimes happens anyway – are all the kids ready to run and tell a teacher that this is what's needed? Even right down to sort of: where are you storing it, right? You could store it in the central office, but the question is: how long would it take someone? The furthest classroom from the office: how long would it take someone to get from there to the office and back again or to make a phone call? Do you have an emergency line that sort of supersedes? These are all just questions of implementation. Again, I think it's generally a good idea.

I think it'd probably be worth looking to other jurisdictions. Certainly, when we were in government and we were making policy, it was probably one of the first things that was always asked for, a crossjurisdictional scan. What do they have in other places in terms of legislation, regulation, and policy, and how is it working, right? What was the feedback there? Often you can get a lot of public official records about this or even news stories that sort of cover how it was implemented and how it worked and what problems have arisen. A lot of times when you go to implement something

like this, it's entirely possible that no matter how well you think it through, something may arise that perhaps you've not thought of.

You know, even right down to questions of, "Who's in charge of ensuring that it's replaced every year?" my understanding is that you have to replace an EpiPen every year, and presumably they don't look materially different than each other. So who's in charge of getting a new one, making sure the old one got disposed of, that sort of thing? I mean, the last thing you'd want is to think that you've helped a student by administering something which doesn't work anymore.

3:50

I'm not really sure what happens to expired medication, whether it, like, immediately sort of ceases to have any impact at all or whether it's just sort of a declining trajectory over time. That's probably a question worth having an answer to, I think, too, just in terms of employees, in terms of them sort of knowing what's going on. You can be very well intentioned, and certainly I know we had this conversation around injectable versus nasal spray naloxone with respect to first responders. There are certain required trainings and procedures around anything that's injectable. You can certainly be intending to help someone, and you could somehow injure them. So what happens to the liability from that, right?

If teachers are being asked to take on this additional role, which, again, I think is a good thing, you know, what happens if they go to perform an injection and there's a bruise or the needle breaks or any number of implementation sort of usage errors, I guess, occur? Who bears the liability for that, right? I think it's an open question. The staff is obviously trying to do their best, but what if the individual student is injured or not helped as a result of that error? Who is responsible for that? I think that's certainly a question that remains to be done. I think that, as with anything you're using in an emergency, it's better to overplan and never need to use it than it is to have potentially missed something in your plan, so I think ensuring that everyone has those conversations around: "Who's responsible for what? Who's responsible for administering, in what zone, at what time?"

In schools it's often the case that if a teacher becomes ill, you can have a substitute teacher, and they may come in on fairly short notice. So do you ensure that all of your substitutes are trained as well? They probably don't do this anymore either, but when I was a kid, if they went through the trained substitute teachers and no one was available, some of our parents who stayed home essentially sort of showed up as, like, the interim substitute teacher. That's probably not a thing that happens anymore, but how do you ensure that someone like that, who may be involved, would be trained?

On a field trip where children are possibly going to encounter substances that are new to their systems, how do you make sure that your parent volunteers are properly trained? Who is in charge of ensuring that, on a field trip, the EpiPen comes with you? Or does it come with you? I think that, yeah, there are a lot of interesting questions in ensuring that we implement this in the best and most effective way in terms of going forward.

But, again, I just want to make it clear – sometimes when you sort of raise questions about things, people are, like: oh, are you really against it? I'm not really against it; I'm really for it. I just think that there are a lot of steps that will need to be taken to ensure that it's implemented in the best possible way. That's pretty usual, right?

You know, members of this place will be familiar: normally we pass the legislation, the legislation surely gives you the umbrella, and it leaves to regulation those sorts of details. Or if there are very fine-grain details, it even leaves it to policy. But I think that because we're talking about schools and because we're talking about school

boards, there's an open question of: do we have one policy for the province, or do we have policies for different school boards? There are pros and cons, right?

You know, I think this is likely to be most important in more sort of rural and remote locations. They're farther from a hospital, so this becomes all that more likely to save a life. But, potentially, those are smaller schools, so the cost of maintaining the program per capita becomes relatively higher. I think that the cost is something that's worth investing in. I think my fear would be that if we're talking about the cost in terms of, like, parents having to fund raise for it or something, you'd wind up with a situation where your access to a potentially life-saving procedure is based on the ability of your local school to fund raise. That's a big concern. We see this with playgrounds all the time. That's why we took the step of saying that playgrounds will be included with schools, because schools are told: well, you'll fund raise for your playground. Well, in Calgary, a scenario that I can think of, there are some schools that are in a much stronger position to be able to fund raise for a playground for their students because the parents in the area are very affluent, so they have money to give to that sort of fundraising effort.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 201, Protection of Students with Life-threatening Allergies Act. Like my colleague, I absolutely do support this legislation, but I do have a few questions and comments. Obviously, I wholeheartedly support any kind of life-saving pharmacare initiatives. I think our record has been pretty good on that. We have supported that. But I do have a few questions, and hopefully the member or somebody will be able to answer some of them.

Bill 201 requires that every school board, including private, charter, and boards of the School Act or Northland school division, establish and maintain an anaphylaxis policy, and then it goes on to say, you know, all of the things that each of the school boards must do. I guess my question sort of backs up a little bit and looks at the larger picture. Absolutely, there are far too many people, young people in particular, vulnerable people in school that do present with absolutely life-threatening allergies, and lack of access to appropriate medication or intervention can definitely mean the end of their lives. However, I think that is sort of one piece of a larger problem.

I'll give you a little bit of an example. I know that likely a lot of members in this House are not super fans of David Suzuki, who is with *The Nature of Things*, for a variety of reasons, but I actually am a fan and became a fan in October 2015, actually. There was a piece that aired called *The Allergy Fix*, and what that looked at was severe allergies.

My niece – her name is Elizabeth Waggoner – at the time was in, I think, the third grade, and she has life-threatening allergies. I'll give you an example of how life threatening. She had dishes that were assigned to her just so that they were clean because she couldn't have any residue, even milk residue, on those dishes or it could threaten her life. One morning I guess somebody didn't clean her dish properly, or maybe something spilled onto the bowl. She went to have breakfast, and there was enough leftover residue on that bowl that it caused a serious reaction. She was given the epinephrine. That didn't really help. Of course, the protocol is to always call 911 immediately, so she was transported to hospital, and this, sadly, had not been the first time that that happened. That's just an example of how severe her allergies are.

When she went to school, my sister actually became a full-time, stay-at-home/lunch lady mom, and part of the reason was that there wasn't enough staffing and there wasn't enough support for her to spend free time at school and be supervised to the extent that she needed supervision. She needed to be sure that she wasn't exposed to any milk products or things like that because even some touching her, in some cases, was enough to cause a problem.

So going back to David Suzuki and *The Nature of Things*, he actually did a piece called *The Allergy Fix* and shared some stats that currently, at the time – and this was in October 2015 – there were 2.5 million Canadians with significant, serious food allergies. Obviously, peanuts and milk are some of the allergies that we're very familiar with. He talked a lot about the germ theory, so, you know, obviously looking at how there's something serious going on with our immune systems, and oddly enough he looked at a lot of the kids that grew up on dairy farms, for example. They had stronger immune systems in this area because potentially they were exposed to more germs or bacteria.

4:00

That was the premise of this study that my niece was involved in at the time. What they did over many years was to try to introduce this product to her at just minuscule rates, and it was always done in the doctor's office because, again, she has a life-threatening allergy. What they did is that they started – I can't even remember what the fraction was, but let's say that it was one-twentieth – with a drop diluted, put into water. She would drink and ingest it and then wait. They would always give her medication before, you know, just in case, and then be ready with epinephrine in case things got worse.

They did this over many, many years. I think she probably went once a week to get used to this, just to introduce this, and it was successful. She's in high school now, actually. She still has a severe allergy, but if it touches her or if there's residue on her dishes or, let's say, in something she's eating – someone has cut something with a knife that touched something – it's not life threatening to her. This was introduced years ago, you know, and I think it has been somewhat successful.

The reason I bring this up is that her severe allergy – certainly, she went everywhere with an EpiPen, which is, you know, the name that we use. I've had them at my place. I know that she always had them everywhere. What this was is that it was more than just this intervention. It required a lot of support in her school life and in her life after school.

Let's say that she wanted to play soccer with her sister. She could not play soccer without the coaches having some training, without her mom or dad being there, without her teammates knowing what to recognize. It required a whole community to support a really severe allergy like she has. My sister really did have to come at lunch. They kind of made fun of her. She was the lunch lady, and all of the kids, of course, loved her – she's really awesome – but what that required was for her to just change gears to be there, to be with her daughter every single lunch hour, every single recess so that she knew that her daughter with life-threatening allergies was safe.

While I completely support whatever funds are required or whatever policy is required to make this life-saving medication available to all students, I think that you have to step back and look at the larger picture so that when we do have students with life-threatening allergies, seriously life-threatening allergies, not just accidentally maybe eating a peanut or smelling a peanut – I mean, I'm talking about, like, a fraction of milk in water with residue on a dish that's been washed that has the potential to end your life if you don't have access to help.

The reason, again, that I'm sharing this example and the story about my niece is that I think it is really important to look at the larger picture. It is one thing for a school board to say: "Okay. Everybody will have one EpiPen. You'll replace it every year. You'll have a backup EpiPen." You know, like my colleague brought up, when you go on a field trip, you've got to make sure that you take the EpiPen among the other things that you take. Maybe it's in a first-aid kit. I don't know. But these are all things that are important.

The other thing – as I was reading some of the notes about the school boards, it made me think of another issue, and this goes, again, to the larger picture – is that one of the school boards that was mentioned is the Northland school division. This triggered something for me, a good trigger. I remember the Auditor General and being a part of the Public Accounts Committee when we reviewed a report about chronic absenteeism in the Northland school division. Of course, there are, as you can imagine, a number of reasons why chronic absenteeism is a huge problem there, from the inappropriate housing for teachers to inappropriate support for communities and for students to hunger to just the legacy of residential schools and all of those things. It's a really compelling report, believe it or not, from the Auditor General.

One of the things it talked about was all of the ways that we can as a province, as a government support our students. The fact that this was mentioned just sort of reminded me that, yes, it's important to have EpiPens, but it's important to look at the larger picture. We do have students that present in our schools, in different school boards, in different areas of the province that do have significant life-threatening illnesses and risks, if you will, to them being able to learn. Allergies are certainly one of them, but there are many. There are many.

I think this is important enough for us to invest this time in this Chamber and the money that will be required by the school boards in terms of training, debriefing with people if they're required to use an EpiPen. I don't know if you've ever used one. It's kind of a big deal, and it's pretty frightening. If you've ever had to give CPR to someone, it's the same thing. It is pretty intense. It is quite frightening, especially if it's a child. So we have resources to invest in training, in debriefing.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and to speak to Bill 201, Protection of Students with Life-threatening Allergies Act. I want to begin by thanking the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for bringing forward this piece of legislation. I also want to thank all the members who contributed to the debate today and, in particular, for sharing their own stories, sharing their own life experience, sharing their experiences in schools, sharing their family experiences. That certainly adds to the importance of this piece of legislation.

[Mr. Hanson in the chair]

Earlier my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford was speaking, and he said, I guess, that the principle behind this piece of legislation is how we provide best supports or how we support the most vulnerable among ourselves. Clearly, the preamble to the legislation also states that students with life-threatening allergies should feel safe and supported at school. On this side of the House I think I can say that we believe that our students deserve cutting-edge education facilities and that they deserve a safe and supportive environment, be it this piece of legislation that protects those with allergies, be it those kids who don't have enough wherewithal to

have meals, be it those students who have a different sexual identity and need GSAs.

In every respect I think this side of the House is in favour of supporting students and making sure that students are safe and have the best supports available to them to facilitate learning, to provide them with the best learning experience and opportunity. Certainly, that's the reason that we are speaking in favour of this piece of legislation. We heard from members of this House on how these allergies can be life threatening and how these kinds of supports – having epinephrine, how to inject an EpiPen, which I guess was the word that was used, having those at hand – are critical in saving lives. Certainly, that's a step towards the right direction. However, nothing against the legislation, but I think there are still some questions.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

When the standing orders were changed and, I guess, the process was designed to send private members' bills to committee, one thing we heard was the idea that at the committee stage we would be able to hear from all concerned, we would be able to hear from stakeholders, we would be able to develop a common understanding on different pieces of legislation, and that that process would certainly add to the debate in this House. However, in this case, I do not believe that there was an opportunity for stakeholders, that there was an opportunity for school boards, the Alberta School Boards Association, families, students, teachers, teacher assistants, all those who deal with students on a daily basis and certainly would have meaningful insight to share with us.

4:10

We do know that there are school boards who have policies in place. Maybe not every school board, but there are school boards – the Calgary board of education, the Edmonton public school board – and there were also some guidelines that the Alberta School Boards Association released. I think that would have been an opportunity to look at those different guidelines, to look at those policy documents released by the Alberta School Boards Association and align all that into a more comprehensive policy.

My understanding is that this piece of legislation is based on legislation from Ontario, Sabrina's Law. As the Member for Drayton Valley-Devon mentioned, in 2003 there was an unfortunate incident in a school in Ontario, and a student died as a result. They brought forward a similar piece of legislation, and it's hoped that this piece of legislation will help us save lives and help us avoid similar incidents from happening in our school system.

As I mentioned, some school boards do have those policies, and having the opportunity to hear from the school boards, hearing from families and students, hearing from teachers and assistants: that's something that would have certainly improved our understanding of this issue and would have certainly helped us improve the piece of legislation. Again, as I've said, this has been tried before in Ontario, and our hope is that this will help us avoid similar incidents from happening in the future.

One other thing. There are, I guess, some details that would help us understand this legislation better on how it will be operationalized. As mentioned, like my colleagues, I'm supporting this piece of legislation, I'm in support of these policies, but at the same time we do know that school boards these days – I can speak for the Calgary school board in particular – are projecting shortfalls in their budgets. Like, the Calgary school board alone is projecting \$40 million in their budget, and they are still waiting to hear from this government on whether or not they will be provided funding. We have been pushing the government on that. We still don't have a

clear answer about whether school boards will be getting that funding.

There is certainly a concern there that this piece of legislation will result in additional costs, on how much those costs will be, and on whether this government will be providing those costs or not. Will they be provided separately, or will they be included in per-student funding, or will schools be expected to bear those costs? That's certainly something where if the member or anybody from the government side would explain, that would be helpful for the purpose of debate here, for those who have a vested interest in getting this legislation passed, to see how that will be operationalized. Students, parents: all of them would be happy to, I guess, hear about that as well.

Also, I think it prescribes what policies must include, which is that it also prescribes that school boards should have policies with some strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic agents in the classroom and school common areas. I guess: what strategies? Will it be left to the school boards? Will there be further direction from the government to the school boards? I do know that if there are too many policies, the minister of red tape may not like it because we are adding more red tape on it. This is a good policy. I don't see it as red tape.

Also, there is a communication plan that will need to be shared with the parents. Will it be the same kind of communication plan that will be shared all across Alberta or will it be school boards that will be creating that? Similarly, there is mandatory regular training dealing with these allergies. How will that training be operationalized, and what kind of support will school boards be getting?

At the same time, we do know that it's a medical condition, and I think there is always room for more collaboration, that school boards, teachers, parents can work with the health regions and health authorities to make sure that . . .

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

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to start by thanking the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for her work on this bill. You know, as others have spoken in this House, I'm a former teacher and school administrator as well, so this is an important issue to me and to many of us who've worked in the education system. I appreciate how many members here have shared their own personal stories with allergies, food allergies, and so on.

We know that according to Food Allergy Canada, about 2.6 million Canadians, including half a million children, have food allergies. They've gone on the record saying that – you know what? – actually legislation is probably the best route to protect children because it sends an important signal to school leaders, to the entire school community, that they need to take that issue seriously and that staff need to be prepared and that all in the school environment need to have a strong understanding of what the consequences can be if we don't take such issues seriously. Of course, we saw this with Sabrina's Law in Ontario, and we know that since Sabrina's Law has been enacted, there haven't been any food allergy deaths reported in Ontario schools. I appreciate that there's a lot of concrete evidence that we can draw upon in approaching our response to this bill.

We know, as well, as the Member for Calgary-Mountain View talked about, that there needs to be a strong understanding at the school level of how this is going to be enacted. For instance, the clear location of the EpiPens, of the management packages: again, everyone needs to know exactly how we are going to approach this.

I was reading one article. It's Dr. Harold Kim, who's the – I don't want to get his title wrong – president of the Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. He said that you need to ensure that there's an obvious unlocked location for these, just like an AED. I think that's one thing we just need to really impress upon folks, that consistent understanding needs to be there.

But what I want to speak mostly about is the consultative piece and the importance of taking a very co-operative approach. As other members have said, on both sides, you know, I appreciate the consultation, that there has been some that has taken place, but I do wonder just the extent to which consultation has been undertaken. Again, I know the Member for Drayton Valley-Devon talked about that there was some consultation that happened at his school division and, again, he's got that school of experience. I appreciate that. As the Member for Edmonton-City Centre talked about, consultation is critical. We'd hoped that this government would be consistent in the consultative approach that they take across the board when it comes to all bills that they are proposing.

I know that two of the boards that fall within the member's riding, parts of it anyway, have policies in place, so I would be curious to just hear what some of the feedback was that came from those boards. For instance, in the case of Elk Island public, in doing a little bit of a review of their policy, they actually have a pretty comprehensive policy in place that's available on their website. It gives a lot of background on ensuring the safety and well-being of all students and staff, the procedures for the safe administration of medication, personal care, severe, life-threatening medical situations, and they give a clear definition of allergies, of anaphylaxis, of what medication means, about what self-administering means, about significant health concerns.

It goes on to talk about the specific procedures. For instance, in this case of Elk Island public

the Division expects principals, central service administrators, and Student Transportation staff . . . to implement site procedures for the administration of medication, delivery of personal care, and for dealing with significant health concerns.

4:20

As has been mentioned already in this Chamber, I do wonder if we're already duplicating a lot of processes that have been in place. I will admit to not having done an entire survey of all school board policies, but I did try to dig into a few, including the school division at which I taught, Battle River, and I saw that in a lot of those school divisions, again, there are quite comprehensive policies. It's actually quite, I guess, reassuring to see how much work and thought has been put into these local policies. I was quite pleased to see that. In many cases, as well, you could see that the policies had been updated quite recently, which is, again, a very promising sign. You're not having any sort of stale policies in place. I gave one example there, of Elk Island specifically. Again, they've got a very comprehensive policy, but they're not alone in that.

Now, I do want to ask, though – you know, we've got some feedback from the boards. I know that the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville said that she'd also heard from a few other significant education stakeholders, the ATA being one. One of the things that the member said was that the ATA are supportive, but I want to just dig a little bit more into that. The Alberta Teachers' Association is generally supportive of Bill 201, their spokesperson, Jonathan Teghtmeyer, said last week, but they would like to see allergy response plans kept as part of one central school emergency plan rather than as individual records. He goes on to note that school boards should bear the legal responsibility for those plans rather than individual principals. The bill as written means

that each principal must develop an individual plan. It reads as follows:

every principal or designate [must]

- (i) develop an individual plan for each student who has an anaphylactic allergy,
- (ii) ensure that, upon enrollment, parents and students are asked to supply information on life-threatening allergies, if any, and
- (iii) maintain a file for each anaphylactic student including any current treatments, copies of any prescriptions, any instructions from health professionals and a current emergency contact list.

Just at first blush, I mean, this doesn't seem overly burdensome, and in a lot of cases I know that this would already be happening at the school level, but I do have to ask, and to the spokesperson for the Alberta Teachers' Association's point, if perhaps elevating that to the board level would be a better approach. I think about the schools where I taught. Again, these were kindergarten to grade 12 schools. You know, they were fairly small. As a vice-principal at one K to 12 school, Forestburg school, it would not have been a huge onus on me to take that on. However, if I were teaching here in Edmonton at one of our large, urban high schools that has, you know, 2,000 to 2,500 students, that is a lot to ask of a site-based administrator, to have to keep track of individual plans for each of those students in detail, as outlined in this bill.

Again, something to think about. We've got incredible school administrators. We've got incredible teachers across this province. I'm not saying that they couldn't do it and they wouldn't do it, but just let's think about elevating that to the board level so that it takes a little bit of the burden off those administrators.

Obviously, you know, as an administrator you want to know. You want to have a really firm grasp. I would want to know exactly which students in my school from kindergarten to grade 12 are dealing with any sort of severe food allergies, any other medical conditions. I would want to know so that when I see those little ones walking in the hallway, I'd be able to say, you know: so-and-so has an anaphylactic allergy; so-and-so has a whatever allergy. It's really important to have that understanding.

Again, I just want to clarify that I'm not saying that they wouldn't do that. It's just thinking about having it at the board level. I know the member also talked about just the consistency, right? Having it at the board level, as well, would ensure better consistency in how those plans are executed at each school, and there can also be conversations at the board level to just ensure that it is being enacted in a consistent way.

Again, just as other members have said, I want to be quite clear that I'm quite supportive of this and I'm quite appreciative of the work that the member did in proposing this bill, but when we do think about the consultative process and moving forward, if we could please consider a consistent approach to consultation and not just picking and choosing depending on the nature of the bill.

The other thing I just wanted to touch on briefly before I finish – and I know a few other folks have spoken to this – again, is just the cost piece. It was, in fact, the Member for Lethbridge-East who in committee talked about the fact that on basic numbers it's about half a million dollars, which he says is a fairly minor cost. I can speak to my experience in a rural board, where every dollar does make a difference. So I would think about asking the government to consider taking on that cost or at least, again, being consistent in how they approach the way in which it's paid for.

I think, on that, I've shared most of my points. Again, I just want to finally reiterate the piece on consultation.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, what a great day of debate we're having here today. I know everyone is listening intently

online and in this House, including the third brother from the brothers of this Assembly family, who's joining us in the gallery today.

Are there any other members who would like to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 201, Protection of Students with Life-threatening Allergies Act. I would like to thank the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for bringing this forward and all the members that have shared their stories. Allergies are not uncommon and very scary when you're dealing with something like anaphylaxis.

I just want to say to the Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat that I really understood where you were coming from when you talked about what it was like to be a child with an allergy. I'm younger than you, and I was a child that had an allergy, an anaphylactic reaction. What I had when I was a kid was an actual needle syringe. It was embarrassing to carry it around. It wasn't in a nice package, and it wasn't child friendly. I didn't want to talk to my teachers or my dance instructors or coaches or anybody about the fact that I had an allergy that required this really big, scary needle because I was afraid of it as a little girl. The fact that there's just been progress with that is really impressive, that the medical advances have occurred.

I'm also, not surprisingly, a mom to a child that has anaphylactic reactions. My daughter was nine months old when we introduced milk to her for the first time, and she had an anaphylactic reaction. I was terrified. We called 911, and the fire department came. The shock on their faces when they saw that she was nine months old, not nine years old as their file had indicated, caused me even more stress. Immediately they administered epinephrine, and we went straight to the hospital. At that moment I made sure that my child had epinephrine at all times. Her life as a tiny human was educating the grown-ups in her life about what that meant. So we made sure that daycare knew, we made sure that every single adult where she had a sleepover knew, and we went through the instruction process with them.

Initially in school it was a bit of a challenge. Sometimes the school wasn't comfortable with having an epinephrine needle on a child, and they would kind of advocate that maybe it should be stored in the school office. That, as a mom, was absolutely not negotiable. It was on her, she was trained how to do it, and I made sure that as a mom I had one-on-one meetings with all of her teachers and all the grown-ups in her life to make sure that she had access to that. Because we had experienced it and knowing how terrifying that is and how life-needing it is, that was part of our process. As she got older, she was able to engage in the school's policy-making and what that looked like in the schools. Fortunately, as a mom, we had great teachers, principals, educators that were onboard with creating really extensive policy for not just my daughter but for the schools that she attended and all of the kids.

As an advocate for this I'm in full support of it, but I do have some questions, Madam Speaker. I know that the bill talks about individual anaphylaxis plans. Again, it's making sure that the schools have the best policies related to all of their students. Section 5 talks about stocking epinephrine autoinjectors. I have a question about that because it says, "a minimum of one epinephrine auto-injector is maintained." As a child my daughter has gone through two different types of epinephrine injectors simply because of her weight. As a smaller child she used an EpiPen Jr. As she grew, she then switched to the adult version. I would hope that it would be injectable for both categories, the children and the older children that weigh a little bit more.

4:30

I also had some questions about what it means when a school goes on a field trip and they're leaving the school property. If their policy is to have one, does that stay in the office? What about the kids that are travelling outside of the school? We know – we see this here almost every day, Madam Speaker – that we have students come on field trips. They leave the school. Sometimes it's close; they're from Edmonton. Sometimes they come from all over the province, so they're quite a ways from home and quite a ways from their school. Just some clarifying questions about the stocking of it.

Then we've heard members in the House talk about the cost of it. Who is going to pay for that? I would hope that the government would look at covering the cost for that, because we ask so much of our schools, and to put that on them seems to be a bit much. I would imagine that the majority of the schools are onboard with this if not already doing some sort of policy, but when it comes to actually having the epinephrine injectors, I would think that we could ask government to help support them with that.

It's a bit concerning that there wasn't a lot of consultation that happened. Perhaps the schools would have said that if they had been talked to about what their needs were. We can all agree that this is absolutely essential – and I am supporting it, Madam Speaker – but I think that having that input from the schools, from the trustees, from parents and our young people about what would make sense for them would have been helpful and maybe made this a little bit more extensive in the legislation.

The other piece that I would like to mention is that families are paying attention to this, which is incredible. I have a really engaged constituency. I had a family reach out. They didn't have such a wonderful experience. They've indicated that they've been struggling to manage their daughter's life-threatening allergies with the schools and believe that this legislation is absolutely essential and is going to help. I couldn't agree more, Madam Speaker. I think that it would be wonderful if every single school board had clear policy about what to do in the case of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, because we can talk about it, but until you do training and those types of things, it's scary as a grown-up and especially as that young person going through it. Just making sure that there's ongoing training and support for our teachers and support staff that work out of the schools if that ever does occur in the school.

[The Speaker in the chair]

I think, really, that's all I have to say on this. I am supportive of this. I think that – again, a thank you to the member for bringing this forward. It is very much appreciated. I hope that all members in the House will support this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there any others wishing to join the debate this afternoon on Bill 201? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadows rising.

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising in the House to actually speak in favour of the bill. I do support this bill. Members in the House have already shared their personal experience in support of this bill. I really wanted to thank you, all those members on both sides of the House as, you know, they stood up and have spoken in favour of this bill.

I, too, come with the first-hand experience of someone in regard to what this bill is trying to address in the House. My son, at the age of 18, a very healthy young fellow, professional soccer player, all of a sudden, four years back developed something called celiac disease. That is the age, as an hon. member in the House already shared the experience, when kids really don't want to talk about it.

Kids don't really want to share what's going on with their bodies and what's going on with their health. They don't really want to talk to their friends, they don't really want to be named for something, and at this age sometimes they don't even really want to take it seriously and mention it to their parents.

You know, we were lucky to have a diagnosis in a timely manner, I would say. It was an experience he was going through. He would probably have one apple, one pear, so he didn't know what was going on with his body and the kind of reaction. On top of this, he would not only spend time in school, but he would end up playing two games but not having eaten anything. Whatever he would eat, he was not able to have proper digestion. So he extensively lost weight, as I said, a healthy six-foot six-inch tall soccer player. We were able to notice that he extensively lost weight. What the heck was going on with his health? He was referred to the University of Alberta hospital and diagnosed with celiac disease. Right now he's on the strictest diet. Thank God he's been taken care of.

Myself, you know, developing allergies from dust mites – I don't know – to other allergies: every single time, something new coming up, I know, changes my habits and my tastes, developing from the lactose-intolerant person. They can really have a huge effect on your life. I really want to thank the hon. member who brought this bill forward. This bill is really going to help Albertan students, children and save their lives in school.

On the allergies, as I already mentioned, you know, someone can be born with allergies, and allergies can be developed at any age. This is something really, really important, to have the program in place so people can be helped if they develop something like this. People could have known allergies, or people could have, like, suddenly something exposed to them, and they never had an experience before this. Having this kind of program in place surely is going to help lives in school and help students, parents and, I would say, help everyone – teachers, staff – keep them all off the hook. They can diligently deliver their responsibilities in school.

One of the aspects that I think most members have already actually elaborated or emphasized in the House in speaking on this bill: I would really like to also stress the consultation part of this bill. Definitely, you know, there is always room for . . .

The Speaker: Hon. members, I hesitate to interrupt, but 115 minutes of debate have passed.

Under Standing Order 8(7)(a)(i), which provides for up to five minutes for the sponsor of a private member's public bill to close debate, I would invite the hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville to close debate on Bill 201.

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The bill is a common-sense bill, protecting the lives of our most vulnerable. I think all of us want to be able to look parents in the eye and tell them that we're making Alberta safer for our children. All of us should be committed to this goal, so I thank you all for your support on Bill 201.

With that, I close debate.

[Motion carried; Bill 201 read a second time]

4:40

Bill 202

Child, Youth and Family Enhancement (Protecting Alberta's Children) Amendment Act, 2019

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

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, thank you so much. I move second reading of Bill 202.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak on Bill 202. It brings me great joy to rise and speak to Bill 202, the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement (Protecting Alberta's Children) Amendment Act, 2019. Some members of this House will recall Bill 216, which I introduced in December of 2017. Unfortunately, that bill did not subsequently get debated before the session ended.

Now, being able to introduce and, hopefully, pass a private member's bill is a rare and incredible opportunity. You know, I was fortunate enough to do this under Bill 205, the pill press bill, which was the first of its kind to deal with the opioid crisis in Canada. So I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to present my bill once again, this time under Bill 202.

I'm grateful for our new Minister of Children's Services, who took the time to listen and understand what I am trying to accomplish with this piece of legislation and offered her support. It is clear to me that she and her office are working very hard to truly have the best interests of Alberta's children at heart. They're willing to put the efforts in to find solutions, not delay tactics but actually concrete action, and that is important to recognize. I also appreciate the recommendation of the standing committee on private bills for this bill to continue making its way through the House.

This bill is not about front-line workers. This bill is about the children of Alberta, full stop, and making it easier and simpler for the public to report child abuse to Children's Services. It is about accountability. This bill amends the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act to reinforce that all adult Albertans are responsible for contacting the authorities if they are aware of a child in need of intervention.

Currently the legislation stipulates that a person is to contact a director to report a child in danger, but it is not at all clear to people who a director is. When I asked the previous minister how to do this, it wasn't meant to embarrass her, but it was to prove a point, especially when she could not answer the question of how to contact a director. Let me read the definition of director in the current legislation.

... a person designated by the Minister as a director for the purposes of this Act and the Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act and without limiting the generality of the foregoing includes a person designated as a director in accordance with an agreement under section 122(2) of this Act.

Even having read this definition, I think you will agree, Mr. Speaker, that it is still very confusing to the average person on who a director is or how a person goes about reporting this to a director.

This bill would add that a person can instead report their concerns to a police officer. They can contact either a police officer or a director and be in compliance with the act. Let me be clear. People have always been able to contact the police to report abuse. That hasn't changed. This is about accountability and society saying that one can no longer turn a blind eye to a child in need of intervention.

Under the law Albertans are already obligated to report children who are at risk, in need of intervention, to a director. While this amendment is a fairly simple concept and change, I would argue that this is a very significant amendment that would strengthen the legislation, would give it teeth, provide accountability. With this amendment there is no excuse for turning a blind eye to a child in need. Nobody can say, "I didn't know how to contact a director," when they know or ought to have known that a child was in need of intervention. That excuse can no longer be used. Everybody who observes any form of child abuse can contact a police officer, and it is certainly common to know to contact the police when you are in need of help or you know that somebody else is in need of help. Children in Alberta have died under inhumane circumstances that could have been prevented if an adult who knew or ought to have known the child was in need of intervention had spoken up.

Mr. Speaker, every member of this House who served last term is familiar with the story of little Serenity. Her case led to the establishment of the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention, which met over the span of a year. Several of my colleagues on both sides of this House participated on this panel in good faith. I do believe that every member in this House wants all children in Alberta to be safe and loved.

For the new members of this House who may not be familiar, Serenity is the subject of an investigation report published by the Child and Youth Advocate in October 2016. The advocate is restricted from publishing the real names of children and had titled the report 4-Year-Old Marie. Former journalist and now Senator Paula Simons dug a little bit deeper into the case and published a harrowing account of Serenity's short life that outraged the public and, I think, outraged every single person in Alberta who was aware of this story. In September 2014 Serenity arrived at a hospital suffering from hypothermia and a suspected head injury, weighing just 18 pounds, the weight of a typical nine-month-old baby. She had multiple bruises all over her body, including strong indications of sexual abuse.

There were more adults residing in that home other than her two legal guardians, and that is the point of this bill. There are other adults who knew or ought to have known that Serenity and her two siblings, who suffered equal amounts of abuse, were being abused, and through an investigation, if they did know, then people like them would be held accountable under this change in this act. Historian Yehuda Bauer forgive me the pronunciation, Mr. Speaker said, quote: thou shalt not be a victim, thou shalt not be a perpetrator, but, above all, thou shalt not be a bystander. Unquote. It fills me with anguish knowing that Serenity might still be here today if someone who knew or ought to have known that she was being abused and in serious danger, if they had actually done something about it before it was too late.

Serenity and her family inspired this bill. I know her mother. I know her mother is watching. I cannot use her name. She has sat in these halls, watched as the opposition said no to this bill at one point.

Some Hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Ellis: Shame. Shame is right.

As a tribute to her, as a tribute to Serenity, I hope that this Assembly will take this step to prevent future deaths by sending a clear message to Albertans that if they see a child who needs help, they need to take action and report it to the police or to Children's Services. From my experience, Mr. Speaker, the truth is that there are children, as we speak right here, that are in need of intervention. We cannot delay this change any longer, and if we can save one child, then this piece of legislation is worth it.

There are more examples where people ignored children in dire situations and the worst possible outcome happened: the child died. In 2013 seven-year-old little Ryan from Calgary died after contracting a strep infection that kept him bedridden for 10 days. A friend of the mother testified that he was a child in the state of supreme suffering and that there was no routine at home. Ryan had little access to food. This person said that Ryan and his mom were, quote, living in a different reality. Unquote. They urged the mother to take him to the doctor, but she would not. People that are aware of children like Ryan, who are in danger, must inform Children's Services or a police officer, full stop, Mr. Speaker. It is the law, and as the government we need to reinforce that.

Thank you for your time, Mr. Speaker.

4:50

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member for Calgary-West.

I see that the hon. Member for Airdrie-East was in fact on her feet first, but I think in the long-standing tradition of the House of going from the government side to the opposition side, I will see the Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, just before I get into Bill 202, I would like to acknowledge Serenity's family and the tragedy of Serenity's death. I think many of us were impacted by the family's story, and we worked on the panel to try to address some of the concerns that are being discussed with that.

I will be supporting Bill 202 with caution. I was a child protection worker for many years before being elected, and it's not a job that people can put into black and white categories around whether or not someone is able to report, whether or not the issues are going to just automatically be resolved within that one call. We know that families have histories of being involved with Children's Services repeatedly through generations, through different struggles. When you're looking at mental health and you're looking at addictions and you're looking at poverty issues and you're looking at a variety of different things that impact families and the reasons why Children's Services becomes involved, it's just not that black and white. So although I appreciate the bill and I appreciate the member and the intention of the bill, just because someone makes a call, it's not necessarily going to prevent these things from happening. I hate to say that, but that is the truth.

Now, in speaking to why people should report and, you know, looking at the consequences of not reporting and different things like that, when I worked for Children's Services, people did call the police. People did call 911. They did call the 780.422.2001 phone number. The police did respond. I went out with police on responses when I worked as part of my crisis work.

The problem that we also have with just reporting and saying to people, "Well, report it to the police" is that the other piece that comes with that is that there were also weeks on end where all of a sudden I would get a report on my desk that said that someone had called the police two weeks ago for an issue that was impacting a child in care or a child that may be in need of supports, and I didn't see the report for two weeks because it wasn't deemed urgent enough. Then I would go out, and I would look at doing the assessment. What happens is that the police officer has to do the report, the report has to then go through their system, then it has to go to Children's Services, it has to go through the Children's Services system, and then it gets put on a desk of a worker. It doesn't mean that if it's urgent like, let's be clear. If there is an urgent call where it is very, very clear that a child is in immediate danger, automatically one of us goes, the police respond, all of those things that happen happen.

People do report. It doesn't mean that if someone picks up the phone and calls that day, someone goes out that day unless there's a very clear urgency attached to it, unless we know that there are dangerous people in the home or if the reporter is able to give a ton of detail about what is actually happening in that situation. There are a variety of different mechanisms in place to screen whether or not it is deemed urgent because, unfortunately, there are a lot of calls that come into Children's Services on a daily basis. It is a very, very, very busy department. So I appreciate the intention of this. I understand it.

The other struggle that we have is that you're right people don't report. People are scared to report. When it's a family member, they're worried that if they report, the family member is going to know it's them, and if you're dealing with criminal activity, gang

members, a different variety of things, people are scared. So, yes, it does limit their willingness to come forward sometimes and report.

To be clear, though, when there are the extreme situations that the member opposite is discussing around the severe neglect that could potentially harm a child to the point of death, there are mechanisms in place within two different systems. Under CYFE, the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, there are charges that can be placed. It rarely rarely happens, but you can press charges towards someone for either failure to report or failure to protect. That can happen. That already exists. It already exists under the Criminal Code to be able to charge someone if they have a failure to protect or if they're negligent towards a child. Those mechanisms already do exist as well.

I appreciate what the member is trying to do. I totally do. But to say that those mechanisms don't exist when they do, to say that people have to report only to the director to have any type of action placed on them for being negligent is not necessarily the case. You can always call 911. Anybody can call 911. If you think a child is at risk, please call 911. If you think that there's something going on, you can always call the police. The police can arrive, the police can do an assessment, and they can call the crisis unit or they can call a worker, and a worker can come out and do the assessment. There are mechanisms.

I guess the part that I caution about is when we start getting into financial penalties for people's failure to report. When you live in an apartment building and Children's Services shows up at your neighbour's, it doesn't necessarily mean you knew. So for me the question would be: how do you determine when someone is willingly refusing to report? How do you determine that they were aware of the situation enough to say that they were negligent? If you're looking at those extreme cases, then fair enough, Member. In those extreme cases, absolutely people should be charged and people should be held to account. No child should ever be put in that situation. I didn't work in child protection for 12 years to say that it's okay, but I also understand the complexity of working with families, and I understand the complexity of working with children in care, and I understand the complexity of working in a multisystem where child protection is one cog in a wheel when it comes to the criminal justice system and when it comes to family law and when it comes to a variety of different things. None of these files are ever black and white.

There are always questions, even as workers, about whether or not what we did was in the best interests of the child in the moment that we had to make the decision about whether or not to apprehend or to keep that child at home or to have that child go to another family member. You are living in moments where you are literally, like, sitting in a room or standing in a room trying to make a decision with limited knowledge, having to make an immediate decision about this child and this person's life with very, very limited information. It is extremely difficult to say that people should be punished for not necessarily being what we would like to see as engaged or reporting when they should be reporting. Whether or not they report to the director, it doesn't matter if they report to the director as long as they report to somebody. It could be a police officer. I mean, it could be your friend the social worker. It could be a teacher. It could be a variety of different people. As long as Children's Services is aware of the situation, they will become involved if they deem it to be appropriate for them to be involved.

The struggle with that as well is that there were many times when I was a worker where people would be, like: "I can't believe you didn't open a file on that family. I can't believe you didn't apprehend that child out of that home." It's easy to look at a file and read a piece of paper and say: "Well, this is what it says. Therefore, the workers didn't do their job."

The Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt, hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning. However, the time for consideration of this matter has concluded. You have approximately one minute remaining should you wish to continue when this item of business is called at a future date.

5:00 Motions Other than Government Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View has the call.

Springbank Dam and Upstream Flood Mitigation

504. Ms Ganley moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to fully commit to the Springbank dam and upstream flood mitigation plans along the Bow River in order to protect Calgarians, their homes, and their livelihoods and, to ensure construction proceeds without delay, that the government commit to replacing any funding that would be lost if the climate leadership plan is cancelled.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, this was written before the climate leadership plan was cancelled.

Saturday we celebrated Neighbour Day in Calgary, a day when we remember the way the city pulled together after the 2013 floods. While it was great to see the way our city worked together at that time, rebuilding and carrying on, I think we can all agree that it would be much better to never have such an experience again. Unfortunately, we know that such weather events are bound to become more frequent as a result of climate change, and wishful thinking is not a strategy. I therefore bring forward this motion to continue to push the government to ensure that they invest in the necessary flood protection for the city of Calgary.

I'm very happy to see that this little motion has had an impact already. Having notice that the motion was coming forward, the government moved to get out in front of it, announcing on Friday their submission to the federal environmental review process on the Springbank dam. I doubt the timing was a coincidence, and I could not be more pleased. However, I do have some lingering concerns because a commitment to continue a regulatory process and a commitment to fund something are not quite the same thing. This motion calls on the government to commit to and fund the best option for upstream mitigation on both the Bow River and the Elbow River. In the case of the Elbow River, we already know what that is, and in the case of the Bow River we're still deliberating through three different options, which I'll discuss later.

Turning first to the Springbank dry dam, Springbank is the best, fastest, and most effective option for Calgary, and that was before we had spent four years already moving the process forward. Stopping to re-evaluate at this point could significantly jeopardize progress. There are hard questions in politics, Mr. Speaker. This is not one of them. I was very heartened to see the announcement from the government just this Friday that they would submit the answers to the questions arising from the federal environmental review. I believe it was almost 8,000 pages. The process has been a long one. I know that has been very, very frustrating for many Calgary communities, but it's important to see that it is moving forward. I would like to see a firm commitment on funding as well. I do recognize that the option isn't perfect. Unfortunately, in life there is almost never a perfect option, and all that can be done is to pick the best one based on the information available. This is easily the best option. It was four years ago, it is now, and, like I said, it's not a hard question, particularly several years into a lengthy

environmental assessment process, that would have to be started over with any other project.

Mr. Speaker, one thing that really bears saying on this project is that it is not a political toy, and I hope that the government is done using it as such. I hope that this announcement represents a final word on the matter because a lot of people in Calgary were very deeply traumatized by this experience, and they deserve to know that the government is moving forward as quickly as possible.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Above all, we in this place must care about honesty and integrity. During the election, while the now Premier waffled back and forth, the then candidate and now Member for Banff-Kananaskis was more than willing to say whatever it took to win. That member took advantage of the confusion to gain whatever advantage she could, with seemingly no concern for the truth. I hope that it was just one member. I hope that it doesn't represent the views of the government as a whole. I hope that they know how important this is to the people of Calgary and how important it is to get a truthful and honest and firm response. I sincerely hope this represents the final word because these people deserve to have a sense of safety and security in our homes restored. So I'd ask the government to be clear and to commit funding. I do see this as a positive step.

I'd now like to move to upstream mitigation on the Bow. Of course, the previous government, which was us, has done a lot of work in securing a contract with TransAlta to ensure that the current Ghost reservoir could be used as available capacity rather than filled earlier in the season. In addition, the upper plateau separation project, which separated the Sunnyside-Hillhurst water system to prevent backflow in that community due to a flood; the downtown and west Eau Claire flood barriers; the pump station 1 and 2 improvements; and the Inglewood Bridge among many, many others have been incredibly important steps.

I do however think that it is clear that there will be a need for upstream mitigation. The Bow River working group worked very hard to identify three main options: a new Glenbow reservoir, a new Morley reservoir, or expanding storage at the Ghost reservoir. Each of these options has possible options within them.

It's a complex task moving this file forward. There are facts to weigh, different considerations, different interests, but at the end of the day a decision must be made. There are so many incredible things about governing, but it definitely comes with a lot of tough decisions. I sincerely hope that this new government is committed to moving forward with the decisions as soon as possible. It's incredibly important to many Calgarians and to the whole province.

As with all major projects, it will require funding, funding which was previously committed, like the Springbank dry dam, from the climate leadership fund, which at this point no longer exists. I would like to see a commitment from the government on this project as well. Basically, in this instance what I'm asking for is a commitment to make the decisions as soon as possible when they come forward and then to commit the funds and start funding as soon as the regulatory process is complete and construction can begin.

Calgary cannot wait. I emphasize this because for years previous Conservative governments dilly-dallied on schools, hospitals, roads, pretty much every infrastructure build you could imagine. Conservatives tend to be about those short-term gains. They balance the books at the cost of infrastructure maintenance, which ultimately costs us more in the long run. Calgary can't wait. This is a commitment that needs to be made. They can't wonder if they will be protected when oil prices go up.

I suppose, in short, you could call this the no-more-dithering motion. Yes, things take time. Yes, there are regulatory processes. Yes, there are options to evaluate on the Bow. But what I'm asking today is for a strong commitment to action. On the Elbow, it should be easy. All we need is a firm yes to immediate funding as soon as the approval is granted. On the Bow, I'm asking for a commitment to proceed as quickly as possible and, again, to immediate funding. This is one of those circumstances where an infrastructure debt carries far more trouble and far more risk than a financial debt ever could. So I'm asking the government to please just say yes, not just for me but for all the people of Calgary. The decision to invest can be hard. There are always more good ideas than dollars to fund them, but I think that this is an incredibly important project, and I think that we need to move it forward.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, according to Standing Order 29(3)(c) all members have 10 minutes to speak to the motion. I see the hon. Minister of Transportation rising.

5:10

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that. I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Motion 504: unfortunately, the NDP's revision-of-history motion. I was interested to hear the comments from the hon. member just now. They were somewhat inconsistent with what has happened in the past.

Let me start off, Madam Speaker, by being perfectly clear. Our government is committed to providing flood mitigation for the city of Calgary and surrounding areas. Without effective flood mitigation, public safety, extensive property damage, and billions of dollars in economic activity are at risk. We are committed to doing what is necessary to complete the regulatory process for the Springbank reservoir and will ensure that there are no delays under our control to the regulatory review.

Now, Madam Speaker, since day one our government has taken action to ensure that the Springbank environmental review moves forward in a timely manner. In fact, one of our very first actions, as promised in the election, was to appoint an independent expert to review the regulatory process to date and to provide advice on the path forward. The expert will conclude his work shortly, and we will make the report public. Additionally, just last Friday Alberta Transportation submitted over 8,000 pages of information to the federal and provincial environmental regulators in response to almost 700 information requests left unanswered by the previous government. The submission marks a significant step in the regulatory process for the Springbank reservoir and demonstrates our commitment to doing what is necessary to complete the regulatory review as soon as possible.

Now, Springbank is a complex infrastructure project undergoing very intense regulatory review. The government is taking time to consult impacted communities and people, including the Tsuut'ina and the Stoney First Nations, Rocky View county, the citizens of Calgary, industry associations, and many other groups, who will continue to be consulted as the project moves forward. Consultation will ensure that our government takes the time to do it properly. Our goal is to make sure we have a full understanding of the concerns people may have and how they can be addressed. We will ensure there are no delays that are under our control to the regulatory review of the Springbank reservoir and are committed to doing what is necessary to complete the regulatory process.

Madam Speaker, the next flood is coming. The fact of the sixth anniversary of the last flood, the devastating floods of 2013, is not lost on me or on our government. We know that every time the river

has risen since, many people became nervous and anxious about it, and we want to alleviate this concern.

What doesn't help alleviate the concern is the partisan games by the opposition, who are trying to circumvent the environmental review by asking the Assembly to issue a decision on a project that is still under review. They're asking the Assembly to fully commit to something that the environmental assessment isn't done on. These are the people that actually claim that they care about environmental issues and try to hold themselves up as the champions of these issues today and asking us to shortcut those very issues. Those are partisan games.

The opposition want to prejudge a project's success or failure before it has completed the environmental review. This is not only irresponsible, but it may slow things down. Regulators don't like it much when you try to sneak things through or rush projects without completing them properly. The past government should know this. The NDP actually had their first EIA, environmental impact assessment, sent back because it wasn't done right, and they had to do a second one, which slowed down the process.

It's disingenuous to the many communities and nations that need to be properly consulted, the motion that's before us on the table today. I'm not sure how the NDP could approach the Tsuut'ina Nation, for example, to hear and understand their concerns on the Springbank project if the NDP had already decided they were going to go full steam ahead. Fortunately, they're not in government, so they don't get to make that decision. Fortunately, I hope we'll be able to talk to the Tsuut'ina Nation, the Stoney Nation, and other interested parties in a spirit of trust based on the fact that we are not prejudging an environmental assessment program that they care very much about and saying that we're going to go ahead without actually completing that process, as this motion would suggest we would do. It's clear to me that the NDP's concern for the city of Calgary, the surrounding communities, and the indigenous people is lip service, based on the motion here today. [interjection]

Oh, I see that the former Finance minister can't quite be quiet and listen to this, but let me remind the opposition of how they handled some things. Bill 6 was shoved through this Assembly by the previous government with little consultation of farmers and those impacted, and when people tried to voice their concerns, the NDP insisted that they knew best. Why? Simply because people disagreed with the NDP government. The NDP always feels like they know best.

Our government does not think that. We actually think that we need to engage with Albertans and find out what matters to them. I also remember the NDP carbon tax, once again, shoved through this Assembly by the previous government with little consultation of Albertans. It wasn't in their platform, it wasn't something they campaigned on, but the NDP determined that it needed to be done: "So why listen to anybody? Let's just make it happen."

In contrast, Madam Speaker, our mandate has been clear from the beginning. I challenge any member to examine the provenances of this government. Go back and take a look at how many times the Premier described our platform and what his government said they would do in the first 100 days. Now, shockingly, at least for the opposition, we're doing what we campaigned on and what Albertans elected us to do. In stark contrast to the previous government, the main bills before this Assembly were in our platform, vetted by Albertans, and were endorsed by over a million voters on April 16.

Because we believe in following the proper process and ensuring that people affected by our decisions are consulted and heard, it would be irresponsible, as this motion suggests, to commit to this project before the review process is complete, before the consultation process is complete, and before the project has

received the environmental authority from both the provincial and federal regulators. Again, the NDP claim to be champions of the environment, but before this House today they come with a motion to actually circumvent and go around the environmental approval process. Shameful.

The review process took a significant step forward last Friday when we submitted answers to those 700 responses. There are still, we believe, potentially many months ahead before the review process is complete. The review process could be closer to completion if the previous government did not drag their feet for the best part of four years. The NDP claimed to be champions of the Springbank reservoir in the 2019 election campaign. That was after they criticized the government on Springbank in the past, and their speeches today demonstrate a commitment to the project and flood mitigation in general. It's funny, though, the opposition is taking that position now, but it's exactly the opposite position they took in 2015, where they campaigned against this particular project.

This is what they said at that time: "Alberta's NDP would not support this project. Some of the core complaints about the project ring true for us, and it does not provide an adequate degree of protection for many of the communities in the surrounding areas." They won government and then the world looked a little bit different and they changed their minds. They campaigned against it and then changed their minds. You know what? I'm going to give them credit for one thing: when people get new information, at least it is okay sometimes to change their minds. However, they're a little bit disingenuous when they talk about being consistent and moving forward on this because they moved pretty slow from that point forward. Their attempt this afternoon, by the mover of the motion, to erase the history leaves us with the simple fact that our government is once again left to clean up the mess of the NDP, because it is a mess.

Again, I will remind the Assembly that the decision to proceed with flood mitigation was made in early 2015. The NDP had four full years of control over the government. It didn't make it happen. In contrast, three days after taking office our government hired an independent expert to review the regulatory process and provide input on a path forward to ensure the project moved ahead to a decision without any delay that we could avoid. On Friday, less than two months after taking office, we gave the answers to the 700 questions, the 8,000 pages. It's a little rich for the opposition to criticize the government for failing to take action. Our government is on track to do more for this project and for flood mitigation in southern Alberta in four months than the NDP got done in four years.

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

Ms Issik: Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise and speak to this motion today. I want to thank the hon. member for putting it forward because it gives me a chance to touch on a key theme: delay. Looking at this motion, "delay" is the word that jumps out at me the most. Those across the aisle would like to tack it onto us like we're playing pin the tail on the donkey, but I think it's more fitting to describe the previous government because it fits their four years oh so well.

5:20

Now, since we're talking about Springbank, let me set the tone by going back to 2013. Calgary experienced 248 millimetres of rain. The surrounding area reported almost 400 millimetres. With the massive ice packs that year we had a disaster of epic proportions, a 1-in-100-year event that, I'm sure, most Calgarians and Albertans

won't forget for a thousand years. Over 100,000 Calgarians were forced from their homes, the largest evacuation across Canada in more than 60 years. It wasn't just Calgarians; it was Albertans in smaller towns as well, over \$6 billion in total damages, the most costly disaster in Canadian history until Fort McMurray in 2016, and, sadly, five people dead. Even one death hits deep for all of us, and I'll say that my continued prayers are with those families of those five people and for all Albertans that were impacted.

Material loss matters, but some of the deepest scars come from the traumas that are unseen: losing a family member, losing property, those pictures of your grandparents, your child's first tooth. Experiencing such damaging devastation leaves lasting effects. For these reasons we will not delay, Madam Speaker, and we haven't. So I think it's rich for those on the other side to use that language when their government did delay. They had four years to do something about the billions of dollars lost by Albertans in Calgary and the surrounding area, four years to consult with First Nations groups, four years to engage with stakeholders, four years to help Albertans recover and provide them with peace of mind for the future. Yet they didn't get it done. Delay.

Now they want to sit on the other side of the aisle and delay some more while they filibuster our bills and try to prevent us on this side of the Legislature from bringing the change that over one million Albertans tasked us with. Well, Madam Speaker, our government won't delay on flood mitigation or any other project that protects Albertans.

Let me tell you what we didn't delay on. We didn't delay on hiring an independent expert to review the application for Springbank and provide us with feedback. We did that three days after our mandate, and we are eagerly waiting to share his results and findings with the public. We didn't delay on consulting with stakeholders and First Nations groups. We have met with them numerous times and will meet with them as much as is needed in order to make sure that they are listened to and treated with respect. They were even the first to know about our announcement that came out last Friday.

We didn't delay on answering all the questions from the regulators that previous governments delayed on. The questions that the regulators asked were unprecedented in number and scope, but we were happy to answer them and are happy to answer any more questions they may come at us with. I will also add, Madam Speaker, that we will not delay in working with the regulators and the regulations to get the flood mitigation that Albertans need and deserve.

What I find confusing is that members across the aisle want to act like they're so supportive of this project when they actually opposed it in 2015. During that year's election the city of Calgary conducted a survey of the provincial parties and their policies, and here's what the NDP said when asked about the Springbank dam:

Alberta's NDP would not support this project. Some of the core complaints about the project ring true for us, and it does not provide an adequate degree of protection for many of the communities in the surrounding areas. If a project this size is to be undertaken, it needs to ensure that as many communities as possible are protected.

Where did these feelings go? Perhaps we'll never know, but as you can see, the NDP are no friend of this project, just like they were never friends to pipelines, but I'll touch on that in a bit.

The previous government didn't delay on everything, though, to be fair. They didn't delay on bringing in the carbon tax even though they didn't promise it in 2015. They didn't delay on costing the province over 100,000 jobs, which I think is something they should apologize for. They didn't delay in driving billions of dollars of

investment away from the province, and they did not delay on making promises they couldn't deliver on.

Where is the social licence that the climate leadership plan was supposed to get us? Where are the pipelines they promised to build? If so much money was going to come from the climate leadership plan, then why are we in the financial mess that we are in now? Where are all the green jobs that the previous government said we would get? And let's not get into how they botched the relationship with the federal government and British Columbia.

The reality, Madam Speaker, is that the NDP have misled Albertans by falsely claiming that the carbon tax under their failed plan would give Albertans the world and more. But it didn't help them follow through with anything they set out to do, and it certainly can't pay for the infrastructure they think it will. But I have good news for Alberta. The infrastructure that Albertans need and deserve will be built. I can assure you of that. The idea that the carbon tax and the climate leadership plan offered anything but economic pain with no environmental gain is laughable. If that were remotely true, we would not have been headed to \$100 billion in debt under the previous government.

To build the infrastructure, we have to be responsible and we must follow the processes and the regulations. I know my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would like it if the government got to dictate everything with no input from anyone else, but Albertans didn't agree with that ideological approach. We have to work with the regulators, we have to work with the First Nations groups, and we have to work with other jurisdictions and all stakeholders involved. This is the way to protect Albertans. This is the way without delay.

The NDP hurt Albertans by dragging their heels on projects like SR 1 while rushing to implement failed plans like the climate leadership plan that raised everyone's taxes. Madam Speaker, we passed Bill 1, we scrapped the carbon tax, like we promised, without delay, and Albertans are better for it. We are building infrastructure and going through the processes without delay, and Albertans will be better for it.

With that, I believe this motion is misguided, misinformed, and attempts to defend the failures of the previous government. I'm not going to defend delay. I'm not going to defend hurting Albertans. I am not going to defend making and breaking promises, but luckily I don't have to because that's not what our government is here for. We are moving quickly to undo the damage of the previous government, and we are getting results for Albertans.

We have already passed Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, which has already led to savings for Alberta. Just look at the pumps. Promise made, promise kept. We have bills 2, 3, and 4, which are all designed to open Alberta for business again, stop the punishment to job creators, and reduce the red tape in our great province. That's what we promised Albertans we would do. It was in our platform, it's what we campaigned on, and it's what Albertans elected us to do. We are grateful for the overwhelming mandate Albertans gave to this government in April this year, and we will deliver on our promises.

In closing, I can say with confidence that our government is committed to working with regulators to provide effective flood mitigation. We are committed to building infrastructure that Albertans deserve, and that is infrastructure that they are going to get regardless of the carbon tax. We are committed to passing legislation that Albertans need to get back to work and to usher in prosperity to the province that was lost in the one-two punch of the 2013 floods and the four years of NDP failures, and we will do it all without delay. We will not commit to giving in to the NDP's misinformation, we will not commit to defending their previous failures as a government, and we will not let them get off that easy.

Albertans demanded something different. They gave us a mandate to right the wrongs of the previous government.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You know, I guess 650,000 Albertans voting for this side, this opposition, is chopped liver in your mind, but there still are 650,000 Albertans who gave us a mandate to not just roll over.

I'm surprised, Madam Speaker, that a motion put forward by my colleague from Calgary-Mountain View – if, you know, the Member for Calgary-Hays was listening and the Member for Calgary-Glenmore was listening, she talked about the regulatory process. She didn't say: do away with the regulatory process. This motion is all contingent upon regulatory approval going through. It's not shortcutting anything. What it really wants to know is if this government is committed to following through with the Springbank dam, SR 1, and upstream flood mitigation should the regulator say: we're good to go here. That's what this is really about. We're not trying to say that anything should be shortcut.

5:30

I, too, went to Neighbour Day in Calgary, as I'm sure many other members of this House did on the weekend. The 16th of June is in recognition of the significant efforts that Calgarians put in and people outside of Calgary as well in supporting each other through the 2013 flood, which was pretty significant in the area of Cliff Bungalow-Mission, which I represent, Madam Speaker, on the Elbow River. That area, of course, had been flooded in 2005. The flood wasn't as significant in terms of all of the downtown, as it had affected all of downtown in 2013, but it was still significant and caused a great deal of damage.

Madam Speaker, it is necessary that we work as quickly as possible for SR1 for the Elbow River and, of course, the Bow River upstream mitigation. I'm really pleased to see the work that's been done on the Bow River in the communities of Sunnyside, Bowness, and Inglewood and the zoo to better armour and protect people from the flood waters that were damaging and destroying basements, houses, other public installations. We need those things to occur, and we need the government to follow through with the consultations it's undertaking, the government to follow through with the regulatory efforts that they're undertaking. We need to see where money is going to come from for all those things. It is a significant amount of money.

I remember \$400 million, \$500 million being talked about for this kind of improvement along the upstream of the Bow, so we need to see that happen, Madam Speaker. The Calgary centre, of course, was affected significantly. There was, over a week of that centre being shut down, billions of dollars lost, as was talked about by Calgary-Glenmore. Six billion dollars was the insurance impact and other things that happened as a result of that.

Madam Speaker, Calgary has not dithered in its efforts to do as much as they could to protect residents of their community and businesses. In fact, when I was first elected in 1995, the most challenging issue that was put on my plate immediately as the area alderman was to say yea or nay to Inglewood being protected, armouring itself with a raised flood wall along the new street backyards of 17 homes in that community. I can tell you that that divided the community, so I well understand why there are some people who believe that these things aren't needed, and there are some people who believe it's needed.

There were many people who stood up in '95-'96 in the community that I represented and said: "Let's not do this. Let's not raise the

rear yards of Inglewood because rivers flood. It's a natural thing, and we should just sort of understand that with the flood we can try and put temporary barriers in place." But I can tell you that that wasn't good enough for a substantial portion of the population.

Just like in this case, where there are some who believe that we shouldn't do anything – the Member for Banff-Kananaskis believes that nothing should be done, that we should, really, just pray and hope that another disastrous flood doesn't occur, but as the Member for Calgary-Hays said Friday and said again today, you know, we shouldn't think that floods won't happen. It will happen. We have to be prepared. I agree with him on that point. That's about the only point that I do agree with that member on.

This side, when we were government, did not delay and think that it wasn't important to put flood mitigation in place, Madam Speaker. That was always our plan. It was always my plan as a young alderman back in 1996 when there were many, many people who didn't want that to happen. Being protected and being prepared and putting flood walls or other things in place is what we need to do to be responsible. That's what legislators and elected representatives need to be able to stand up and say: I believe this is necessary because it's in the best interests of safety; it's in the best interest of protection of property. This side understood that just as much as the people on the other side.

It wasn't under my direct responsibility as a minister, but certainly making sure the funds were in place was under my responsibility. The Minister of Transportation was the point person for us in that regard, not unlike the current government and the Minister of Transportation being the point person with regard to SR 1, Madam Speaker. We found that the regulatory process that was put in place was not adequate, so we had to reload in that regard, and we did. It took time to get all of that work back together, but we were moving forward. As well, we were moving forward with engagement with property owners and talking with those and negotiating with those individuals who would negotiate with us with regard to buying property for this purpose. There was a significant interest. There was a significant importance placed on this issue. While we, campaigning for government in 2015, didn't know all the where and wherefores of this issue, once we became apprised of it and reviewed the file, we were firmly in support of moving forward with the necessary flood mitigations not only for Calgary but for communities downriver from the Bow River and Calgary.

In the meantime, while we were organizing, working with the regulator, outreaching to property owners who would work with us for the purchase of their properties, we were taking steps to put in place emergency responses for Calgary and to make sure that the things that could be done with proper approvals both from the environment and the federal regulators that were identified by my colleague from Calgary-Mountain View with respect to separations of the upper plateau from the lower parts of the valley in the Sunnyside area and above Sunnyside in Crescentwood took place and were funded. We took initiative to work with city of Calgary around Downtown West and Eau Claire to make sure that those projects would go forward so that there was better mitigation in the downtown part of Calgary.

All that, as well as continuing to work on moving SR 1 forward, was what we were doing, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members. The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased today to speak to Motion 504, referencing, among other things, the Springbank dam, the Bow River, and the climate leadership plan.

I'm going to address the motion in a few parts: first, our position on flood mitigation; second, the NDP's record on flood mitigation; and third, throughout my speech, the climate leadership plan.

Before I do that, I want to acknowledge that the motion references a project that is currently undergoing a critical and comprehensive assessment by two regulatory agencies, the provincial Natural Resources Conservation Board and the federal Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. This process takes several years and has many components. It primarily involves the proponent of the project, in this case Alberta Transportation, and the regulatory agencies going back and forth to review the viability of the project and its impacts on the environment. At the end of the review process the agencies will issue a recommendation, the NRCB to the provincial government and the CEAA to federal environment minister.

5:40

I am mentioning all of this information on process because I want to note that this motion attempts to go around the environmental process. The NDP want to ignore the work of the environmental review process and have the Assembly issue a directive that a project currently under review be committed to. That's not only a reckless approach to a massive infrastructure project, but it's a dangerous approach to take on impacted communities for consultation. You can't have a meaningful dialogue with something that you have already predetermined. You just can't do that, but that's typical of the NDP approach. When they brought forward far-reaching farm legislation, they neglected to properly consult stakeholders as radical as farmers. Even when protesters hounded the Legislature demanding simply that they be heard, the NDP refused to listen. This approach continued for the Climate Leadership Implementation Act, which, among other things, brought the carbon tax to Alberta. The NDP's 2015 campaign platform mentioned the carbon tax exactly zero times. They once again refused to take the time to properly consult Albertans.

The NDP attempted to sell the carbon tax on the argument that it would buy our province social licence to build a pipeline. You can tell by all the excellent new pipelines we have that that worked out quite well. Northern Gateway, approved by the Harper government, was immediately axed by the Trudeau Liberals. The Keystone XL pipeline was vetoed by the Obama White House. The Energy East pipeline was abandoned because of regulatory uncertainty caused by several levels of government in Canada. Now Albertans' last hope, the Trans Mountain pipeline, hangs by a thread. It became so precarious and uncertain that the federal government had to buy the pipeline in order to bring some sense of stability, not the carbon tax. No, the carbon tax brought economic pain to Alberta families. The opposition leader herself admitted that she had no idea what the environmental gain would be when asked just a few short months ago.

It's been clear from the beginning that the climate leadership plan was not really a plan and didn't include much in the way of leadership. Instead, Albertans got taxed for heating their homes and driving their cars. In our cold northern climate with long, dark winters Albertans were punished by the NDP simply for trying to live. The climate leadership plan was always a bad idea and is still a bad idea today, which is too bad because climate change is an important issue, and we need to consider all of our options. Our platform, in contrast to the NDP, made it clear that we're committed to creating programs that achieve real outcomes through an entrepreneurial approach, not the creation of slush funds. The NDP didn't run on the carbon tax, rammed it through the Assembly without regard for the opinions of Albertans, and refused to listen to anyone who had concerns with their approach. Now they want to

commit to a project before it has completed the environmental assessment process. It's an irresponsible approach to the environmental review but, again, not surprising that the NDP would like to skip through the proper process.

On we go to flood mitigation. Our government's position is clear. We are committed to providing flood mitigation for Calgary and the surrounding areas. We are committed to getting the Springbank reservoir project through the regulatory process to a decision. The Member for Calgary-Mountain View has talked about honesty in government, claiming that our government is conflicted. It's true that there's a healthy debate in our caucus on the issues, among many. Our caucus believes in representing our constituents to the best of our knowledge. That's called doing our job and a big reason why I ran underneath the UCP banner in the last election. The previous government may have believed in centralization and, indeed, they were routinely criticized for doing so, but ours believes that members must represent their constituents' beliefs first.

Additionally, in making such an argument about our caucus, the members opposite seem to forget that they not only had conflicting opinions about the Springbank and flood mitigation in Calgary, but they actively campaigned against the project in 2015. In response to a question from the city of Calgary, "The Springbank off-stream diversion and storage site . . . do you favour?" the NDP answered, "Alberta's NDP would not support this project." So it's ironic now to hear their resolute support for the Springbank considering their similar resolute opposition.

Now, it's healthy in a democracy to be open to changing your mind. That's important. When you get new information, you re-evaluate what you know. That's fair.

I'm not criticizing the NDP for supporting the project they campaigned against. What I do wish the members opposite would acknowledge is that their dithering led to four years of delay and inaction on flood mitigation, leaving our communities at risk. Four years later we are no further forward, only four years further behind.

What's the cost of that inaction? Let's go back to 2013 and what the city of Calgary experienced: a 1-in-100-year flood event that Calgary is still recovering from; over 100,000 Albertans forced from their homes, the largest evacuation in Canada in over 60 years; the costliest natural disaster at the time, over \$6 billion in total damages; sadly, five people lost their lives. These are the consequences. Every spring when the water rises, Calgarians like myself sit on edge, hoping and praying that we won't flood again. We've been lucky for six years, but next year or the year after we might not be so lucky.

It's important to do this project right to make sure that those who are impacted by this complex infrastructure project are properly consulted and feel heard. That is our government's goal, and we will ensure that we properly oversee this project. What does not help to move this project forward is motions, like this one today, which seek to prejudice the outcome of a review process before the review is completed.

What does help is a government that takes action. Let me remind this Assembly that our government has been committed to flood mitigation since day one, and I'm pretty proud of our minister for how quickly he got on top of this. Shortly after being sworn in, our government hired an independent expert to examine the review process to date and provide input on the process moving forward. Just last week the Minister of Transportation announced that his department had taken a significant step forward toward completing the regulatory process for the Springbank reservoir by submitting over 8,000 pages of information to the provincial and federal environmental regulators. These are concrete steps that we have done in the last six weeks. It's more than the NDP did in the last four years.

You don't hear the opposition talk much about their record on this file; it's because they have no record to defend. We campaigned on doing projects properly, engaging Albertans, and ensuring that we're taking a smart approach moving forward. That's what we promised Albertans we would do. It was in our platform. It's what Albertans elected us to do. We are grateful for the overwhelming mandate Albertans gave to this government in April this year, and we will deliver on our promises. I can say that the Minister of Transportation and our government are committed to providing effective flood mitigation for the city of Calgary and surrounding areas. We will continue to consult with affected Albertans to understand their concerns and how they can be addressed. We will take action where the NDP did not. We will not rush through a review, however, and ignore necessary processes simply because the opposition suddenly thinks it's expedient to do so.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, would the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View like to close debate?

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased for the opportunity to close debate on this matter, and I will make my own comments, unlike the previous speaker, who read identical notes to the Member for Calgary-Glenmore's.

The Minister of Transportation certainly likes to take shots about what our government did or didn't do. They have no basis in fact, but I don't think that that's the important thing to get into at this moment. What's important is that we move forward to protect the people of Calgary. What's important is getting it done.

The question on Springbank was quite clear. It was: will you commit funding once it makes it through the regulatory process? That's a pretty clear question, I think, and that's all we're asking the government to commit to. I know it's possible to do because our government did it. I think that it's rather rich for them to stand up and say: oh, well, this circumvents the regulatory process. No, of course, it doesn't. The regulatory process is associated with all sorts of things that have committed funding. When we commit to build a school, there are still, sometimes, environmental assessments that need to be done. There are geological assessments that need to be done. When you commit to build a road in certain places, there are environmental assessments that need to be done. You can make the commitment without circumventing the process. What we're saying here is: they should fully commit to following through on the process and to funding the dam.

5:50

What I think frustrates me most is that in the rather extensive and repetitive comments we heard, there was no mention of flood mitigation on the Bow. That is a real frustration for me because we were clear in it that we wanted, you know, to go through, to assess the options, to do the necessary work, but what we were looking for was a commitment to continue moving that forward. There are a lot of people that live along the Bow River. There are people in downtown, there are people in Eau Claire, there are people in west downtown, in Inglewood and in Sunnyside, Hillhurst in my riding, and many other people as well. I think that the fact that it didn't even bear mentioning is very, very troubling to me.

You know, during the campaign we heard commitments going back and forth, and that's fine. You get into government, sometimes you see the facts, and you make a different decision. I think that's how good governance works, and I'm fine with that. But what I'm

asking is – now that they've had the opportunity to see the facts, to see a commitment, and I'm not hearing a commitment, and that's really, really troubling to me. The government likes to talk about their huge mandate, a little like a 14-year-old boy, but I think, Madam Speaker, that at the end of the day, what's important is not how we got here but what we do now that we're here. I think that ultimately what will reflect us and what will reflect on us is what we accomplish in the time that we're here.

What I'm asking for in this motion is for the government to commit to moving both of these projects forward. I'm really, really troubled that we didn't hear more about flood mitigation on the Bow because I think it's still in process, and I think there are a lot of people who would like to continue to get information about that process. I think that the government owes to Albertans an answer on flood mitigation on the Bow. Are they going to go forward? Are they going to continue to assess the options?

We of all people know that regulatory processes can take an incredibly long time, a frustratingly long time. The most important thing you can do is to continue to communicate back and forth. I've had the opportunity to work with the Calgary River Communities Action Group and a number of other groups on these files, and we had ongoing conversations on the Springbank dam and where we were in the regulatory process and what was going on, likewise with flood mitigation on the Bow. What I would like to see is that continued conversation back and forth in order to ensure that we can make progress on this.

They're welcome to take shots at me, Madam Speaker. I'm just hopeful that they will commit to Calgarians. They don't need to commit to it for my sake. What I'm asking for is a commitment for the sake of not just my residents but the residents throughout Calgary.

With that, I will close debate. Thank you very much.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion Other than Government Motion 504 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:53 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Ceci	Irwin	Sabir
Feehan	Nielsen	Sigurdson, L.
Ganley	Renaud	Sweet
Goehring		

Against the motion:

Allard	Luan	Savage
Amery	Madu	Sawhney
Dreeshen	McIver	Schulz
Ellis	Neudorf	Sigurdson, R.J.
Fir	Nixon, Jeremy	Singh
Glasgo	Orr	Smith
Hanson	Rehn	Stephan
Horner	Rosin	Walker
Issik	Rowswell	Wilson
Lovely	Rutherford	Yao

Totals:	For 10	Against 30
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[Motion Other than Government Motion 504 lost]

[The Assembly adjourned at 6:10 p.m.]

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