



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, June 4, 2020

Day 26

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature

Second Session

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New Democrat: 24

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 4, 2020

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our Queen and to 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, desire to please, or unworthy ideas but, laying aside all private interest and prejudice, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

Please be seated.

Ministerial Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to take a moment to mark this month as a time for education and reflection, to learn and commit.

Some comments were made in the House yesterday, and the member apologized sincerely, and I believe him. He knows this file. He's visited First Nations and Métis communities throughout the province and has relationships with many of the indigenous leaders in Alberta. This is an opportunity to increase educational awareness for all of us here in the Chamber, and I would be remiss if I let this moment pass because even the most well-intentioned among us is capable of unintended harm that keeps racial prejudice and ignorance alive.

The red dress that stands in the Federal Building, just a few steps from this Chamber, is a powerful symbol. Indigenous artist Jaime Black first displayed the red dress in public spaces in 2010 to honour the missing indigenous women and girls and lives of the families of the communities that they came from. Their absence is haunting. This powerful symbol reminds us that indigenous families and communities lost mothers, aunts, sisters, and daughters, and those voices have been taken away forever though their spirits surround us. I keep this beaded red dress near my heart as a reminder of those taken too soon and the very real potential of many more in the time to come.

Indigenous women have traditionally been leaders in their matriarchal societies, holding positions of power as community caretakers, teachers, and political leaders. Mr. Speaker, our long history of residential schools in Canada tried to undermine these traditional gender roles. Add to that the federal Indian Act, which stripped indigenous women of their Indian status and rights, and the heartbreaking tragedy of violence against indigenous women and girls: we see what it's done to our society and has systematically undermined them.

The red dress that was gifted to this Legislature is a reminder of this ongoing pain and trauma. The Awo Taan Healing Lodge staffer and artist Emily Taylor created it by hand. Every bead and every stitch that she made gives a voice to the women and girls whose lives were senselessly taken. It's not a stretch to say that blood, sweat, and tears went into the creation of that incredible garment, that all Albertans can go and see.

It's true that we have a lot of work to do as people to address these many wrongs. Indigenous women have been calling us to action, and through this working group we are listening. We are listening to the families who guided the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We are listening to the spirits of those women and girls whose bodies leave these red dresses empty.

Mr. Speaker, words do matter even when we're swept up in passion: the little jokes, the narrow attitudes, the biases that put our world view ahead of others. This is exactly what indigenous women are telling us. We do need more than words. We need action, and this government is taking it.

Thank you.

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

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm pleased to be able to rise to respond notwithstanding that we were unaware that this statement would be made today.

The minister is correct; our words do matter. That is why our member was quick to apologize, and that is why in all cases it is very important for all of us to take genuine accountability for issues and actions that are within our sphere of agency. That is something that I think all members of this House should do at every opportunity.

When it comes to the profound implications arising from the report relating to the murdered and missing indigenous women, we know that there is much, much more work to do, and we know that it is at this time the members opposite who have agency over this matter. Therefore, it is the members opposite who also must live the accountability that comes with that.

Let me begin by joining the minister in again honouring the artist who put so much thought, passion, love into the creation of the red dress, and let me say as well that it does serve as a beautiful, meaningful symbol and an incredibly important reminder of the work that must still be done to bring true reconciliation and to bring about true action in order to respond to the many, many important recommendations that were released in the report just one year ago as of yesterday. I will be in fact asking additional questions about that.

We know there are many, many actions, concrete actions that must be taken to support victims, to support their families, and to prevent further tragedies to indigenous women in our province and in Canada. We will continue to work hard to push not only the provincial government but also the federal government in doing the things that will genuinely ensure true reconciliation for indigenous women and their families and their loved ones throughout the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Members' Statements

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

Alberta Medical Association

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, yesterday the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul said that he discovered the details of the 2016 public agreement negotiated between the AMA and our government. The agreement, which saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars and protected patient care, was ratified through a democratic vote of Alberta doctors with 74 per cent support and a 2018 update by 89 per cent. Now, maybe the Member for Calgary-Acadia told him that the AMA signed a deal that doctors didn't want, but that's not true. Now they're talking

about breaking up the AMA in an obvious attempt to divide and conquer by a member who has clearly lost control of the situation.

Here's just a sampling of e-mails I have received from doctors in the last 24 hours. Dr. Ernie Boffa: "The AMA has represented me for the past two decades, and will continue to represent me going forward. I would never negotiate a contract directly with [that member], as I've seen what he does with contracts, and his continual dishonesty gives me no reason to trust him going forward."

Dr. Paula Dubois: "I fully support the AMA as my representative . . . It feels incredibly risky to enter into any agreement with this government, given the provisions in Bill 21, and I would hesitate to work directly with the government."

Dr. Sandra Allison: "The sitting government's lack of willingness to negotiate with doctors signifies an important turning point in the publicly funded health care system that Tommy Douglas set in motion. It is sad, and I plan to return to BC where they respect physicians."

Dr. Ako Anyaduba tweeted: "AMA only. They represent my full interests. I supported and campaigned for [the UCP] but I fully regret this seeing the undemocratic and dictatorial leadership that this has hoisted on Albertans."

I have lots more letters, Mr. Speaker, many of them quite unparliamentary.

To be clear, the AMA is willing to help this government end the crisis it's created if the government wants to do that, unless chasing doctors out of rural Alberta has been their plan all along.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-South East.

Student Transportation Task Force

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 11 the Minister of Education announced the School Transportation Task Force. As the government was developing the new K to 12 funding model, announced earlier this year, in February, we heard that changes to the school transportation system were long overdue and very much needed. Currently over 300,000 students rely on our transportation system to deliver them safely to class, covering an estimated distance of 450,000 kilometres per day.

1:40

Challenges in student transportation are not new. Operators have historically experienced difficulty hiring and retaining school bus drivers as it can be difficult due to competition with other employers, costly training, and special licensing requirements. Budget 2020 allocates \$310 million to student transportation services, with school boards receiving a 5 per cent increase while a review of the system is under way.

The task force will be exploring our approach to ensure that student safety, costs, eligibility, collaboration within transportation industry stakeholders and school boards, and individual responsibilities are being appropriately addressed. Chaired by the Member for Lethbridge-East, the working group will be made up of 13 stakeholders and five MLAs from across the province, including myself, who will be providing the ministry with recommendations this upcoming fall. We believe that a safe, reliable, and cost-effective transportation system for school children is essential and will enhance their educational experience.

I'm looking forward to working with my colleagues and the other members of this task force to learn more about the issues impacting student transportation, best practices, and other opportunities for efficiencies and, ultimately, on developing recommendations to improve student transportation across Alberta.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod has a statement to make.

Choice in Education

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week our government introduced Bill 15, the Choice in Education Act, 2020. This act was a key part of our platform during the last election both in the specifics of the bill as well as in our stated belief that parents know their children best, including what kind of education their children need.

Alberta's legacy of school choice is one to be proud of. Students across all economic thresholds attend a variety of different kinds of schooling, whether it be public, separate, francophone, private, charter, or home-schooling. This legacy of school choice has saved Albertan taxpayers nearly \$2 billion over the last eight years and allows for a much wider range of options for parents to find a school that works best for their child. The system that has been built in Alberta over the last number of decades is incredible.

That's why it's so disappointing to see the president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, Gil McGowan, attack charter schools for being a home for, and I quote, religious nutbars. In addition to the disgusting bigotry against Christians, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, and others that Gil McGowan was attacking, he was just wrong. Charter schools in Alberta cannot be religious schools, yet a full week later I hear crickets from the other side of the aisle as an organization that's legally intertwined with them and in their constitution attacks 76 per cent of Albertans who identify themselves as religious.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that we as a government affirm that parents know what is best for their children, and I believe that the members opposite should be ashamed of their silence as their affiliates attack these Albertans. After the carbon tax, one of the issues I heard the most about from my constituents in Livingstone-Macleod was that we needed to end the NDP attack on Alberta's legacy of school choice, and I couldn't be happier to see us continuing to fill our campaign promises.

Once again, Mr. Speaker: promise made, promise kept.

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

Public Transit

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The COVID-19 pandemic has had deep economic impacts on municipalities. Last month the city of Calgary announced that they will be cutting 17,000 service hours of transit service and laying off nearly 450 transit operators. This news was gut wrenching for many transit operators, their families, communities, and transit riders alike. Transit is an essential service, and essential service workers still rely on it to get to their jobs. Seniors also need transit to obtain medical supplies. It is vital for them to go grocery shopping and to go on their medical visits.

While some of the reduction in demand faced by the city was expected after the local state of emergency and the pandemic, it is the province's unwillingness to work with the municipalities that is making the problem worse. Our economy recovery will be led by our municipalities, Mr. Speaker, but the mayors of both of our big cities have warned that without immediate and direct help from the provincial government there is going to be a municipal financial crisis. They have said that they're going to need support from this government to restart transit and restart their economies.

The Premier of Ontario has committed to supporting municipalities in his province with help from the federal government. It would be wise if the UCP government here could take their lead and start

working with the federal government not just to take their pandemic money for their party but to support our cities as well because unlike UCP operations, Mr. Speaker, transit operations were essential before the pandemic and are going to continue to be essential going forward.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans want this government to act, and the time to act is now.

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

Playgrounds

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple of weeks ago I had the pleasure of taking some pictures with Mayor William Choy of Stony Plain to announce that playgrounds in Stony were reopening. Just one day later Mayor Stuart Houston of Spruce Grove also announced that playgrounds in the city would be reopened immediately.

Whether as a child or as a father, I've always loved playgrounds. As a child it was easy to imagine that I was elsewhere while on a playground and pretend that it was a pirate ship, a castle, a rocket, or anything else that came to my mind. Playgrounds are important for this reason and many others. Not only do they encourage people to exercise their imagination, but they also bring families together, encourage co-operation in play, and, admittedly, give parents a break from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate, given their importance, that so many schools in Alberta were built without playgrounds by previous governments, and that's why I was glad to hear the minister say on November 1, 2019, that going forward all new schools would be built with a playground. What made me even happier is that this Tuesday the minister announced funding for two schools in my riding that had been built without plans for a playground included.

Prescott Learning Centre, which is a K to 9 school, has operated fully since 2016 with no playground. As a result, the Prescott Learning Centre Fundraising Foundation has worked for years to gather the funds to build a playground at the school, and I'm glad to see that this has led to a grant of \$150,000, which will mean that Prescott students will finally have a playground, hopefully by the fall. I was also glad to see the minister commit all the funding necessary to ensure that the new Stony Plain Central replacement school will have a playground when it opens.

Mr. Speaker, these are important investments in my riding, and I want to thank the minister, Ms Kincheloe, the fundraising committee, and all the patient parents for their work in getting this done.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Military Family Resource Centres

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition liaison to the Canadian Armed Forces to rise in this House and commemorate Canadian Armed Forces appreciation day this June 7. Many Albertans understand the sacrifice made by military members in the context of domestic and international deployments. What many may not know is that there are staff and countless volunteers who support the military families. In Alberta you can find these wonderful individuals at your local military family resource centres. These staff and volunteers assist families for the duration of their time in the military but are especially invaluable for families during times of deployment.

When COVID-19 began, it interrupted everyday life for all Albertans. However, military members who were deployed overseas are still in the midst of their deployments. Many who were at home are now deployed across the country to help in the COVID-19

emergency response effort like assisting in seniors' care facilities and bringing attention to the conditions that these seniors were exposed to. This is an additional stressor to an already incredibly tense situation for many military families. I want to take this time to say that I hear you, I see you, and I thank you for reaching out to me to share your experiences.

If you are a family that is part of the military community, know that the MFRCs are there for you. As our new normal begins to get clearer each day, the MFRC continues to provide help and support. They are a beacon of light in these uncertain times. If you are watching this and part of the military community and you need assistance, please reach out to your local MFRC. This is exactly why they are there.

To those who are no longer with us; to the veterans across this nation; to current members, both regular force and reservists; to the military families; and to the MFRC staff and volunteers: thank you.

Oral Question Period

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

Rural Physicians

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The rural health crisis created by this government is deepening. Families in Crossfield will lose their family doctor as of September 1, and it's clear who's to blame. "The practice is no longer financially viable as of a result of the Alberta Government cuts to Rural Family Practice." The Crossfield doctor also does ER shifts in the Didsbury hospital, but that, too, will end as he sets up shop elsewhere. To the Premier: what do you have to say to the 3,000 people in Crossfield who are losing their doctor?

1:50

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, the Crossfield clinic is not closing. The clinic itself says it on their own social media: "Dr. Sam is the only doctor leaving the practice. The practice is still open and excited to walk along side you in your health journey." A single physician has said that he has plans to relocate 20 minutes down the road on highway 2.*

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not quite what we saw on their note.

Nonetheless, last night the Premier went on to Facebook to say that the Member for Calgary-Acadia is doing, quote, an amazing job under very difficult circumstances. Well, let's recap. We have practice closures or mass hospital resignations in Athabasca, Stettler, Sundre, Rocky Mountain House, Canmore, Cochrane, Okotoks, Peace River, Rimbey, Westlock, Three Hills, Bragg Creek, Drayton Valley, Cold Lake, Lacombe, Pincher Creek, Fort McMurray, Ponoka, and Claresholm. Twenty communities and counting. When will the Premier stop praising this minister for destroying rural health care in Alberta?

Mr. Shandro: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to be able to rise and answer the hon. member's questions as the Member for Calgary-Acadia. I would say this. To withdraw or change hospital privileges requires a physician to file a formal application to Alberta Health Services giving 90 days' notice, which has not occurred in the locations that she's mentioned. Now, if physicians choose to voluntarily withdraw from serving patients in their local hospital, our government, as I've said many times in this House, is going to work with AHS, Alberta Health Services, to make sure that rural Albertans have the care that they need in their communities.

*See page 1123, right column, paragraph 8

Ms Notley: Yeah, because it's no problem replacing doctors in rural Alberta.

You know, the Member for Calgary-Acadia is so bad at his job, he's now threatening to break up the AMA. Yesterday he told this House that he's looking at, quote, alternative ways to negotiate with physicians. End quote. Doctors are fed up. The AMA rightly says that the member's comments were, quote, profoundly inaccurate and misleading. To the Premier. This relationship is broken beyond repair. Will you apologize to the AMA, fire the Member for Calgary-Acadia, and finally commit to a respectful conversation with the century-old organization doctors have chosen to speak for them?

Mr. Shandro: You know, going back, actually, to the first, the original question from the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, there have been no cuts to rural health care. In fact, we announced on April 24 that in consultation with my rural caucus members we developed a rural action plan to increase funding in rural Alberta to be able to increase the ability for rural physicians to care for those patients by lifting the cap on the rural, remote, northern program, something that their government failed to do for four years, to help those rural physicians get paid more, not less, so that rural Albertans have better access to the care that they need in their communities, which their government failed to do for four years.

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

Ms Notley: Yet rural physicians stayed in rural Alberta when we were in government, and now they're leaving in droves.

Victims of Crime Fund

Ms Notley: You know, Mr. Speaker, it's been one year since the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This report includes numerous recommendations regarding the use of our victims of crime fund. One is:

Guaranteed . . . financial support and meaningful and appropriate trauma care must be provided for victims of crime and traumatic incidents, regardless of whether they report directly to the police, if the perpetrator is charged, or if there is a conviction.

Why, instead of putting funds towards this critical recommendation, is the Premier actually raiding the fund . . .

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you mentioned, we just passed the anniversary of one year since the report was released on murdered indigenous women, and we are working hard on that. We've put in place a group that's working on that, and we've been very active in creating plans for real action in protecting indigenous women and girls in the province. I was deeply moved when I attended the ceremony last year, and I attended that final release. One significant action is that we did appoint three colleagues from our cabinet that are working on this right now.

Ms Notley: Well, meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, the minister is taking money away from helping victims instead of addressing the recommendations in the report.

Now, another recommendation:

Adequate and reliable culturally relevant and accessible victim services must be provided to family members and survivors of crime, and funding must be provided to Indigenous and community-led organizations that deliver victim services and healing supports.

That means more funding. So why, instead of taking money out of the victims' services fund, is the Premier not disbursing more funds to indigenous victims' services organizations?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, we answered this question yesterday. This isn't an either/or; this is more. We're growing the victims of crime fund to include public safety and growing the fund by 50 per cent, to increase the fund usage by \$20 million. We're continuing to work with grant recipients. We have two members of this House that are going to be out there consulting to make sure we get the best use of the dollars from this fund. This is about public safety. We're going to continue to move down that path.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, the report did not say: use victims' services money to pay for policing. That is the government's responsibility. Now, what it did say, though, was:

As soon as an Indigenous woman, girl, or [gender-diverse] person decides to report an offence, before speaking to the police, they must have guaranteed access to legal counsel at no cost.

And:

Victim services must be independent from prosecution services and police services.

That is not currently a guarantee today. Fixing that takes funding. That could be done through the victims' services fund. Why are you taking that money for police instead?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to consult with organizations on the ground as to how we can improve the victims of crime fund and include and address public safety concerns. We have gone out and met with thousands upon thousands of Albertans to hear their concerns.

While under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, people weren't sure if a car was coming. We're addressing those concerns, particularly in our smaller, rural settings. People are worried about their public safety. This is one initiative amongst many to continue to grow that and continue to consult. I'm proud to work with our minister of indigenous affairs on many issues.

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

Provincial Fiscal Policies and Energy Policies

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The first year of the Premier's economic strategy was a train wreck. He cancelled Alberta's economic diversification strategy, gave a \$4.7 billion handout to corporations, fired thousands of public service workers, and raised income taxes and fees on everyday families. The results are predictable: 50,000 jobs lost pre-pandemic and a deficit of over a billion dollars while foreign shareholders bank billions with share buybacks. To the Premier. The economy is on its knees. Are you going to reverse course, or are you going to double down on your failed strategy?

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

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government inherited, really, a train wreck fiscally from the members opposite when we took office last year. We implemented a whole series of policies and we're continuing to implement policies that will improve our economy, that will attract investment, create jobs and opportunities for Albertans. Right now we are facing a double black swan event with COVID-19 and a global energy price crash. We will be rolling out an economic recovery plan in the coming weeks.

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

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Finance minister is suggesting that we will see a new economic plan. Clearly, the old one isn't working. This government has also claimed that diversification is a luxury we cannot afford. In October 2019 the minister said, "I'm convinced that government doesn't know best in terms of where capital should flow [and] to what sector." To the Premier: are you still convinced that rewarding foreign shareholders, raising taxes on families, and cancelling economic diversification strategies is the right move?

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

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Diversifying our economy is a goal of this government. We certainly believe that energy has a great future, that agriculture has a great future and many other sectors, including tech and innovation, tourism, and others. What I've stated is that it's not government's role to allocate capital in the economy. It's government's role to create the most competitive business environment, and private-sector Albertans and businesses know best where that capital should go.

Mr. Sabir: As this government scrambles to figure out what it stands for, our energy sector is in crisis. The Premier claims he has delivered the most successful and robust economic response to the pandemic, but nobody in the energy sector is buying it. Roughly 95 per cent of the provincial response has gone to one company and one project. To the Premier. Companies are going under. People are losing their livelihoods. When are you, the Premier of the province, going to get a backbone, show some leadership, and take action?

2:00

Mrs. Savage: Mr. Speaker, there is no government that is more supportive of the energy sector than our government. We ran on a platform to support them. We have been relentless in supporting them. Our caucus, all of us, have been in thousands of meetings with the energy sector, and that includes the small companies in their ridings. It is of utmost importance that our oil and gas sector gets to the other side of this pandemic healthy, and we are doing everything we possibly can to do that.

The Speaker: The hon. the Official Opposition House Leader has a question.

Government Contracts

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is already taking Canadian taxpayers' money against their will to finance his failing political party, but he's also funnelling Alberta taxpayers' money into the pockets of his partisan buddies with lucrative, no-bid contracts. The Premier's senior campaign adviser was paid over \$480,000 in taxpayers' money for polling work, and he didn't even have to bid on it. Premier, Alberta families are facing extreme economic hardship. Why are your friends getting rich at their expense?

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

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government's contracting has followed all applicable procurement policies, the same policies that the members opposite implemented when they were in government. Yes, our government has been doing more polling. It's important for us to really understand Albertans' concerns during this time of COVID-19. One thing I will point out is that during the last year that the members opposite were in

government, their costs for polling were 10 per cent more than ours were in the last year.

The Speaker: The hon. Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that if the polling had to do with COVID-19 and not about whether or not the Premier's rates are going up or down, it would be more effective.

Given that Erika Barootes was the president of the UCP during the 2019 election, scoring a \$12,000 payday to train the Premier's communication staff and the ministers' press secretaries, besides the fact that she clearly didn't do a great job and didn't even have to bid for that work either – no tendering, no bidding, no competition, just the easy money – to the Premier or the Finance minister. This payment is on your books. Did you know you were signing off on a juicy contract to a partisan buddy? How much more . . .

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. Finance minister has said, all rules have been followed, the same rules that the NDP would have followed just a short time ago when they were in government.

Let's talk about what the NDP did with those rules when they were in government. Who could forget the now Leader of the Opposition's former chief of staff, John Heaney, who made \$287,000 a year and then left and got a \$130,000 contract within months from the Member for Calgary-Buffer, who was the then Finance minister. And what about the former chief of staff to an NDP Premier who got a \$40,000 contract for providing advice on efficient working relationships, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's keep going. Let me help the minister with his file. The answer is \$73,000: that's for the no-bid contract that he signed off for the Premier's favourite media company to make a flattering video of him. Vek Labs made campaign ads for the UCP and a documentary about their leader to show at the UCP convention. The minister's own spokesman admitted that the company didn't have to bid because they're buddies with the Premier. Minister, you're a chartered accountant. Do these contracts meet your professional standards, or are you going to hide behind your Government House Leader?

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's such a ridiculous question. Again, as the Finance minister said, the process has been followed.

But you know what? I am shocked that the NDP would even ask that because we, too, know that the now Leader of the Opposition, the former Premier of Alberta, the NDP leader, has been spending in recent days, including today, taxpayer, Legislature money to run ads to advertise her new dog, Mr. Speaker. Shame on her. What a ridiculous approach to take in this House. I think that Albertans don't want taxpayer money spent advertising the Leader of the Opposition's dog. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont has a question.

Economic Relaunch Strategy and Capital Projects

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Constituents of Leduc-Beaumont know the importance of getting our economy open and

growing, and Alberta's relaunch strategy puts safety first while gradually reopening businesses, resuming activities, and getting people back to work. With the provincial guidelines in place Albertans can safely and confidently support Alberta businesses as we relaunch. Can the minister please update the House as to what the government is doing to create jobs and get thousands of Albertans back to work as we relaunch the economy?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government is doing everything we can to get people back to work. In response to COVID-19 the government is investing almost \$2 billion from the capital plan to resurface roads, repair bridges, restore schools, and fill potholes. By doubling the budget for capital maintenance and projects, we'll get Albertans back to work by advancing almost a billion dollars this year; \$410 million will go towards about 100 proposed highway maintenance and renewal projects that will support over 3,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Mr. Rutherford: Mr. Speaker, given that the collapse in energy prices greatly affects the constituents of Leduc-Beaumont and all Albertans and that every region of the province has felt the economic impact of COVID-19, as Albertans hit the road and get back to work, can the minister update this House as to what the government is doing to ensure Albertans can get back to work quickly and safely?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, this spring, like every spring, the roads take damage due to frost heaves and one thing and another. As I said, out of our additional maintenance there's \$60 million extra beyond the budget for pothole repairs province-wide and other critical safety measures. In fact, if people are out driving this weekend, they will likely see workers out there doing that work. We're renovating schools. We're paving highways, updating bridges and culverts. There are hundreds of shovel-ready projects moving ahead between our ministry and the Ministry of Infrastructure, and we're not done.

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

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad to see the road crews in my riding.

Building new roads is a good way to create jobs and economic development. The capital maintenance and renewal announcement did not include new roads, however. Can the minister explain why he started with road maintenance and renewal instead of new construction?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, we started with road renewal and maintenance because my phone was ringing off the hook from all sides of the House and from across the province. Again, as each spring the roads get torn up by frost heaves, potholes, it is time, as we said even before spring, when we were releasing the budget, to up our game a little bit on maintenance and put an emphasis there. I believe the Minister of Infrastructure is in many ways on the same page. It's what Albertans have been calling for. This government, this side of the House listens to Albertans, and that's why we put the emphasis where we did.

Provincial Parks

Mr. Schmidt: When I hear the minister of the environment say, "I am not selling parks," it reminds me of when another Nixon said, "I am not a crook." This minister's plan is clear. He is selling parks.

This minister stands proudly beside his fundraisers taking a federal bailout but thinks it's a waste of money for Albertans to enjoy the cherished parks that they've been visiting for years. We know he didn't consult with Albertans on this plan to sell their parks, but did he consult with his colleagues? Did the minister of environment consult with the Member for Central Peace-Notley before deciding to shut down three parks and sell six parks in his riding?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again, Alberta's government is not selling parks. It was disappointing to see the hon. member holding a press conference the other day listing parks that are clearly not for sale and not shut. They are being fully funded by the department of environment and the Alberta government, and they are open and being run. This is getting a little weird now. I don't know if the NDP has this little bit of a plan that they're working on, that they actually want to see parks sold, but maybe all my colleagues together could help the hon. member. The Alberta government is . . .

Some Hon. Members: . . . not selling parks.

Mr. Schmidt: Yeah. Well, Mr. Speaker, Nixon said that he was not a crook, and that statement didn't turn out to be true either.

Given that this minister will stand in this House to defend the use of taxpayer dollars to pay down his campaign debts but will ignore the facts about his plan to devastate our parks system and he's ignoring Albertans by the thousands who are telling him to stop the fire sale of the parks that belong to them and given that the Member for Banff-Kananaskis certainly didn't campaign on selling off Albertans' parks and given that there are so many parks in her riding up for sale that you can't even count them on the map, did the minister tell the member before he put her constituency up for sale?

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar will be very aware of the standing order that says that he can't do indirectly what he can't do directly.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again, Alberta has no parks for sale and will not have parks for sale.

But I will point out that when that member was the member of the NDP government and oversaw the Alberta Energy Regulator, the old Alberta Energy Regulator before this government fixed it, \$2.4 million went missing. Does he know where that \$2.4 million is, Mr. Speaker? I don't know, but the Auditor General is very, very interested.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, Mr. Speaker, instead of a denial I guess we get a deflection on the issue.

Given that the policy of closing or selling parks appears not once in the UCP platform despite this minister's repeated claims and given that in their platform the UCP actually promised to "ensure [that] these lands meet the needs of Albertans" and given this minister thinks that a for-sale sign is the best way to ensure that these parks meet the needs of Albertans but given that he's selling four parks in Cardston-Siksika and given that this plan was never mentioned by that member in the last election, when did the minister consult with the member to tell him that his constituents would have their parks sold?

2:10

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again, Alberta has no parks for sale. It's such a ridiculous assertion. Maybe the hon. member is trying to distract from the fact that his leader has been spending around \$600 a day of taxpayers' dollars advertising her new dog. I don't know. Maybe that's the way he's going to approach it in the

House. But let me be clear. Despite the fact that the NDP continue to make things up, Alberta is not selling any of their parks.

Pride Flag Raising on the Legislature Grounds

Member Irwin: June is Pride Month, but you wouldn't know it from this Premier, who's not said a word in the acknowledgement of pride or of our community, and you wouldn't know it from walking by the Legislature as the UCP raised the pride flag just long enough for a photo op with the minister of culture and then pulled it down the very next day. It's yet another insult from this government to queer and trans Albertans. Minister, why did you order the pride flag to be taken down from the Legislature? And don't say that it's because you ran out of flagpoles.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. Happy Pride Month to everyone. Really looking forward to many of the celebrations that are going to be going on across this province. In fact, I think we have a couple of really great opportunities to acknowledge this wonderful, wonderful group of folks.

I wanted to mention that there's a nonpartisan protocol that allows the flags at any time, all flags other than the flags that rest on this property at all times, to be raised for one day, and then they're taken down. So the next day was the Filipino flag. It went up for one day and then came down, and we'll do the same with all the rest.

Thank you.

Member Irwin: Given that in 2018 under the NDP government we kept the flag up for most of the month, after learning that the flag had been taken down, one young racialized trans person reached out to me to say: raising a flag is a small gesture, but it adds to my sense of safety and security to see it up there for Pride Month; I was heartbroken to find out it was barely up for a day. Minister, I have privilege, I feel safe, I'm clearly comfortable in my own sexuality. You see, we don't raise the flag for a government photo op. We don't raise it for me either. We raise it for those young people out there who see it and know that they are safe, they are seen, and they are loved. What do I say to that young person, Minister?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. Thank you again to this member, and thank you for saying that you feel safe and that you feel protected. I think everyone in this House can hope that every single person feels the way that you do. You are a marvellous representative in this House. One of the things I'd like to also say is that the courtesy pole that we use for this: it's just to make sure that there's equity and consistency right across. There's no reason behind it other than just because the Premier and myself and everyone on this side wants to make sure that all of the cultures and groups across this province have an ability to have their flag raised. It's not a photo op. It's a privilege.

Member Irwin: Given that, yes, I feel safe, but you know who doesn't feel safe? The trans black person who can't walk down the street without fear of violence, the young queer kids struggling with their sexuality. So many in our community do not feel safe, Minister. Stop with the false allyship, and start showing that you actually give a care about our community.

The Speaker: I might provide some guidance around asking questions of personal opinion or making an accusation of what a minister may or may not be doing.

The hon. Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, should she choose to respond.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. Again I'd like to thank this wonderful member for her incredible advocacy. On this side, again, our job in this House is to elevate and to make sure that all Albertans feel safe here. I can promise you that we will proudly fly that flag every year and, hopefully, in many other communities as we go around the province this month to be able to acknowledge that and be able to also acknowledge the incredible work that has been done with this community and to encourage and to hope that, potentially, for the person that she's speaking about that feels unsafe, we can continue to create better situations so that they do continue to feel safe. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis has the call.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Ms Rosin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Jaime Black started the red dress campaign 10 years ago. Last October the Minister of Indigenous Relations was presented a red dress, delicately handcrafted by an indigenous social worker and gifted to the government of Alberta to honour those no longer with us and to seal our government's promise to combat the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women. This commitment should not hold partisan weight, yet yesterday a member of our opposition trivialized this symbol and mocked its importance. Though this member rightfully apologized, how can our government ensure that we remain sensitive and honour the voices of these indigenous women and girls?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to the Member for Banff-Kananaskis for this important question. Between 1980 and 2012 in Alberta 206 indigenous women were murdered, accounting for 28 per cent of all female homicides in the province of Alberta. Our government honours these lost voices by preventing and addressing violence against women and girls now and in the future. Indigenous women and girls need to know that their government stands with them. We will work tirelessly to ensure our justice system protects indigenous women and girls, to create a province for them to be safe.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis.

Ms Rosin: Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given the efforts that this government has made to create a strong and respectful relationship with indigenous peoples and the strides we have taken to foster true reconciliation, including the creation of the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation and the joint working group on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and given the rich culture of the indigenous peoples and their history of discrimination and displacement in this country, mocking their cultural symbols and the hardships they face is disgraceful. To the same minister: can you please update this House on our government's approach to indigenous relations?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and the Status of Women.

Mr. Aheer: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This has been one of the hugest privileges of my life, working with the joint committee, with the minister of indigenous affairs along with other members of the Legislative Assembly who are committed to ending violence against indigenous women and girls. MLAs on the working group have a significant number of indigenous peoples among their constituents and are extremely aware of the issues and concerns that are facing our First Peoples in Alberta. We are absolutely committed to addressing the calls for justice and to building an Alberta where indigenous women and girls are valued, respected, and lead lives . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis.

Ms Rosin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again, Minister. Well, given that the government has already created a joint working group dedicated to reducing violence against indigenous women and girls in response to the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and given that the sole purpose of this group is to ensure that calls for justice are answered in a thoughtful and thorough way to foster partnerships with indigenous communities, will the Minister of Indigenous Relations please provide an update to the House on further actions our government has taken to fulfill our promise of true reconciliation?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you for the question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The joint working group is meeting diligently to develop the Alberta government's action plan in response to the calls for justice, and it includes members from the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women and the Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society, which are organizations from Alberta that had standing in the final report.

A few initiatives that were already undertaken include the recently announced Human Trafficking Task Force as well as Bill 17, the Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act so that there can be more protection for those at risk of domestic abuse, which is so important now, especially considering the increase in domestic violence during the pandemic.

We also have increased . . .

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

Alberta Medical Association

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday Dr. Adam Burgess wrote to me:

This is obviously a divide and conquer strategy, but Alberta physicians are united behind the AMA . . . doctors are ready to help the government confront [fiscal] realities, but if they don't listen to us they're going to create a broken system, especially in primary care, and I'm worried they're going to force in a funding model that doesn't let me take care of complex patients properly.

Why does the Member for Calgary-Acadia refuse to go back to the table with the AMA and actually listen to their proposals instead of denying that they exist?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. After we announced the new physician funding framework on February 20, we continued to meet with the AMA, as we do. The ministry and my office continue to meet with the AMA. I meet with Dr. Molnar as well, the president of the Alberta Medical Association. We also

struck a working group at their request and met in March. But I'd like to point out that there was no constructive proposal that came out of the working group sessions. And even when we met during negotiations and mediation, I point out, not a single proposal was actually tabled by the AMA in the mediation process.

Mr. Shepherd: Given that this minister has no credibility on what he purports to be reality and given that Dr. Trevor Byers wrote:

If there is a doctor who is unhappy with the AMA, they aren't in my clinic, my hospital, my city or honestly my province that I know of. [That member] should know this – on May 5, he received a letter signed by the presidents of 40 different sections of the AMA, declaring our unity. All of my colleagues are on the same page as to who is at fault for the current situation between physicians and the government, and that would be [that member].

Why won't that member abandon his clumsy attempt to divide doctors and get back to the table with the AMA?

2:20

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to remind the member and all members in the Assembly that we are paying the 11,000 doctors in this province \$5.4 billion for them to be able to care for patients in this province. If the member has questions about my credibility, as he also had in the ministerial statement, I take that criticism, and I take it as advocacy that perhaps we need to do consultations with the AMA to start looking at disclosure of physician compensation to Albertans so that all Albertans can get a full picture of physician compensation instead of getting the misinformation from the hon. member.

Mr. Shepherd: Given, Mr. Speaker, that I'll put my credibility against his any day and given that Dr. Diana Rucker wrote:

I stand completely behind the AMA,
and given that that member

has repeatedly shown that he knows nothing about health care: making rural doctors who do uncomplicated deliveries pay the same insurance fees as a high risk obstetrician . . . starting his own on line virtual platform . . . without proper privacy [software], having a history of approaching physicians and bullying them, [and] obtaining physicians' numbers by breaking privacy policies,

does this member really think any Alberta doctor would want to leave the AMA to deal with him?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know really how to reply to that. There was a lot of misinformation again in the hon. Health critic's question. They continue to misinform Albertans. They continue to, I think, give a huge amount of incorrect information to Albertans, including in this House. I think it's disrespectful to Albertans. It's time we had a full set of facts on how physicians are compensated. I take that advocacy from the hon. member, and we will start beginning consultations with the AMA on how Albertans can get a full and accurate picture of physician compensation through disclosure of their compensation. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Arts Funding

Ms Goehring: Mr. Speaker, tonight I will be joining the Leader of the Official Opposition for an online showcase that celebrates the arts in Alberta and the amazing artists that our province has to offer.

Albertans are lucky to live in a province that has so much talent. That's why it's so frustrating for both myself and the struggling artists of this province to see the minister of culture dismiss their concerns and brush over the impact that her cuts are having on them. Will the minister of culture accept an invitation to meet with these performers in the very near future so they can tell her just how much they're struggling as a result of government inaction?

Mrs. Aheer: Yes.

Ms Goehring: Thank you. Given that the minister denies the very existence of these cuts that artists are struggling with right now and given that her actions and policies are causing hurt, fear, and mistrust in the arts community and given that it's even driving some artists to look at leaving Alberta for a province that has a government that respects them and given that this minister is defending the decision to take a federal subsidy so that her partisan fundraising can continue unabated, to the minister: if you are going to insist that artists don't deserve proper funding, will you at least also advocate to the Premier to send back his taxpayer-funded package?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will continue to say this in the House as many times as necessary so that member gets this clear. The funding has not changed from our last budget. We have temporarily reallocated dollars for COVID response. I'm sorry that that member doesn't believe that that is an important decision at this time, but we are actually working with artists to make sure that if there are things that can happen where somebody is not going to actually get sick, we are very open to that discussion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we've heard that the impacts of these cuts mean that some artists might not have a future in this province and given that tonight our caucus will be celebrating artists and their contribution in Alberta, can the minister commit that she will reverse these cuts before we see an exodus of Alberta's world-renowned artists? Time is running out, Minister.

Mrs. Aheer: Mr. Speaker, what I will commit to is not spreading fear. What I will commit to is working with the artists and the AFA and all of the other incredible organizations across this province that absolutely require and work in partnership with government to make sure that artists, as always, are honoured and valued throughout this province. We are creating an arts profession act for that reason, exactly, something that that government never did. In fact, it's interesting because I do not remember once the arts being mentioned the entire time I was here in opposition.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Physician Compensation Framework

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had the privilege to meet with many of the physicians who live in Calgary-Klein. I would say that they are amongst some of the most respected and valued doctors in this province. Through these conversations it has become abundantly clear that they are worried that their views and their concerns are not being heard. There was a common underlying

concern. Many physicians on the front lines feel that they are not represented. That is why I'm standing in this House today, as promised, to advocate on their behalf. To the minister: is there any truth to the concerning rumours that are causing concern for doctors in my riding?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, there's been a significant amount of misinformation surrounding the new physician funding framework, as we've seen earlier today from the hon. Health critic and the Leader of the Opposition. Now, to be clear, we've maintained physician compensation at \$5.4 billion, the highest per capita level in the country and the highest amount that it's ever been. The opposition has dishonestly painted our government's attempts to create a more lean and efficient system as cuts. Now, every dollar that we save in the health system is going to be reinvested to pay for the Alberta surgical initiative, keeping up with the demand for continuing care beds, and a long overdue mental health and addiction strategy.

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

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for the excellent response. Given my discussions with my constituents – they were very clear that doctors are willing to work with government to review compensation structure – and given they have been praised as the foot soldiers in this pandemic but have been told by fearmongering that the government is merely waiting for the pandemic to end so they can unilaterally order them around, to the minister: can you address these concerns for my constituents, and can you confirm that the government and this ministry are focused on affordability in the system with linked focus on quality of health for patients?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We remain committed to keeping the total amount on physicians at \$5.4 billion per year, the highest level in the history of this province, the highest per capita in Canada. In four years the NDP increased spending on physicians by \$1 billion, from \$4.2 billion to \$5.2 billion. That's a 23 per cent increase, twice as much as inflation and population growth combined. We respect physicians, and we support paying them generously, but \$5.4 billion a year is enough. We're facing 13 per cent unemployment and a \$20 billion deficit in this . . .

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that during these unprecedented times we are needing to clarify blatant misinformation that we continue to hear today, that is creating fear and uncertainty, unfortunately, and given this is unnecessary and, frankly speaking, cruel and given in most countries politicians and oppositions and special-interest groups of every political stripe have been banded together against the common enemy, that is COVID-19, to the minister: how are you and your department ensuring that the truth of what you are doing to care for Albertans is heard over this partisan rhetoric?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to work with the Alberta Medical Association and directly with physicians. We've been seeing a ton of misinformation, as the hon. member mentioned, spread online. We're going to continue to move forward

through our new funding formula. In fact, we expanded access to virtual visits at the request of the AMA. It's for chronic pain and palliative care as well. I'm open to any credible proposal that meets our priority of keeping total spending on physicians at \$5.4 billion a year, again, the highest level in the history of this province and the highest per capita in this country.

Beef Producer Supports

Mr. Dach: Alberta's beef producers, Mr. Speaker, are concerned. The agriculture minister has acknowledged that premiums for the western livestock price insurance program are up 250 per cent from last year. Alberta's beef producers have not yet received a response from this government on their ask for funding support to reduce these sky-high premiums. This minister and his party jumped at the chance to take a handout from their sugar daddy Justin Trudeau to subsidize their fundraising, but hard-working producers are left waiting. Why has the minister of agriculture failed to respond to these serious concerns and the request for support from Alberta beef producers? Will he commit to them and answer today?

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

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We as a government have created a set-aside program. We took a lot of time to figure out the proper way in which we could set it up so that we can actually get money into the cattle feeders' hands right now that are going through a difficult time with about 130 or so cattle backed up in the slaughter system right now. It's something that we want to make sure is market driven so that we can actually affect the behaviour of the cattle feeders and cattle in feedlots right now so that the most appropriate cattle are going through the system at the right time.

2:30

Mr. Dach: The Alberta Beef Producers are instituting a letter-writing campaign to get the minister to hurry up on this because they're going broke while he dithers. Now, given that this government has failed to show support for their request to remove the referenced margin limit from AgriStability, which would make the program more responsive to the needs of producers and encourage greater participation but given that while producers are waiting on the minister to get back to them once again – he's been busy making sure that his fundraiser will have the taxpayer money they need – on behalf of these producers who are sick and tired of waiting, will the minister support this simple request? Yes or no? Enough stalling, Minister.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung, I really encourage you at the start of your next question to not use a preamble as you did in your previous question.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are working with other provinces and the federal government to make changes to the business risk management program, which AgriStability falls under.

But when it comes to stalling, Mr. Speaker, I think a question that is on the minds of many Albertans is why the NDP are waiting so long to actually condemn the comments made by Gil McGowan, a party member that sits on the NDP board. I think it's about over a week now that they haven't actually condemned his calling Alberta parents nutbars for having their kids in private school systems. It's just reprehensible.

Mr. Dach: Given that this government and minister have not responded to the recommendation from the federal cattle set-aside program and given that despite the recommendations to implement a bid program the government chose instead to make initial payments that could spend up to 30 per cent of the funding before implementing the bid program and given the concerns raised by producers that this lack of clarity means that payments might not be allocated fairly or effectively, why does the minister choose to not listen to the recommendations of the beef producers? Why has he failed to provide the clarity they're looking for?

Mr. Dreeshen: Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. We've developed these programs with the cattle industry, and the initial payment is something that we want to make sure that – because it is taking time setting up the bid program with 100-plus thousand cattle that are backlogged currently, right now. We are working hard, though, with the industry to make sure that the bid process is set up because that's the best way to make sure this program will work.

COVID-19 and Workplace Safety

Mr. Nielsen: This government is completely backwards when it comes to red tape. When it comes to supporting small businesses, they're burying them in unnecessary surveys and zero support when it comes to PPE and relaunch. The revelation that safety inspection of Cargill did not involve workers shows that when it comes to regulations to defend workers, this government can't cut those fast enough. Will the minister of red tape apologize to the workers at Cargill and immediately commit to regulations that ensure that in the future workers are at the forefront of safety?

Mr. Hunter: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would invite the hon. member to get out from under the dome, as our past Premier Klein said, and to talk to actual businesses. What businesses are telling us is that we need to get out of the way of our job creators and innovators. If we do that, they will jump-start the economy and get Albertans back to work, and that's what we're going to do. We're going to reduce regulatory burden by at least one-third in the first four years of our mandate.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, given that our government knew the value of having workers' perspectives and representation on health and safety committees, which is why we included it in legislation, and given that this government repealed this legislation under the auspices of red tape reduction and balance and given that the tragic loss of life at the Cargill and JBS plants shows that listening to workers when it comes to workplace safety isn't red tape, will the minister of red tape agree with us that every worker should return home safely, and if he does, will he commit to reinstating health and safety committees as soon as possible?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate it if the members of the opposition would do their homework. The fact of the matter is that we eliminated duplicative health and safety committees. There are health and safety committees at JBS. There are health and safety committees at Cargill. We worked with those health and safety committees to put measures in place to protect the workers there. Those outbreaks are contained. We have fewer than five in each site. It is atrocious that members opposite would use this COVID-19 pandemic for political purposes.

Mr. Nielsen: This is about protecting workers. You should try it. Given that two workers died at Cargill and that Cargill ignored the workers when they were telling them about their safety concerns

and fears and given that this government has steadfastly refused to take responsibility for ignoring the circumstances that led to the largest COVID-19 outbreak in North America, will the minister tell this House how many cases of COVID need to occur, how many deaths need to occur before he finally decides that protecting lives isn't red tape and commits to immediately reversing the cuts to regulations designed to ensure workers' safety?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, our government takes the health and safety of Alberta workers and all Albertans extremely seriously. As soon as we were notified of issues and concerns at Cargill and JBS, we had representatives from occupational health and safety, Alberta Health, AHS on-site to deal with the outbreaks. Recognizing that we had two large outbreaks, I want to commend the workers and employers for putting in measures to protect health and safety. We have had under 45 outbreaks in total in this province. When we take a look at this, there are over 165,000 workplaces. That is success. We are protecting the safety of workers.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche.

Fort McMurray Flooding

Ms Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fort McMurray suffered our second major natural disaster in four years. In late April a local state of emergency was called for my community as rising water levels on the Athabasca and Clearwater forced nearly 13,000 people to evacuate their homes. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: can you please explain to the House what our government has done to help the communities affected by this 1-in-100-year flood recover from these unprecedented damages?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for that question. The Premier said it best when he said that the people of northern Alberta are made of very tough stuff. We are committed to helping the very tough people of northern Alberta get back on their feet as soon as possible. That is why we have approved the disaster recovery program that will allocate \$147 million to flood-affected communities and the people who call those communities home.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche.

Ms Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the response. More than 1,200 businesses and homes in the Fort McMurray region were damaged in the spring flooding, and given that the application deadline for the disaster recovery program is August 5 and given that damage assessments can take time and residents and businesses are encouraged to access their own insurance options first and given that very few homeowners have stand-alone flood insurance to cover these losses, to the minister: how many applications to the disaster recovery program have been received so far?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to report that Fort Vermilion has been advanced \$5 million, and Fort McMurray has been advanced \$20 million; 344 individuals and business claims are currently being processed, including 277 in Fort McMurray. The road to recovery is long, and we are just getting started, but the program is working to get funding to the people that need it.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the answer. Residents in my riding of Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche have had to cope with an economic downturn, global pandemic, and now historic flooding, and given that community recovery from a natural disaster can be prolonged due to unforeseen circumstances, and many people in my riding of Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche have told me that they simply want to go back home, to the minister: can you provide this House with a timeline as to how long constituents should expect to wait for their DRP claims to be processed?

The Speaker: The hon. minister

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for her advocacy on behalf of her constituents. What's most important is that residents get their applications submitted as fast as possible. They don't even need to be complete. Residents have until August 5 to apply for the program, but the sooner they get their applications in the better. We are dedicating all the resources needed to get these applications done. Applications can be done online at www.alberta.ca.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I have received notice from the hon. Minister of Health that they would wish to provide a supplementary answer given to a response to a question from earlier in question period. Given that this is the first time in the 30th Legislature that this has happened, I'm pleased to inform all members of the Assembly that following the additional supplementary information, a member of the opposition may be eligible to ask an additional question.

The hon. Minister of Health.

2:40

Rural Physicians

(continued)

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's come to my attention that earlier I stated that a single physician was planning to relocate from Crossfield to north Calgary, and I quoted that information directly from the clinic concerned. However, a more recent update from the same clinic states, though, that the other physician is also planning to relocate, so the clinic is relocating itself. The clinic states that they're only relocating and hope to continue to serve the same patients, but the information I gave earlier was incorrect.*

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Would anyone like to ask a question? The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre. Correction; of course, would anyone like to ask a question?

Mr. Shepherd: Sure. And thank you. I do appreciate that clarification. I was prepared to table that precise thing. What I would say, I guess, to the minister is: in view of this and in view of the 20 communities across Alberta who are losing access to doctors as a result of this change, can he name a single physician who is in support of the changes that he forced through and the trust that he burned when he tore up the contract with doctors and put them in this position of incredible uncertainty that continues to perpetuate across this province?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Yes, Mr. Speaker. There are physicians who have even published letters in local media. I encourage the hon. member to seek out those physicians who have published those letters in

*See page 1115, right column, paragraph 7

their local media, letters to the editor, for example, and in op-eds that have been published to support – because in particular, when it comes to rural physicians, rural physicians, I think, have seen a significant increase in some of their compensation because of the lifting of the cap of the rural, remote, northern program as well as the other initiatives that were taking place that we announced on April 24.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds or less we will return to Members' Statements.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: Hon. members, the Member for Peace River would like to make a statement.

Cambodian National Day of Remembrance

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to speak of those who were so tragically lost from 1975 to 1979 in Cambodia during the reign of the atrocious Khmer Rouge regime. The Khmer Rouge was a brutal communist regime that oversaw the murder of an estimated 2 million people. That is one-third of the total population. This regime stopped at nothing to create what it believed to be a communist utopia, a state in which the concept of individual freedom and personal identity did not exist, where currency had no value, and where people were viciously hauled into the killing fields for simply wearing glasses.

The brutality of this regime cannot be understated, and my words cannot do justice, Mr. Speaker. People were slain in the infamous killing fields and burned alive at the stake, starved to death in camps, and tortured in incredibly inhumane prisons all in the name of communism and so-called greater good of the Cambodian state.

Though the pain and suffering of this era still heavily weigh on the shoulders of the Cambodian people, today the Kingdom of Cambodia, Cambodian culture, and the people's sense of pride in their heritage and traditions are stronger and brighter than ever before. Cambodian culture is one of perseverance, strength, honour, family values, inclusion, and, of course, what culture doesn't celebrate its food? Mr. Speaker, if you haven't tried Cambodian cuisine, I highly recommend it, and I can recommend some restaurants in Edmonton.

On the 20th of May we celebrated the Cambodian National Day of Remembrance, a day in which the Cambodian people pause to remember family and friends who were lost at the hands of this brutal regime, but it's also a day to celebrate how far Cambodia and its people have come since that naked and unbridled evil.

As we remember them and bow our heads in solidarity, we should be reminded how blessed we are to live in a country like Canada, where our freedoms are foundational in our society and where fear plays no part in the way we are governed.

Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to stand in solidarity with the Cambodian people and remember their loss.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie has a statement.

Economic Recovery and the Energy Industry

Mr. Milliken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not only does our oil and gas industry create jobs and drive economic growth for Alberta, but it pays the bills across Canada, paying for hospitals, schools, and social programs such as AISH. Albertans are proud to provide clean, reliable, responsible, Alberta-made energy. The energy we

produce is used to increase the quality of life for people around the world.

However, despite us raising people out of energy poverty and raising the standard of living for everyone, the United Nations secretary-general during this COVID-19 crisis chose to virtue-signal when he stated that your taxpayer money, when it is used to save businesses, can't go to carbon-intensive industries. The UN is actively advocating for the death of our responsible natural resource industry. For that I say: how dare you, António? How is it responsible for you to tell governments to kill jobs, scare off critical investments, and force people to choose between heating their homes or having food on the table for dinner? That is the reality we risk if our natural resource sector goes under.

But guess what? That's not the scary part. The United Nations is not the first organization to talk like this. We have heard from climate extremists on the left, some of whom are opposition members in this House, as they criticize our natural resources. They've been doing it for years, but what they don't understand is that we will need – we will need – all of the revenues derived from selling and harvesting our natural resources to pay for the emergency COVID-19 spending. Thankfully these organizations do not talk for most of Albertans, and they will not divide us.

Seeing that my time is coming up, I will quickly just summarize. Oil is not dead. Oil products help raise everybody's standard of living. Alberta leads the world in ESG. The United Nations is a virtue-signalling bureaucracy.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Camrose. [interjections] Order. Order. The hon. Member for Camrose is the one with the floor.

Camrose Railway Museum

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are very fortunate in my community to have the beautifully restored Camrose heritage railway station and park. Forming the centrepiece of the park, this 1911 Canadian Northern Railway depot has been carefully restored for all to enjoy. The original passenger shelter, the Sparling Centre, filled with historical photos, and the track car storage shed are available for the public. Visitors will be able to read stories of the previous workers and see what they accomplished, preserved by the many volunteers who keep the centre well-maintained and alive.

You can also help yourself in the tea room, which is elegantly appointed with traditional china. The park is also home to the Canadian Northern Society's library, where guests have a unique opportunity to see everything from manuals and books to historic maps on the Canadian National Railway. In the library exists a truly astounding amount of Canada's railway history, right back to the establishment of Canada as an economic union that stretched from sea to shining sea.

For those wanting a different setting for a meeting, the museum can accommodate meetings and general assemblies and is available for special Victorian teas or even a garden party. Why not consider the location for a memorable wedding? No museum is complete without a gift shop. Count on finding some cool items in this unique little shop. If you are planning a family vacation and you want to stay in Alberta, put Camrose on the list, and make sure that you stop in at the Camrose heritage railway station, a little gem in my community.

If you live in the community and are looking for a light voluntary commitment, why not consider giving a hand at the museum? I would encourage everyone to visit this little gem. I've enjoyed the museum many times. Please come to Camrose and see our beautiful museum.

The Speaker: I would encourage the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie to see how you can complete a member's statement in two minutes.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. the Health minister.

Bill 17 Mental Health Amendment Act, 2020

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise this afternoon to introduce Bill 17, the Mental Health Amendment Act, 2020.

Now, Alberta's Mental Health Act allows for individuals with serious mental health disorders to be involuntarily detained for treatment in a designated facility or mandatory treatment in the community. Now, these proposed amendments would strengthen the rights of these patients and assure that their rights are provided for and respected while they receive care. The amendments would also modernize the act and reduce red tape, providing for more timely and responsive care.

2:50

Our government is committed to improving mental health and addiction care in our province to help more Albertans get on the path to health, wellness, and long-term recovery, and these amendments would better enable us to ensure vulnerable Albertans get the help that they need and their rights are safeguarded while doing so.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I hereby move first reading of the Mental Health Amendment Act. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 17 read a first time]

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Bill 21 Provincial Administrative Penalties Act

Mr. Schweitzer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to request leave to introduce Bill 21, the Provincial Administrative Penalties Act.

This act would amend the Traffic Safety Act to give Alberta some of the strongest impaired driving penalties in the country. It would also create an administrative procedure that would be used for first-time impaired driving offences and in the future traffic tickets and potentially other provincial regulatory contraventions. The system will be quicker and easier for Albertans to navigate. These changes will remove many matters from the court system and free up thousands of hours of court time and police time. It'll also save many lives, Mr. Speaker. It's part of the government's work in general to protect Albertans, make roads safer, and our communities safer.

I ask that we move first reading of Bill 21, the Provincial Administrative Penalties Act.

[Motion carried; Bill 21 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Peace River.

Bill Pr. 1 The Sisters of the Precious Blood of Edmonton Repeal Act

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to request leave to introduce a bill being Pr. 1, The Sisters of the Precious Blood of Edmonton Repeal Act.

By way of context, Mr. Speaker, The Sisters of the Precious Blood of Edmonton was a Catholic order that practises acts of corporate mercy and was incorporated in 1964 by private statute. The purpose of this bill is to allow The Sisters of the Precious Blood to dissolve as they are no longer in operation and were canonically wound up in 2012. Before public laws were created to allow religious organizations to incorporate, their incorporation was done through private bills. Private bills are not typically reflective of any party's platform or individual MLA's partisan or political position, so party affiliation of the sponsoring MLA is generally not taken into account to consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 1 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there tablings? The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the requisite number of copies of correspondence received in support of Bill 201, Strategic Aviation Advisory Council Act. The first one is jointly from Edmonton International Airport and the Calgary Airport Authority, signed by president and CEO Tom Ruth and president and CEO of Calgary Airport Authority, Mr. Bob Sartor, in support of that bill.

Secondly, I have one from Pegasus Imagery Ltd., an Edmonton-based organization which designs, manufactures, and deploys remotely piloted aircraft to deliver intelligence and data services, and they're speaking strongly in favour of Bill 201.

Lastly but not least, from the town of Edson, signed by His Worship Mayor Kevin Zahara in support of this bill, stating, "We feel this will provide an informed group with a strong voice, focused on industrial growth in the aviation and tourism sectors." And, of course, the Edmonton airport also services the Jasper national park areas vitally important to our tourism sector.

These will be tabled today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk: on behalf of hon. Mrs. Aheer, Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, responses to questions raised by Ms Hoffman, hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora, on March 17, 2020, Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women 2020-21 main estimates debate.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we are at Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 20 Real Estate Amendment Act, 2020

The Speaker: The Minister of Service Alberta.

Mr. Glubish: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and move second reading of Bill 20, the Real Estate Amendment Act, 2020.

This bill is another important step forward in fixing the major problems of the Real Estate Council of Alberta, or RECA, that were

identified by the independent KPMG report earlier last year. The first step we took, of course, was back in October with Bill 15, where we fired the Real Estate Council of Alberta and instead appointed an administrator to ensure that the regulator could continue to function in the interim period.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

What I promised at that time, Madam Speaker, is that I would speak with industry groups and associations from the real estate industry to listen to them about the chief concerns they had with the regulator and to hear their ideas on how to move forward in a constructive way, and that's what this bill is all about. This bill is about bringing forward sensible governance reform to the regulator, and I am pleased to say: promise made, promise kept.

I also want to say thank you to all of those organizations that took part in this extensive and, I would say, unprecedented consultation with my office and myself and my department. The amendments that we're bringing forward in this bill will increase transparency of the regulator, they will improve accountability of the regulator, and, ultimately, they will restore good governance to the regulator. This is good, Madam Speaker. This will restore the faith of Albertans, Alberta businesses, and the real estate industry in the real estate regulator.

We know there were many, many problems with RECA before, and those were highlighted in extreme detail in the KPMG report that we've addressed many times leading up to this bill and also in our discussions on Bill 15 last year. That report highlights and underscores why it's so important that we take these steps to move forward and make these changes to the governance of RECA.

The most significant reform that we're bringing forward in this bill is to create four industry councils. Before we used to have the residential real estate industry, the commercial real estate industry and commercial property managers, the mortgage broker industry, as well as the residential property management industry all under the same regulator and all with a single board dealing with the strategic priorities and urgent needs of all of those members. That contributed, Madam Speaker, to a lot of the dysfunction because all of those groups have different priorities, different interests, different needs. But when you have all of them on the same board, it led to a devolving of relationships and led to where the regulator ended up, which was not being able to function properly. So what I am bringing forward is the recommendation to create four separate industry councils.

Now the residential realtors will have their own industry council, and instead of having to balance the discussion and strategic focus of the regulator with all of the other industries, they will be able to manage and self-regulate their own industry through that industry council. Similarly, commercial real estate brokerages and commercial property managers will have their own industry council, Madam Speaker, and they will be able to focus on the most important urgent needs of their industry. Likewise, the same for mortgage brokers with their industry council and residential property managers with their industry council. So this is a really positive step in the right direction to allow each of these different sectors and segments of the real estate industry to self-regulate, still under RECA but with more control over their own destiny.

This reflects a lot of the feedback that I received through our consultation process over the last eight months, and I'm very proud of where we've landed with this. I'm looking forward to more debate on this so that I can potentially answer more questions from any members who are interested in what we're trying to do here.

Another change that we're bringing forward is that we are refocusing the mandate of the regulator. The regulator will now be

focused on licensing and regulation, which is what they always should have been focused on. But what we are changing is, for example, they will no longer be responsible for the delivery of education to the licensed members of the real estate industry.

3:00

You know, I'll tell you a story, Madam Speaker. When I met with the administration at RECA early on in this process, some of the staff there were telling me about their education programs. I was shocked a bit to see how proud they were. They motioned to me and said: "You know, Minister, we're really proud of this education program that we've developed. In the olden days the binder that the realtor had to read and study before writing our test was this big." For *Hansard's* purposes my hands are motioning about two inches thick. "But now, Minister," they said, "it's this thick." And again for *Hansard's* benefit my hands are 18 inches apart.

They were proud of this, Madam Speaker, yet they gave me no indication of why or how that expansion of the volume of material would contribute to improved professionalism, improved performance, better competency, better accountability. Ultimately, the education system should be about ensuring that these professionals can do the job properly and serve Albertans in a competent manner. You know, unfortunately, the regulator was just overreaching in its authority and overreaching in its regulatory capacity and doing things it should never have done and was not good at.

What we will be doing is ensuring that the industry councils can determine: what do they want the education process to look like? What material should their licensed members need to study in order to become a licensed member or to stay a licensed member? And then the education delivery will be delivered by a third party who specializes in the delivery of education. This is another very positive step forward to ensure that professionals who are regulated by RECA, regardless of which segment of the real estate industry they are in, will have the skills they need and the competencies required to serve Albertans properly.

Another change that we're bringing forward is – and we heard this lots. There was no dispute resolution process at the regulator, which, again, contributed to the dysfunction. You know, we had various members on the board who didn't get along and disagreed with one another, and ultimately a lot of the time with that regulator was spent on personal differences and not on strategic governance issues for the regulator. We will be requiring through this bill, should it pass, that a formal dispute resolution process must be set up.

Furthermore, we're going to make sure that none of the board or industry council members will be able to be on any of the hearing or appeals panels; instead, that will need to be made up of either public members or industry members.

These are just a few of the changes that I am pleased to be bringing forward in this bill to amend the Real Estate Act. Ultimately, though, Madam Speaker, this comes down to just a couple of very simple things, and that is about increasing transparency, improving accountability, and re-establishing good governance so that we can restore the faith of Albertans, Alberta businesses, and especially the real estate industry in the real estate regulator.

I'm confident that this bill will do that. I'm confident that we have the support of the real estate industry and the various sectors of the real estate industry who worked very closely with me and my team to inform us on the important matters at hand. I'm grateful for their feedback, I'm grateful for their involvement, and I'm looking forward to working with them to implement this should it pass this Legislature, I hope, with the support of the full House.

That's a lot to talk about in this bill, and I'm really looking forward to the debate on this, but for now I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 16
Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety)
Amendment Act, 2020

Ms Gray moved that the motion for second reading of Bill 16, Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020, be amended by deleting all of the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 16, Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020, be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Families and Communities in accordance with Standing Order 74.2.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Any members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity this afternoon to add some thoughts around Bill 16, the Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020, and, of course, more directly, the referral motion to the Standing Committee on Families and Communities to look at some of the aspects I think of this bill that have been overlooked.

You know, during the debate last night I guess there was a secondary line of debate around the fund itself, the victims of crime fund, and how that money was being spent, how it wasn't being spent. I think one thing that we can consider here as to why we should refer it to committee is how the money is being spent, how it could be better spent, to serve Albertans.

I know during the consultations that the government made on this, one organization that I know for a fact was not consulted with is the Victims of Homicide, Madam Speaker. This is an organization whose founder, Jane Orydzuk, is a constituent of mine. She founded this group actually a little more than 25 years ago as a support group. Her son Tim was murdered on October 1, 1994. At that time there really was no support system for, you know – sometimes when we're looking at crime in general, we certainly do have a victim that is involved with that, but one of the aspects that we forget about a little bit is some of the family members of potentially that victim, in this case Jane herself, being the mother of Tim. This is an organization that I think we could have the opportunity to consult with around maybe some of the things that we could be doing in addition to what's already being done with the victims of crime fund. That aspect in itself I think would be very, very valuable in terms of a reason why we should send this to committee.

Some of the other things that I do want to key in on again, as I almost always do, are around the language that's contained in the bill. You know, the reason for referral to committee would give us the opportunity to look at some of those things. Initially going through the bill itself, I'm looking over here on page 2, number 4, section 2, specifically (a)(d), "victims should receive benefits promptly in accordance with this Act and the regulations." Now, as everyone knows – I've spoken to it at length – I always get hung up a little bit on the language. "Should" does mean that that should happen, but it doesn't guarantee that it could happen. When we find those instances where it's not, was it a case of that they didn't receive the benefits in a day, a week, a month, a year, a decade? I don't know. But that word itself, "should," could leave it open to potential problems and people falling through the cracks. Sending

it to committee would give us the opportunity to evaluate that and maybe even offer some recommendations on how we could strengthen that part of the language.

On that same page, Madam Speaker, number 5: "Section 5(1) is repealed and the following is substituted." You know, in terms of the committee, the victims of crime committee is continuing as the new name of the committee, but more specifically on the following page, that I wanted to cue in on here, is (1.1), "The Committee is to consist of at least 3 but not more than 5 members appointed by the Minister." Unfortunately, when I've looked at the track record of the government when it comes to making appointments, they tended to be very partisan appointments, and, like I was talking earlier in other debates – for instance, on the private member's bill Bill 201 I want to make sure that we're getting the members from that industry that can provide that type of background, not just an opportunity for some good donor to go on there that really doesn't know anything about the aviation industry. I want the proper people in that place. That concerns me a little bit when members are appointed by the minister. Maybe perhaps by sending it to committee, we can look at that and maybe find ways of coming up with some different language there.

3:10

Again on page 3, number 6, section 6, but more specifically in (a): "evaluate applications for grants relating to programs or initiatives intended to" – and here's what I wanted to really cue in on – "benefit victims of crime or to promote public safety." Now, during the course of the debate there has been a real emphasis on: and public safety. By heading to committee, getting a chance to potentially consult with the group that I was mentioning earlier, the Victims of Homicide, we could find a way to potentially include that organization, but because maybe they don't necessarily promote public safety – as I said, it is a support group for family members that have had other family members that are victims of crime – does that mean it gives them the ability to be completely excluded? It means they're no less deserving. Again, we could send that to committee. We could look at that language. Maybe there's a way that we could fix that. Again, getting hung up on the language, but language means everything. It really does. It's so amazing how it always comes down to that.

One of the other things I saw here on page 4, right at the very top, use of fund, number 10: "The Minister may." Perhaps maybe my colleague from Edmonton-South West and the Minister of Municipal Affairs would be willing to speak to this, especially maybe in committee, how we had that little discussion around the words "will," "may," and "shall." He seems to think that they're the same. Of course, I would highly disagree. That in itself, "The Minister may, in accordance with this Act and the regulations, make payments from the Fund with respect to the following" – and it goes on – doesn't mean the minister has to. It means the minister may.

We may be finding ourselves in a situation where there is money that could be dispensed from the fund, but for some reason we decide not to. I think there should be some accountability, something I have seen other legislation having a great lack of, or even exit clauses to prevent any kind of blowback.

Right within that same section, Madam Speaker, I wanted to highlight (c), "programs and initiatives that benefit victims of crime and promote public safety." The reason I highlighted that is because, as I mentioned earlier, there was another one where it said, "benefit victims of crime or to promote public safety." Is it one or the other, or is it both at the same time? Again, we now have conflicting language. I have a bad feeling that that is now going to start opening it up to various different kinds of interpretation. It could create some chaos, quite frankly, for the government, and by

referring it to committee, we get a chance to look at that language and perhaps maybe suggest some changes or maybe alter it, take it out altogether.

Madam Speaker, if you've been following along, which I know you have been very, very closely, I'm only at page 4 of a 17-page document, and I've already found all of those problems. You know, I don't want to belabour it here, but if I've already found all of these problems and I'm only at page 4, we really need to send this to committee to clean this up. We need to take a very good look at this. Yes, it'll also give us the opportunity to consult with some other organizations. Again, that side discussion around how maybe the fund is being dispersed, why is the surplus not getting out there: that would be a perfect venue to be able to answer those questions.

I'm very much in support of the referral motion to send Bill 16 to the Standing Committee on Families and Communities. I would urge all members of the House, based on some of the things that I've pointed out here this afternoon, to support that motion so that we get the opportunity to create some very strong language and maybe even come up with some even better ideas of how we can use that money from the Victims of Crime fund rather than just paying for police in communities that we downloaded those costs onto.

With that, thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I will take my chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available for comments or questions.

Seeing none, any other speakers to amendment REF1 on Bill 16? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak again to Bill 16, Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020. I have to say that this is a vantage point which I have not yet spoken from before in this Chamber, so this is a little bit different. It feels a little warmer down here, I have to say.

Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the bill but also to speak to the referral amendment to refer this matter to the Committee on Families and Communities. You know, I raised a number of questions, comments, concerns with respect to Bill 16 at second reading of this bill, but now it's interesting because actually since that time, even in the last couple of days since I last spoke on this bill, we've heard some feedback from organizations and groups that were either consulted very, I guess, minimally with respect to the proposed changes to the victims of crime fund or were not consulted at all and have raised some significant questions about the changes that this bill introduces to the purpose of the fund and how the fund will now continue to serve those whom it is intended to serve, which are, of course, victims of crime.

In particular, I note that there have been a number of organizations who have highlighted that they're concerned that what was originally the mandate of the victims of crime fund and the funds that were part of that are now going to be – I think the term used was “raided” by the government for other purposes. We have to remember that this fund was dedicated specifically to serve those victims. I think just the feedback alone that we've heard from a number of organizations – and I'm going to walk through what some of that feedback has been – highlights the need for this to go to committee because, certainly, at committee we have the opportunity to hear some additional feedback from stakeholders who weren't aware of what precisely was going to be happening.

Perhaps like many other stakeholders in Alberta, they anticipated, when the governing party laid out in their campaign a crime-reduction strategy plan, that they were going to not pick the pockets

of one area to support the other in order to maintain all of those commitments. What they thought was that there was a complete commitment to all those pieces of the campaign platform. But what we're seeing – and this is not new with this bill; we saw this already with respect to the two budgets that have been tabled by this government so far – is that in order to maintain some of the commitments that they've made, they're actually downloading those costs onto other parties that were not expecting that. For example, we know that a number of rural municipalities were not expecting to have to pay for the police that the government promised them through raises in property taxes. They were told that this party was committed to increasing the number of police and prosecutors but weren't told that they would have to pay for it themselves.

We're seeing that that is happening once again here with respect to Bill 16. We see that the government is planning on paying for some of its promises and initiatives and public security initiatives out of a fund that was actually created to be dedicated to victims of crime. Some of the feedback – and I'm sure, Madam Speaker, perhaps some of the other speakers and the government members are likely aware of some of this feedback as well – has been coming from various stakeholders. For example, the Alberta Police-Based Victim Service Association, the APBVSA, submitted a release where they were very concerned, precisely the concern that I just outlined, that the fund was going to be used for purposes other than for which it was intended.

You know, this fund has had a long history, and it has a substantial amount of money in there that's meant to be dedicated toward victims. I know that some work had been done under the previous government to try to make sure that those services were being used for the purposes for which it was being intended, and that work was happening. But the APBVSA has indicated in their news release that they're very concerned that victims are now going to be – this is a ploy, really, that “does a great disservice to them” because the funds that are being dedicated for them are now being used to fund other purposes. They indicate that “association members have already felt impacts of victim funds being redirected for public safety initiatives as requests for operating funds have been reduced and training dollars all but eliminated.”

3:20

They indicate as well, Madam Speaker – and this is a quote from their news release – that “this is the wrong move for this province. Funds need to first address the needs of victim services while any expanded use be judiciously considered after consultations with the victim serving community.” I think that right there sets out particularly why it's important that this bill be referred to the Committee on Families and Communities, because that precise consultation which this association is asking for can take place at that committee hearing. It's an opportunity to be working with the associations who deal directly with victims to talk about that.

Now, as well, since I last had the opportunity to speak to this bill, we've also seen some feedback from some other community-based organizations. Some of that includes, for example, a comment by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. I know that this government has indicated that they believe that domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual violence are very important to them. They set out in their campaign and we have indeed seen within the first year of this government's term that they have introduced two bills related to these issues, specifically Clare's law and the human trafficking act. Those are great measures, but I maintain the comments that the opposition stated all along while supporting those bills, that those measures under Clare's law and the human trafficking act will not be meaningful and will not have a significant

impact on reducing the harms which they're intended to address unless there are actually resources behind them.

Here we have now a perfect example of how the government is not intending to put the resources to making sure that women leaving sexually violent situations or domestic violence or human trafficking, or children, have access to the supports they need. Not only are there no new announcements, for example, with respect to affordable and supportive housing, no new announcements with respect to child care, all things that are critical to make sure that families and women have an opportunity to leave these situations and actually remain out of those situations and move on with their lives and get the supports they need, but now we're seeing that funds from the victims of crime fund, which served a lot of these women and children and families who were in these violent situations, supported them through that process – that fund is now being undermined. So no new resources, but actually funds that were available are now being undermined.

For example, the executive director of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, with respect specifically to Bill 16, indicated her concern that part of this bill cuts off the witness to homicide benefit, which was a \$5,000 support payment to those who've seen a loved one die by violence. Let's be clear about who typically, not maybe typically but often, would have received that kind of witness support. If we're talking about domestic violence situations, it would have been children. It would have been children because we know that in domestic violence situations, there's often a family, and there are often children.

We know the trauma that can exist and that can be long lasting on a child who has witnessed violence, and this kind of support, the \$5,000 support, which was originally part of the victims of crime fund, was key to making sure that those children could get supports that they needed to be able to process, handle, move on, and recover from the trauma that they experienced as a result of witnessing violence. And it's not just witnessing violence; it's witnessing violence within their family home, within a space which is supposed to be a safe and secure place, to a family member and often, if we're talking about domestic violence, to their mother. That's usually the typical situation.

I can't imagine that that could have been the intent of these changes. I can't imagine that this government would want to take away supports for children who may have witnessed violence. I simply can't imagine that that was the intent. I assume, therefore, that this was a bit of an error, and perhaps that sort of feedback in a committee setting, where organizations have the opportunity to provide that feedback, could propose some significant changes to this. I think that feedback is very important.

I mention this as well because there's another change within Bill 16 that also specifically affects children, which again I can only imagine must be unintended yet directly affects children. That, Madam Speaker, is actually set out in Bill 16. Section 11 of Bill 16 repeals section 12.2 and 12.3 of the Victims of Crime Act. Specifically why that's important is because section 12.3 of the original Victims of Crime Act says the following:

If the victim was a minor at the time the offence occurred, an application under section 12 must, subject to the regulations, be made within 10 years from the date the victim reaches the age of majority.

That's a pretty standard provision, that kind of allowance for additional time for a victim or an individual to seek enforcement of a legal right.

Of course, I know, Madam Speaker, that you'd be aware that there are statutes of limitations that are set out regularly in legislation. The typical statute of limitations for somebody to raise a claim of a breach of an act or a criminal claim or a civil claim is

two years. That's the typical. But it's also quite standard to make sure that minors have additional time, and usually that time period doesn't begin until that minor reaches the age of majority. That's for obvious reasons, because often, of course, a child would not be either aware of their legal rights to either seek civil or criminal enforcement of their rights or they may not even be aware of the violation or breach that they're seeking enforcement of.

We certainly know that there are cases, particularly with sexual violence and physical abuse, where children would suppress that information and would not come forward with that well into their adulthood. It is typical to allow a child to mature and to become an adult and then provide that the statute of limitations, one, is not triggered until they reach the age of majority and then to provide an additional period of time beyond the standard two-year statute of limitations.

Again, that all is compassionate. It's reasonable. It makes sense. I don't think anybody on the government side would say that that's something we wouldn't agree with, that children should have additional time. Especially if we're talking about a child who's in a domestic violence situation, they may not have a trusted adult who would seek enforcement of those rights on their behalf. The child may have to do it on their own, which is pretty typically the case. So if a child doesn't have an adult, a trusted family member who's able to initiate their legal rights, they need to be old enough, mature enough, have the opportunity to articulate and to understand what they may have experienced, and give them additional time to seek enforcement of those rights. That is just common sense, Madam Speaker.

However, for reasons that I can't understand, the proposed Bill 16 actually removes that 10-year statute of limitations, if you will, from the point that a child reaches the age of majority. In fact, it seems to apply simply the standard two-year statute of limitations, which means that a victim of crime has to seek an application for access to the fund within two years of the date upon which they were made aware of the situation. Two years might make sense for adults, Madam Speaker; of course, it's in line with the typical statute of limitations. But to ask a child to have to raise that claim and have access to this fund within two years – we're potentially speaking about children who are not close to the age of majority. We could be talking about children who are quite young.

There's no limit on a victim's age within the Victims of Crime Act. They could be four years old. They could be six years old. They could be 10 years old. To say that that child has two years – and again, remember, a child who has witnessed violence and crime may not have parents. Their parents might be the ones who were either victimized themselves or may have been a perpetrator, especially in the situation of domestic violence. To suggest that that child has only two years, that a six-year-old has two years, has until they're eight years old: that's completely unfathomable. I can't believe that that was the intention of this bill.

Perhaps if we have an opportunity to refer this matter to the Families and Communities Committee, we would have a fulsome discussion about what was the intent behind that provision. Was it an oversight? I would like to hear from organizations such as, for example, child advocacy centres such as the Zebra centre, such as the Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre, those centres who actually work with children who have been abused, to see what their thoughts are about accessing the victims of crime fund if you are child, and how many of those children would be in a position to seek such an application. They would absolutely have to have an adult do it on their behalf. Do they have a trusted adult? If they don't, do they lose out on their right to access supports under this fund? That can't be the intended purpose. I cannot imagine that something called the victims of crime fund would cut out the most

vulnerable victims. Again, I simply mention that this could not have been intended. Perhaps this was an oversight.

3:30

We need to have that discussion about: what are the rights of children? Who are the children who would typically seek access under this fund, and what are their circumstances? I know that I'm not the expert on that, but I know that there are many stakeholder organizations who are. I know that they work closely and compassionately with children who've experienced significant trauma, whether it be to themselves or as witnesses.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I was very interested to hear the analysis of the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, especially in regard to young people that are under the age of majority. I had not known about this nor thought about it, and I would like to finish my tutorial if possible.

Thank you.

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

Ms Pancholi: It's a rare opportunity that I get to teach a teacher, right? Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, as I said, I think that there is obviously an oversight with respect to what's happened here or an error because despite, I know, the partisan rhetoric that takes place in this House, I cannot imagine that the government is intending to exclude children from accessing this fund with such a limitation period.

What I will say is that I want to highlight the importance of access to a fund such as this for vulnerable women and for vulnerable families. When I had the opportunity to speak to this bill before, I talked about how I had experience as a law student working in a legal clinic which served women who were survivors of violence. We know about the hesitations and the challenges that women who have experienced sexual violence and domestic violence have in actually getting enforcement or getting a conviction within a criminal justice system. For many of these women, not only is the process of going through making a report already traumatic, but then should something actually come to trial, should they actually get to conviction – it's very unlikely. We know that many women will not want to put themselves through that experience. We know we have a lot of work to do in our criminal justice system to prevent revictimization of women who are survivors of violence.

When I had that experience working in that law clinic, what I know is that those women found access to these kinds of funds to be critical because it was a way for them to at least feel recognized that something criminal had happened to them, that there was an acknowledgement of that, but they didn't have to wait for the very long, arduous process of getting a criminal conviction to actually access supports and supports for injuries that they had incurred, trauma, emotional supports. So this kind of fund is very important, and perhaps what we need to do, rather than taking the dollars from this fund and distributing them more widely, is that we need to make sure that more victims are aware of this fund and that there is this opportunity to access this support.

That's even more so the case for children because, again, if there is no trusted adult who can actually advocate for that child and seek application under this fund, there could be many, many missed opportunities to provide critical support to highly traumatized children. We all know in this House that the earlier you can provide those supports to a child rather than waiting even till they're the age

of majority or older, the more likely they are to be able to heal, to recover, to be able to move on with their lives in a meaningful way.

What we should be doing is encouraging more individuals, particularly those who are vulnerable, particularly those who are unlikely to get the satisfaction that they may seek through the criminal justice system entirely or may be too scared or traumatized to even do that. We need to encourage more families, more women, and more children to be able to access the supports here. But by spreading that fund and moving away from the focus of the victim and by now using it to support funding for police, funding for prosecutors, all important things, Madam Speaker – I'm not disagreeing that those are important things; they absolutely are. However, it shouldn't come out of supports that we provide to victims to be able to fund that.

There are many choices this government has made about how to spend our money, and this is not a good use of it. Taking away from victims to fund their campaign promises rather than ensuring that we have the proper tax base, the proper income from taxes in order to pay for their promises: that's what's more important. You don't take from victims in order to support prosecutors and police. We need all of those measures to be taken equally seriously because criminal justice is not just that front end. It's not just policing; it's not just prosecutors. It's about supporting the victims through it.

I know that I've heard the Minister of Justice stand and say many times how he's heard from victims of rural crime. Of course, this is a fund that serves all Albertans. It's not specific just to rural Albertans. It applies to my constituents as well, and it is something that all Albertans should have access to.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment REF1 on Bill 16? I see the hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 16, Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020, more specifically to the referral motion. This is my first time speaking on the bill, and I actually really appreciate my colleague's comments and her expertise as a lawyer and having done a lot of work with victims of crime, actually, the focus of this.

I'd like to add a little bit of a different perspective. One of the things that I'd like to focus on is actually a piece that this bill will really decimate, and that is supporting the organizations in the community that support victims of crime and their families in many cases. Years ago I was a volunteer with a victims' services unit that was attached, obviously, to a police department. As a volunteer you go through all of the steps that are required – you know, Crimcheck; I think they did a credit check, all of those things – as well as you have to do all of the training that you need to have. As well, you have to demonstrate a degree of expertise that you have to be able to do that kind of volunteer work because it actually, really is intense. As a volunteer you commit to a certain number of shifts or a certain number of hours per week to work.

The training is intense, and it is done by a number of professionals. It covers, as you can imagine, every kind of area that you can imagine. It is disturbing. You hear from victims of crime – you hear from survivors, you hear from their families, and you hear from adjacent communities that are impacted by the different crimes – and it causes you to feel like there's just no way that you could possibly do this volunteer job. Like, it is just so enormous. How do you possibly prepare yourself to support victims of crime? There are just so many crimes that this would apply to, which is why you lean into the training. You lean into the training, that is funded by the victims of crime fund, and you rely on that fund to

pay for the training that you continuously are required to update and participate in.

That means spending your own time, and it's an incredible investment in this province when you have Albertans with expertise in all kinds of fields giving hours, giving their time each and every week not only to do the work but to train themselves and to ensure that they're ready to do the work. I don't know if there are colleagues that have also done that kind of volunteer work, but it is difficult. You do all kinds of things. Some volunteers with more experience: I don't know that they still do that, but at the time they would respond after an event. Let's say that there was a robbery at a store. Once all of that had been cleared and law enforcement had done all their work, you know, to follow up with, perhaps, the staff that had been there or people that had been in the store to ensure that they were okay – and the only way that these volunteers do it is because they receive the training that they did.

Some of the most difficult things that I ever had to do were to follow up on reports of domestic violence – of course, they were always really difficult and really complex when, sadly, partners or the person who had been abused chose, you know, not to go further for whatever reason; we all understand with the dynamics of those situations – and make sure that there was a plan: should this happen again, here are some resources, or here's what you can do. Following up with children that had had to do – I can't even describe it. I can't describe it.

3:40

A lot of the time it was a phone follow-up, so you would get a stack of these occurrences that had happened, whatever, the day before or two days before, and you would need to follow up with the ones that were referred by the people that had done the work to ensure, like: "Do you need anything? Can I give you the phone number for something?" If you have to go to court, there is also this ability to participate in court preparation. A volunteer will walk you through what that looks like, how that feels to sit there and to have lawyers asking you questions, or, you know, where a judge will sit. It doesn't always look like it does on television. We would practise these things, sometimes with dolls or stuffed animals or whatever.

But all of this was done because there was an investment made through the victims of crime fund to pay for essential training for volunteers, like I was, like many other people were. We would not have been able to provide this free service to Albertans who had experienced some of the most jarring things that you can even imagine. I certainly didn't go on some that were worse than the things I saw, because I was a newer volunteer. I had not had the years of free training that the victims of crime fund had provided. That is essential. Some of the larger urban areas, certainly, likely have more resources to be able to continue that training, but small communities do not.

Once again, I'm very concerned that this government has dropped a bill, will jam it through, and then consult later. I haven't even had time to connect yet with the victims' services unit or organization in St. Albert. I met them a few months ago about some other issues, but our calendars have not allowed us to meet again, and that's not allowing me to do my job. I cannot imagine this government has had time to do all of the consultation that is required to put forward legislation that is responsible and that supports all Albertans.

Sometimes the easiest way that I have to debate or talk about some of the legislation that I come across is just to draw on my own experiences. I want to draw your attention to another piece of this legislation. Why I think it would be very important to go to committee is that, you know, with the funds that are given or made accessible to victims of crime, I think there are a lot of things that

we can be looking at. Some of the Auditor General's recommendations were outstanding. There are just a lot of things that we can do, but it needs to be there and not after the fact: don't worry; we'll fix it. But you have to do the work first instead of going back and looking to plug a hole when you see there's a leak.

In January 2015 in St. Albert at the apex casino – I'm sure everybody knows about it. I worked at LoSeCa Foundation, which actually is right across the street, and I was going to work on a Saturday morning and noticed, like: oh, my goodness, something has happened here. There were police vehicles everywhere, and obviously we all found out later what had happened, that Constable Wynn was killed, as was another. Auxiliary Constable Derek Bond was injured. He did not die, but it was horrific. This happened, like, at 3 o'clock in the morning. I believe they were, like, a routine check, looking at licence plates, and then had gone into the casino to look at their security footage. Anyway, I don't mean to dredge all this up, because this has been, you know, horrific for everybody and anybody touched by this. What I saw was years later.

Weirdly enough, I actually worked with my colleague, my federal colleague, who is Michael Cooper, the MP for St. Albert-Edmonton, and one of the things that we were able to do together is that – there were a number of witnesses there that morning at 3 o'clock, and the way that the legislation was written is that not all witnesses had access to the funds that they really did need to be able to get through this. They had seen somebody murdered right in front of them and were never the same. This is a couple that were in their 30s at the time, I believe, had a child, possibly two. It was incredible the damage that this had done to their family, to these individual people. They could not afford things like counselling, obviously; they'd lost jobs. The children – I think it was one child. The child was having a tough time, with all kinds of expenses.

I'm giving you these examples because these things happen every single day. Mike Cooper is the Conservative MP for St. Albert-Edmonton. We were talking about the need for this fund to go further, not for it to stop. I'm bringing up this example because I know how easy it would be for this government, if it truly intended to make this legislation better, to stop, go into the communities, talk to the victims' services units, talk to the other organizations throughout Alberta that do this kind of work, that support victims of crime, and ask the tough questions now, before things change, not after.

You know, I understand there's been a panel appointed. I would suggest that it doesn't go far enough. To have two elected members: that's great, but let's have more people with lived experience, whether those are people that do the work, people that have been impacted by crime, people from all over Alberta, people with disabilities, people from every race you could possibly think of. We can do better than this, but I don't believe that we are. I think there has been a pattern of: shove the legislation through; we'll worry about the details later. But this is too important. I think that we need to pause, send it to committee, and take the time to explore all of this.

I didn't even realize that there had been changes like my colleague talked about just now, and if we didn't realize that, I'm pretty sure members on the other side were as surprised as I was. If we don't know these things, then we should stop before we vote on this, send it to committee, allow it to have the time that it needs.

You know, I would even question how many people have read the regulation. I had never actually read the regulation, the victims of crime regulation, that goes into great detail about how the grants are used. I'm alarmed that these will be gone and that it will be only five people deciding who gets it next. I'm alarmed at the vast range of crimes and victims of these crimes that are covered in this fund, that five people have been identified to really make a decision about

– it’s horrible to say – all of the people in the future that will be victims of these crimes. There are pages of it. Pages. Yet, sadly, I believe the government once again will decide that they know best and will push it through although we continue to say: you have not done your job if you have not taken the time to consult every single person that is impacted by this.

I have a number of other concerns about this. I understand that there is a need to do something about rural crime. I get that. I think it’s horrible. No Albertan should be subjected to the crimes that they are. Absolutely, we need to do something. If we need more law enforcement, then so be it. If we need more prosecutors, then so be it. If we need more clerks, then we need more clerks. If we need more training for victims’ services, then let’s do that. But let’s do it properly. Let’s fund that properly. Let’s not take it from the victims of crime unit to plug a hole that we’ve created by eliminating something that actually was working.

I think that if you go back and if you look at the recommendations made by the Auditor General, you will find that you are missing the point. Those recommendations were not made to eliminate a fund that is essential. Not at all. It talked about: what can we do to expand the scope, and what can we do to address the accumulating surplus?

I don’t think it’s too late to just stop. You don’t hear a lot about humility. Have some humility, enough humility to say: “You know what? Maybe we didn’t do a great job. Maybe we need to pause, take a deep breath. Occasionally the opposition may actually have some good ideas. Maybe we could actually include them, because there are tens of thousands of people that we also represent, and we bring their voices to this place, too.” But that has not happened. So why not, for something this important, that affects so many people, whether it’s in rural communities, remote communities, or urban communities, stop and do it properly and take the time and send it to a committee?

3:50

This government had absolutely no problem in sending opposition private members’ bills to committee. I heard all of you debate – I was going to say ad nauseam, but I will not. I will say that I’ve heard the debate about why it was essential for private members’ bills to go to committee. So if that was important, why is it not important enough for something like this to go to a committee to allow us the time that we need to go back to our communities? At least give us time to do that.

If you truly, truly want to protect Albertans, if you want to ensure that victims of crime are protected properly, that all of the supports, all of these things that this fund paid for, essentially, remain as resilient and as strong as I hope that you want them to be, why not pause and allow that to happen instead of jamming it through so that you can say, you know: promise made?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to amendment REF1 on Bill 16? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It’s my pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill 16, Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020, and specifically to REF1. I believe that is the referral motion to the Families and Communities Committee. I can speak from first-hand experience. Not only was I a member on this committee – lovely to see you in the chair, Madam Speaker – but I was also the chair of this committee, and I can speak to the incredible work that was done out of this committee, especially when it came to referrals to the committee.

There was a wonderful opportunity to be able to engage Albertans in the process that’s happening in this House if they’re able to come and present. We look at reaching out to Albertans specifically through ideas that the members of the committee come up with, whether it’s specific organizations, individuals who have an interest in the topic that’s being discussed.

When we’re looking at the victims of crime fund, I think we’ve heard that there are many organizations that feel that they didn’t have a voice in this, and having them come to a committee to present, whether they do a written submission or they do an oral presentation, I think it’s essential to have their voice heard.

These are organizations that are embedded in communities and that truly do the work because they want to see what’s best for those community members that they serve. Being able to have their voice on the record and being listened to by government I think signals to them that the work they do is important and that it’s valued. Knowing that there are organizations that are reaching out and saying, “We would like to have our say,” I think it should signal that this is something that the government should consider doing. In having them come to committee and present, I can say that it could be quite overwhelming when you start hearing some of the stories that we were hearing in the Chamber today about those individuals that are actually being impacted.

We’re not just talking about money that’s out there where they’re looking at restructuring, putting in policing, et cetera, which is important, but this is specific to victims of crime. They have heart-wrenching stories, and those that serve these individuals have a really important role in our province. They are the first responders, the face-to-face people that work with individuals likely at their darkest moments. To be able to hear their stories and their pleas about why they should continue to be funded is essential and why my colleague from St. Albert had indicated that the Auditor General had looked at this fund and came up with suggestions about how to expand it and to allow better access for Albertans that needed to access this fund.

There wasn’t a mention of taking the money and putting it elsewhere. It was to take the money and really make it a robust program and service that allowed more people to access the fund, not take that money and put it somewhere else. That certainly wasn’t the intention of the Auditor General’s report when we were discussing that, and I was on that committee at that time as well, Madam Speaker.

I think that when we’re looking at making a referral to a committee, specifically Families and Communities, it makes sense, especially when we’re talking about something that is so near and dear to so many organizations’ hearts. It’s our fellow Albertans, those that have been victimized, something that I know we’ve heard the government talk about, the crime in this province being a concern, which it absolutely is, and looking at ways to support the victims of those crimes is essential and making sure that we get it right.

To listen to those that have served for decades in communities and what they need and what they think would be the best way forward with this fund is, I think, essential for all members in this Legislature to hear, and this is the perfect opportunity to bring that voice in here. I know that my colleagues and I will hear from individuals, hear from organizations, and we stand up in this Chamber and we share that voice. To be able to have them come and speak directly about something that I know they are so passionate about has an impact.

The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud talked about unintended consequences. There are decisions that are written through this legislation that have unintended consequences, and I don’t know that that was really considered when the legislation was proposed.

This would provide those organizations that provide services to victims of crime an opportunity, the chance to explain the impact of those decisions. While it might not have been an intentional consequence, unfortunately it is going to be a consequence that could have lifelong impacts on individuals that have been impacted by crime.

My experience in working in the Legislature with committees has been that it's been a really beneficial opportunity both for organizations coming to present as well as for the members that are hearing that information. I can only imagine that individuals in this Chamber know someone who has been or they themselves have been a victim of crime. But to not be the individual, to step out of that personal role and look at those that provide service to victims of crime: the Member for St. Albert touched on that, talking about the extensive training that goes into working with those individuals that support victims of crime and being able to identify that you're someone that is interested in volunteering in that capacity. You seek out an organization, and you're able to get the extensive training that is required to be able to do that really, really hard work.

When we're considering making changes to these organizations, I think we need to hear first-hand from them, and in a committee setting is a safe, controlled way to be able to provide that information to the members, who may not have experienced working in an organization such as those that are from the victim-serving community. It gives opportunity for members to ask some of those clarifying questions, to hear the work that's really being done as opposed to just reading through legislation.

It's really important what these organizations do, and I think that having an opportunity for them to present in a committee is essential. We want to make sure that we're getting it right. There is so much work and research and ongoing learning that happens when you're working with individuals that have experienced trauma. It impacts the brain, and I'm sure that many are aware that the brain is one of those organs that we're continuing to learn about, especially when it comes to trauma and that permanent impact.

When I did my private member's bill on posttraumatic stress disorder awareness, hearing the impacts of crime on individuals and those serving those impacted by crime was heartbreaking. Knowing that there are services out there that they can rely on can be life-saving. Having an organization that has been in a community that serves specifically the needs of that community, perhaps an indigenous community, they have very different ways of approaching trauma and healing than perhaps an organization that deals with members of the LGBTQ-plus community. They're the experts in that area, and they should be able to have a say in how this money is best spent and what the process to get the money to the victims should be as opposed to us in this Chamber coming to the determination of what's best without having all of the information.

4:00

I know myself that I was a volunteer with the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton. I worked the crisis line, and I took extensive ongoing training to be able to do that job. If it wasn't for those individuals that worked out of the victims' services that did that face-to-face work, I can't imagine what some of the individuals' lives would have been like. It's one thing to know that a crime has occurred when you're speaking to someone. To have that person take the next step to come forward to make a police report is incredible. It is very difficult to have an individual feel supported. There's stigma around crime. There's stigma around sexual assault, around domestic violence. There's that victim mentality that perhaps they deserved it. And for these individuals that have taken that step, to tell someone and to report it is huge.

We as a society need to support those individuals in the next steps. What does that look like? It's this exact fund and making sure that those individuals that were a victim of crime and were brave enough to come forward to share their story – we need to show them that we believe them and that we're going to support them. How do we do that? We adequately fund the victims of crime fund, and we make sure that when we're in this Legislature making decisions about what needs to happen with this fund, we're doing it based on expert knowledge on how it needs to occur.

By referring it to committee, I think it gives all of the members in this Chamber the opportunity to hear first-hand from those that provide this service to victims what they need. Hearing some of the victims' impacts about what it meant to them to have a volunteer show up on their doorstep right after a crime had happened in, let's say, Barrhead – and I say this because I had a client that had that experience, was in a small community, was a victim of a horrific crime, was new to the community, didn't know anyone, and had a complete stranger show up from victims' services. This stranger became their lifeline. It allowed them to create the space to share their story in a way that reduced trauma, because recalling the story can have an impact, but doing it in a safe way and having someone say: I believe you.

When you're giving your police report, it can sometimes feel very formalized and uncomfortable, and it can be daunting to an individual, sharing very intimate moments of a crime. So to have someone that is there just for you to help you through that process and then stay with you through that process – when you're already in an isolated community and you're a victim of crime from an intimate partner, you're alone.

Having someone from the victims' services unit show up at your residence and help you through that and continue to give you strength to file the police report and to follow through with the court preparation and, like the Member for St. Albert had said, to go with you to court and to sit down and show you that when you're testifying, it absolutely is not like on TV – victims tend to not get a seat when they're testifying. They stand to provide their testimony. That can be a shock for a victim. They're expecting to be able to sit down and relax and have that brace, be grounded, and that doesn't exist. So just the simple fact of walking into a courtroom can be overwhelming, knowing that there's going to be a judge, there are going to be lawyers – depending on the notoriety of the case there could be media involved – having to run that gauntlet and understand all of those things that are impacting this individual having their day in court, being able to share this.

Then there's the training that goes with being cross-examined about their crime. Sometimes victims, unfortunately, are put on trial for a crime that occurred to them. We've seen it where, unfortunately, there's some stigma and some misunderstandings, especially when it comes to sexual assault. There have been many cases where that victim has been blamed for the sexual assault or questioned on their behaviour. Having the strength to stand up there and continue to share your story, seeing that individual from victims' services in the room with you, kind of being there, silently cheering you on, and giving you encouragement is essential.

Hearing those stories and hearing their suggestions, I think, is something that is definitely needed at this point in the legislation before we make these major decisions and change things so dramatically. I think that having it referred to the committee could only benefit this piece of legislation. We know that everyone in this Chamber wants to make sure that victims are supported and that Albertans are taken care of to the best of our ability, and the way for that to happen is to hear directly from the organizations that provide that support to these victims. They could share numerous

stories of the trauma that individuals experience and the need for supports.

I know that this government is taking these crimes seriously. When we look at the human trafficking legislation that was recently brought in, we were in agreement with it, and I stood up in this very Chamber and spoke at length about the importance of having strong legislation but also the need for supports. When we look at some of these crimes that are happening to Albertans, we know that they have impact.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to amendment REF1 on Bill 16? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadows.

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in the House and provide some comments on the amendment to Bill 16, Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020. Just going through the bill and some of the information, when I see the changes this bill is proposing, one of the biggest concerns that – I really, from my heart, wanted to support the amendment to send this bill to the committee and not read in the second reading right now in the House.

As much as I understood that this bill is aiming on strengthening the public safety and brings us, I will say, fundamental changes to the victims of crime law, one of the major changes, as it has been many times reiterated and discussed and brought to our attention, is that for the victims of crime fund that is being proposed, the funds now will be redirected and will not be available to the organizations, to the agencies, and to the people that it was serving, the victims of the crimes, very effectively, successfully for the last over two decades, more than 20 years.

As my colleagues already mentioned, the Member for St. Albert and the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs, the other important aspect, what really needed to be actually looked at, is that the Auditor General of Alberta did recommend to expand this based on the kinds of tasks or, you know, issues this fund has been addressing in the past. The victims of crime fund has been successfully helping, but as the Auditor General said, there might be a need to do more to expand the area of the fund but not to redirect the funds with some different beliefs and then leave the very vulnerable people in chaos.

4:10

What this fund has been doing in the past was – the fundamental principle of this fund was to help subsidize programming, training, and all the resources for the victims of serious crime.

By passing this bill, the biggest change I would see that it will bring is the eligibility criteria, first of all. That changes the mandatory surcharges. If we pass this bill, the government is eliminating the injury and witness to homicide. This is the Criminal Injuries Review Board. That's an independent body that was established under the Victims of Crime Act to conduct a review of decisions made under the victims of crime financial benefits.

There are fundamental changes. The impact of these changes to the victims: what I'm seeing is that when we're talking about the effects on minors, in the previous law the minors had a longer window when it came to accessing the victims of crime fund. Now that time will be much narrowed. They are now expected to file in two years.

From my personal experience as an MLA and before becoming an MLA, working within communities, specifically with victims of, you know, crime, people with mental injuries, psychological injuries, this is something with actually incredibly important

changes for them. It sometimes takes years and years to come out. Specifically, if they're underage, they don't understand. They don't help to come out, or the accessibility they're not aware of in the laws. They could be victims of human trafficking. They could be victims of family violence.

The kind of impact, you know, that crime could leave on people – I was talking to someone the age of 30. The person was sharing her life stories as I tried to encourage her to go out and seek services. The people suffering from mental health due to those things: it's not easy. This will be, I will say, the worst impact by narrowing the window of the time frame to access and the eligibility of the funds available to those victims.

One of the hobbies I have, like, whenever I have time – I have friends or relatives visiting from other places – or in my free time: my recreational activity is that I try to drive outside, you know, go on a long drive or drive to rural areas. It's unique. I don't know how many people living in this urban life in big cities in Alberta can see that driving 20, 30 minutes out of your big city, you will experience a totally different life, a totally different province, a totally different Alberta.

One of my activities I really enjoy: to learn more about Canada, learn more about the indigenous communities and the First Nations. I had the opportunity to go around to some of the reserves, about five reserves, in the past. There I had the opportunity to speak with one of the fellows that's serving on the council of one of the communities, had a great lengthy conversation. His experience, his knowledge: he was a very learned person. After receiving his degree from the University of Alberta, he decided to go back to his community and, you know, give back to the community that gave him a lot.

I had a great lengthy conversation recorded, even on camera, with a promise that he said these things: I will only talk to you, the one very learned person, professional, and working in the community to help others. The kind of impact these mental injuries can leave – he shared all that information with me only on one condition, that it will not be shared with anyone else.

We really need to see the seriousness of this. We are not against it when the government really wants to strengthen safety for the public in general. I do get calls from my constituents on the rise in crime in communities and different scenarios, different issues. We wanted to support it, but the way we are doing it, the raiding of the funds from one program that's already serving the community very well, and on the contrary, we are establishing a new program that has to go through all the way from the start to developing totally different mechanisms, we don't know in the end how successful it will be.

I still remember going to one of the Maskwacis – I don't know if I'm pronouncing it right – nations. There I had a chance to – I was looking for someone. He was not there. I just spoke to the person who was available. The fellow who was with me was a journalist, and he just started a conversation with reference to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. That was the moment, as the gentleman just, you know, spoke those words, that triggered right away the kind of rage and anger that a senior person actually sitting in that place had. He, really, pointed to the church across from his place, from the seniors' home, and he said: "Don't talk to me. Go and visit those places, and you will have the answers. Dig those walls and you will have the answers. Don't ask me these questions."

The other time I visited one high school, and I was really, you know, impressed by the talent and all the decorations in the school and all the art that was exhibited in the school, that was not really purchased by the school, the high school on one of the reserves. That was all developed by the local students in the school. Amazing work.

4:20

I was looking more into the library. I was willing to learn as much as I could learn about the community and, similarly, about Canada and Alberta. And the irony of that was that there was nothing specifically available that could tell us, tell them about the history of the nations. There was literally no book in that library. The person I had spoken to in the school said: “The only thing I can just, you know, add into this is that my last name is Littlechild, but this was not Littlechild about a few generations ago. It happened when, you know, our elders welcomed communities into Canada here, and they were working with them. They started working with them, and they started calling my great-grandpa: hey, little child, you come here; hey, little child, you do this. And now somehow this is the history of our last name, and now we are called Littlechild.”

I don't have a lot of professional study, but I have some of the experiences that I'm saying. I have experience in the communities, and as I see the professional organizations, the organizations like the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services, a number of those professionals . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, any other speakers to amendment REF1 on Bill 16? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to get up and speak to this referral amendment as, of course, I've spoken to this on the main bill. I believe that was not last night but the previous, and I had a number of questions that I asked of the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General at that point, and I didn't get any response to any of the questions that I asked while in debate.

Now, since then I've actually reached out to some of the nonprofit organizations, as many of my colleagues here on the opposition side have also reached out to organizations, to let them know about what exactly is happening with this proposed piece of legislation. Of course, these people from nonprofit organizations have many of the same questions that we do. So what better opportunity for this government to actually answer the questions we have than to send this to committee, give an opportunity for nonprofit organizations and other interested stakeholders to actually engage in a conversation about what's being done here, right?

Now, to go back, one of the questions that I had was in terms of the \$5,000 benefit to the people who are witnesses to homicide, the funeral costs for homicide victims. These are the kinds of issues and concerns that people have because these were immediate benefits, supports that people continue to depend on up until this piece of legislation will actually come into force when we receive royal assent. For them to now understand that this is what the government is proposing through this piece of legislation is causing a lot of questions and not only causing a lot of questions but causing alarm, right?

I can't tell you the number of times – and, Madam Speaker, I know you know this because you were in opposition at that time when we were in government – the opposition at that time would yell and scream at us about: “Oh, you haven't done enough proper consultation on this. You haven't done enough to consult with people, the people you're actually going to be affecting.” And I raise that same issue now, right? This is something that's going to

impact a considerable number of people, and I believe that they should have their opportunity to actually be able to give their opinion to the government. As we're seeing and is the tendency, at least from what I'm hearing from constituents and stakeholders that contact me, the government isn't willing to listen. They call. They want to speak with ministers, but they aren't given time to actually share what their concerns are with particular pieces of legislation. This is what I'm hearing. Now, I could be mistaken. Correct me if I'm wrong, but this is what people are actually calling my office to share with me and discuss.

By sending this proposed piece of legislation to committee, I think that we could give a number of stakeholders the opportunity for them to ask their questions and then for the government also to receive input from these interested parties, these stakeholders, and perhaps look for other solutions, other solutions because at the end of the day I understand that the government is trying to come up with some kind of solution in order to fund ALERT and RAPID force, you know, to have money for drug treatment courts and hiring more Crown prosecutors. But the adverse effect of this bill is that it's going to negatively impact perhaps the people who suffer the most when this type of crime actually occurs in our society.

This is the big problem that I have with this, right? I think that when people who experience the emotional harm when a crime such as this actually occurs, it's a very difficult time for them. You know, the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs highlighted very well the type of experiences that she knows about, having worked in the field before. I think it's our duty to listen to these people, at the very least, listen to what they have to say, and the government should be providing them with this opportunity.

What better opportunity than to send this bill to committee so that stakeholders – and not just stakeholders, but if people were interested, if the government were willing, they could even reach out to people who have actually gone through the process before so that they could actually share their experiences about what they experienced when going through the process and the actual benefits that they received from receiving assistance for physical damage, for property damage, or any other kind of economic loss that came as a result of the crime that they experienced. I believe it's a responsibility of the government to be able to provide that space, a safe space, where people could come in and share their experiences so that people on the government side can make a more informed decision about what it is that we are considering at this time through this piece of legislation.

I can't tell you the number of times, for example – even when I was part of the governing party, even with pieces of legislation that were being proposed by our own government, when we were in government and I was part of the governing party but sitting as a private member, I would take the opportunity to reach out to my constituents on a proposed bill, and I'd have a consultation in my office. I'll remind you, Madam Speaker, that the experience of us being in government is that we had – and I can only assume that this is true now, but I don't know . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt. The clock now strikes 4:30. My children are ready for me to come home. We will be adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 4:30 pm.]

Bill Status Report for the 30th Legislature - 2nd Session (2020)

Activity to Thursday, June 4, 2020

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

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

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

Bill 1 — Critical Infrastructure Defence Act (Kenney)

First Reading — 4 (*Feb. 25, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 12-18 (*Feb. 26, 2020 morn.*), 96-98 (*Mar. 2, 2020 aft.*), (*May 27, 2020 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 859-61 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 861-69 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed on division*)

Bill 2 — Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Amendment Act, 2020 (Hunter)

First Reading — 30 (*Feb. 26, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 857-58 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 1004-09 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 3 — Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 30 (*Feb. 26, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 431-46 (*Apr. 7, 2020 morn.*), 458-65 (*Apr. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 465-76 (*Apr. 7, 2020 aft.*), 477-507 (*Apr. 7, 2020 eve.*), 572-83 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve.*), 659-66 (*May 6, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 703-09 (*May 7, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2020 c8]

Bill 4 — Fiscal Planning and Transparency (Fixed Budget Period) Amendment Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 62 (*Feb. 27, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 858 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 869-75 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 933-35 (*Jun. 1, 2020 aft.*), 970-72 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve.*), 1040-43 (*Jun. 2, 2020 eve.*), 1077 (*Jun. 3, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 5 — Fiscal Measures and Taxation Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 110 (*Mar. 3, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 224-32 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*), 222-23 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*)

Committee of the Whole — 232-33 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*), 234-41 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 241 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*), 242-48 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 20, 2020 Outside of House Sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c3]

Bill 6 — Appropriation Act, 2020 (\$) (Toews)

First Reading — 215 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 216-22 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 222 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., deemed passed on division*)

Third Reading — 222 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., deemed passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 20, 2020 Outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force March 20, 2020; SA 2020 c1]

Bill 7 — Responsible Energy Development Amendment Act, 2020 (Savage)

First Reading — 827 (*May 27, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 858-59 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 891-99 (*May 28, 2020 aft.*), 972-76 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve., passed*)

Bill 8* — Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 431 (*Apr. 7, 2020 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 509-21 (*Apr. 8, 2020 morn.*), 551-58 (*Apr. 8, 2020 aft.*), 559-72 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 593-618 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve.*), 671-73 (*May 6, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 709-12 (*May 7, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on May 12, 2020, except Part 2, which comes into force on July 1, 2020; SA 2020 cP-26.87]

Bill 9 — Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2020 (Madu)

First Reading — 276 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 277-80 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 280-82 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 282-83 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 20, 2020 Outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on March 20, 2020; SA 2020 c2]

Bill 10 — Public Health (Emergency Powers) Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 296-97 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 307-20 (*Apr. 1, 2020 morn.*), 337-44 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 354-57 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft.*), 407-09 (*Apr. 2, 2020 morn.*), 426-28 (*Apr. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 428-29 (*Apr. 2, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on April 2, 2020; certain sections took effect on earlier dates; SA 2020 c5]

Bill 11 — Tenancies Statutes (Emergency Provisions) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 297 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 298-301 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 301-03 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 303-05 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c6]

Bill 12 — Liabilities Management Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Savage)

First Reading — 297 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 320-25 (*Apr. 1, 2020 morn.*), 344-49 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 350-54 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft.*), 401-05 (*Apr. 2, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 406 (*Apr. 2, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c4]

Bill 13 — Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2) (Madu)

First Reading — 431 (*Apr. 7, 2020 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 521-26 (*Apr. 8, 2020 morn.*), 537-51 (*Apr. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 583-93 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve.*), 619-35 (*Apr. 9, 2020 morn.*), 648-57 (*Apr. 9, 2020 aft.*), 673-74 (*May 6, 2020 morn.*), 688-99 (*May 6, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 699-701 (*May 6, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on May 12, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c7]

Bill 14 — Utility Payment Deferral Program Act (Nally)

First Reading — 687 (*May 6, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 724-45 (*May 7, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 758-86 (*May 8, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 786-90 (*May 8, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on May 12, 2020, with certain provisions having effect as of March 18, 2020; SA 2020 cU-4]

Bill 15 — Choice in Education Act, 2020 (LaGrange)

First Reading — 887-88 (*May 28, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 937-54 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve.*), 1011-40 (*Jun. 2, 2020 eve.*), 1058-67 (*Jun. 3, 2020 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 16 — Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 888 (*May 28, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 954-70 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve.*), 1109-12 (*Jun. 3, 2020 eve.*), 1127-35 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., adjourned on amendment*)

Bill 17 — Mental Health Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 18 — Corrections (Alberta Parole Board) Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 912 (*Jun. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 989-1004 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft.*), 1011 (*Jun. 2, 2020 eve., passed*)

Bill 19 — Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 989 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 1079-98 (*Jun. 3, 2020 eve., passed*)

Bill 20 — Real Estate Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 1057 (*Jun. 3, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 1125-27 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 21 — Provincial Administrative Penalties Act (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 201 — Strategic Aviation Advisory Council Act (Gotfried)

First Reading — 62 (*Feb. 27, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 136 (*Mar. 5, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Second Reading — 914-26 (*Jun. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 202 — Conflicts of Interest (Protecting the Rule of Law) Amendment Act, 2020 (Ganley)

First Reading — 136 (*Mar. 5, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Bill Pr1 — The Sisters of the Precious Blood of Edmonton Repeal Act (Williams)

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

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