



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday evening, December 8, 2020

Day 78

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 30th Legislature

Second Session

Cooper, Hon. Nathan M., Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP), Speaker
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UCP), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Milliken, Nicholas, Calgary-Currie (UCP), Deputy Chair of Committees

Aheer, Hon. Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Strathmore (UCP)
Allard, Hon. Tracy L., Grande Prairie (UCP)
Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UCP)
Armstrong-Homeniuk, Jackie,
Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UCP)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Bilous, Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)
Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UCP)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (NDP)
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)
Dreeschen, Hon. Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)
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Official Opposition Whip
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP),
Government Whip
Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)
Fir, Tanya, Calgary-Peigan (UCP)
Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UCP)
Glasgo, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Glubish, Hon. Nate, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UCP)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche (UCP)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UCP)
Hanson, David B., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UCP)
Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)
Horner, Nate S., Drumheller-Stettler (UCP)
Hunter, Hon. Grant R., Taber-Warner (UCP)
Irwin, Janis, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy Whip
Issik, Whitney, Calgary-Glenmore (UCP)
Jones, Matt, Calgary-South East (UCP)
Kenney, Hon. Jason, PC, Calgary-Lougheed (UCP),
Premier
LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, Red Deer-North (UCP)
Loewen, Todd, Central Peace-Notley (UCP)
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UCP)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UCP)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Luan, Hon. Jason, Calgary-Foothills (UCP)
Madu, Hon. Kaycee, QC, Edmonton-South West (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader
McIver, Hon. Ric, Calgary-Hays (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Nally, Hon. Dale, Morinville-St. Albert (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader

Neudorf, Nathan T., Lethbridge-East (UCP)
Nicolaidis, Hon. Demetrios, Calgary-Bow (UCP)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Nixon, Hon. Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre
(UCP), Government House Leader
Nixon, Jeremy P., Calgary-Klein (UCP)
Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),
Leader of the Official Opposition
Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (UCP)
Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
Panda, Hon. Prasad, Calgary-Edgemont (UCP)
Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Pon, Hon. Josephine, Calgary-Beddington (UCP)
Rehn, Pat, Lesser Slave Lake (UCP)
Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UCP)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UCP)
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UCP)
Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UCP)
Sabir, Irfan, Calgary-McCall (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Savage, Hon. Sonya, Calgary-North West (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Sawhney, Hon. Rajan, Calgary-North East (UCP)
Schmidt, Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)
Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UCP),
Deputy Government Whip
Schulz, Hon. Rebecca, Calgary-Shaw (UCP)
Schweitzer, Hon. Doug, QC, Calgary-Elbow (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Shandro, Hon. Tyler, QC, Calgary-Acadia (UCP)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Sigurdson, Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)
Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UCP)
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UCP)
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP)
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UCP)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP),
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Toews, Hon. Travis, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UCP)
Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UCP)
Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UCP)
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UCP)
Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UCP)
Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UCP)
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UCP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)
Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

Party standings:

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Adriana LaGrange	Minister of Education
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Nixon, Jeremy
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Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Cooper
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Deol
Goehring
Goodridge
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Neudorf
Sabir
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Williams

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Horner
Irwin
Neudorf
Nielsen
Nixon, Jeremy
Sigurdson, L.
Sigurdson, R.J.

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Jones
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Loyola
Pancholi
Rehn
Reid
Renaud
Yao

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Chair: Ms Phillips
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Dach
Feehan
Fir
Ganley
Getson
Loewen
Rehn
Singh
Smith
Yaseen

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Hon. members, it truly is the best time of year. Please be seated.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm a little more partial to July myself, but anyways. I will rise to ask for unanimous consent to go to one-minute bells for the remainder of the evening, including in Committee of the Whole.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 46

Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2)

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and move third reading of Bill 46, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2).

Over the past few weeks we've had extensive discussion about this bill, and I believe this debate has resulted in a clear understanding of the bill's purpose and intent, but I'll take the opportunity to highlight some of the key points. Through Bill 46 we are building a system focused on patients, a system that more effectively meets their health care needs. The proposed amendments in this bill will enable a more responsive and a more efficient health care system and strengthen its ability to support the health and well-being of Albertans. Bill 46 achieves this objective by creating patient-focused services, enhancing the system's protections for patients, regulating more health providers to ensure that consistently high standards are followed, and providing for the ability to make changes when patient needs require it.

This bill also enables the use of health information to identify system improvements, to plan, and to ultimately help Albertans achieve better health outcomes. Now, while our deliberations of Bill 46 have included discussions about those changes to health information, some misconceptions remain. To clarify, the proposed amendment to update Netcare, Alberta's electronic health record, stems from the recommendations of the health information systems review that was conducted last fall. Findings from the review identify the need for legislative changes to position Alberta's health care system for future success. Right now health information rules, agreements, and protocols don't support patient-centric health system goals. These updates would address this deficiency. Now, let me be clear. This is not a transfer of authority or responsibility to the government. The legal authority and the oversight for Alberta Netcare do rest with Alberta Health. The proposed amendment would just clarify this role.

There has been much debate on the issue of privacy and the concerns expressed by the Privacy Commissioner. Department officials are addressing these concerns directly with the office of the Privacy Commissioner, and consultation will follow on the enabling regulations, which would be critical to implementing the proposed changes.

I also want to emphasize that the sharing of health information between the ministry, Alberta Health Services, and the Health

Quality Council of Alberta will continue to be subject to the privacy requirements of the Health Information Act. The proposed amendments would enhance the routine sharing of information among the ministry, AHS, and the Health Quality Council, which are all part of the Ministry of Health and accountable to the minister. The ministry will continue to be subject to privacy requirements and will be able to focus more resources on proactively protecting Albertans' health information.

The proposed amendments don't change any of the responsibilities and legal obligations to appropriately protect and safeguard health information. Privacy impact statements remain in place for the development of information systems. Protecting the privacy of the health information of Albertans is and always will be a top priority for me and the staff at Alberta Health as well as those at AHS and the Health Quality Council of Alberta. In fact, the proposed amendments include tougher penalties for inappropriate access to a person's health information, and it preserves the breach reporting requirements that already exist. These penalties would bring Alberta into closer alignment with other jurisdictions in Canada like British Columbia and Ontario.

Moreover, Bill 46 positions Alberta for the future, allowing us to modernize the system by updating our province's health care legislation. This view to the years ahead applies not only to health information but also to hospitals, health providers, and, in fact, all parts of the system. Together these amendments in this bill will ensure that our province's health system and health professionals can more readily adapt to changing needs and best practices. With this enhanced flexibility they can adjust to meet the health care needs of Albertans in a timely way as these needs shift and as they evolve. In the end, that's what this bill is about, continuously improving how we serve Albertans and their health care needs.

In closing, I ask you to support third reading of Bill 46, the health statutes amendment act.

Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 48

Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (No. 2)

The Speaker: The hon. the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move third reading of Bill 48, the Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (No. 2).

Bill 48 represents one of many steps we are taking to make Alberta the freest and fastest moving economy in North America. It shows our unwavering commitment to reduce the number of hoops that our job creators and innovators have to jump through. It is only common sense that as we work to recover economically, we must also continue to create a climate in our province that encourages investments and supports our job creators. One of the best things we can do to achieve that is to cut red tape. Bill 48 proposed changes to several pieces of legislation that will cut red tape by streamlining, eliminating, and modernizing outdated or redundant rules. Some examples of this include speeding up timelines for subdivision and development permit approvals, removing the ability of municipalities to take additional reserve land beyond the standard amount from developers for municipal purposes, and strengthening accountability and transparency of off-site levies.

When I introduced this bill, Scott Fash from BILD Alberta stated that these changes help to increase activity and create more jobs in

land development and the residential construction industry. He noted, “The clarity in rules [would] . . . greatly assist industry’s continued partnerships with municipal governments across the province.” This bill will provide needed certainty to our job creators, with the most impactful amendments designed to encourage investment and economic growth. If passed, Bill 48 will speed up approvals and ensure stability in Alberta. I think we can all agree that that is really needed right now.

Amendments to the Municipal Government Act will implement one of our platform commitments, called the Golden Girls Act, that supports unrelated seniors who live together in a single dwelling.

In addition, four different boards will be amalgamated into a single public agency under the land and property rights tribunal act. This change will eliminate unnecessary duplication of services across the four entities and give the tribunal more flexibility on how to use its resources to address surges in applications, ensuring that Albertans’ concerns are heard and addressed as quickly as possible.

We are saving Albertans time and money by repealing the need for building assessment reports, which duplicates requirements that are already in the Safety Codes Act and Condominium Property Act. This represents about \$2.7 million of savings per year for condo buyers.

The savings that will be earned through this legislation also save Albertans, industry, and government something just as important as money, Mr. Speaker; it saves them time. As we all know, time is money. If passed, these 12 changes will add to the many red tape reduction related initiatives already implemented or approved by our government. I am grateful to each of the ministers that contributed to this bill. It shows that this initiative is truly a crossgovernment initiative.

7:40

During this debate we heard the NDP rail against the red tape reduction efforts submitted by my good friend and colleague the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women. While listening to them, I was reminded of a story I heard many years ago. A man was walking on a beach that had thousands of starfish washed up on the sand. He was heartbroken that so many starfish were dying, but there was nothing he could do, so he walked on. Further down the beach he came upon a young boy who was walking along the beach, picking up starfish, and throwing them back into the ocean. The man thought the boy’s efforts were futile. “Why are you wasting your time throwing these starfish back into the ocean?” he said. “There are thousands of starfish dying; surely your efforts won’t matter.” The boy picked up another starfish and threw it back into the ocean. “It mattered to that one,” he said as he smiled and walked on.

Mr. Speaker, red tape reduction efforts that ministers take, whether large or small, make a difference, whether you are a ma-and-pa shop, a small business that has to fill out one less government form, or a medium-sized business that doesn’t have to hire yet another compliance officer. The work we are doing in red tape reduction matters to them. This bill is something that all members on both sides of the House should be able to support. Red tape reduction is a nonpartisan topic around the world, and it’s sad that the members opposite have not realized that yet. We know there is more to do, and I’m excited about the work that we’re doing. I want to thank all members for the robust discussion and fulsome debate on the changes we have brought forward in this legislation, and I look forward to bringing more red tape reduction matters before the Chamber in the future.

With that, I’d like to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Motions

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Time Allocation on Bill 46

56. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 46, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2), is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in third reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier this afternoon, it has become clear over the last few weeks that the Official Opposition intends to continue to drag out the process, not to, from our perspective, continue with anything productive. In fact, they went out of their way to hold legislation in second reading rather than get into Committee of the Whole to begin to work on their amendments that they say they have – we haven’t seen them yet – on this legislation.

As I have said many times in this House, Mr. Speaker, we care about the Official Opposition’s role. We have given them ample opportunity to be able to participate, and we’re going to continue to give them some time today to be able to participate in it, but when it becomes clear that the Official Opposition is blocking the majority from having a chance to vote on legislation that is important to Albertans, it falls on the Government House Leader to be able to make sure debate will continue to move through this House. I do encourage the Official Opposition to stop playing some of the games that we’ve already seen this afternoon and maybe get actually to work on moving the amendments that they claim their constituents want because, to be clear, the time is drawing to a close for them to be able to do that.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the Government House Leader has moved Government Motion 56. The Official Opposition has up to five minutes to respond.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Three things. First, the Government House Leader knows that he is moving a closure motion, a very heavy-handed, undemocratic tool that curtails debate. In the introduction, whatever the Government House Leader said, nothing can be further from the truth. This sitting, in seven weeks, we debated 15 pieces of legislation, and we passed 11 pieces of legislation, 37 different stages, for 24 days. We were doing what Albertans elected us to do. We were debating those bills on behalf of those who we represent. We were scrutinizing those bills. We were holding the government to account.

This is the government who doesn’t want to get up early. They cancelled morning sittings for three weeks, and had they not done that, they wouldn’t have to resort to these heavy-handed tactics.

But that’s not the reason. They want to do that because they know that this bill attacks the health care privacy of Albertans. They know that the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta, an independent officer of the Legislature, not that government cares about those offices, has written a long letter outlining concerns about how this piece of legislation, if passed, will water down the privacy rights of Albertans. They just want to push through their agenda so that they can give Albertans’ health care information to outside jurisdictions, so that they can water down the oversight of the Privacy Commissioner on Albertans’ health records, so that they can move ahead with the privatization of health care. That’s

the real reason, that the Government House Leader didn't talk about.

We are here to defend our constituents. We are here to defend the Albertans who elected us, and we will continue to do so. I urge each and every member of this House – the people who elected you, the people who you represent: their privacy rights are impacted. Your first obligation is not to your government; it's to your constituents. Their privacy rights are getting attacked, so stand up for your constituents. Stand against this attack on Albertans' health care privacy rights. Just read the independent commissioner's letter. None of those concerns were addressed at the second stage. If government was sincere, they could have addressed those concerns, but they didn't. Instead, their members get up and actually explain all of this to the Privacy Commissioner as well. It's not a good bill. It's not in the best interests of Albertans. It's not in the best interests of your constituents.

I urge everyone in this House to vote down this heavy-handed, undemocratic tactic to curtail debate in this House.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 56 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 7:48 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Madu	Rutherford
Allard	McIver	Savage
Copping	Nally	Schow
Glubish	Neudorf	Schulz
Goodridge	Nicolaides	Toews
Hunter	Nixon, Jason	Turton
Issik	Nixon, Jeremy	Walker
LaGrange	Panda	Wilson
Luan		

Against the motion:

Carson	Irwin	Sabir
Ceci	Nielsen	Sigurdson, L.
Goehring		

Totals:	For – 25	Against – 7
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[Government Motion 56 carried]

Time Allocation on Bill 48

60. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 48, Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (No. 2), is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in third reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader, Government Motion 60.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was thinking about what to say on this motion, and I'd like to actually just start off by pointing out a couple statistics that the House may find interesting. In fact, for this session that we're in, 4.7 million words have been spoken in the Chamber and counting. Now, to put that in perspective, all the volumes of the Harry Potter series only total 1.08 million words, so we've been able to do the Harry Potter series

a little bit over four times. I can tell you that if you took the time to look at *Hansard*, the Official Opposition were repeating themselves almost as much as the Deputy Opposition House Leader repeats himself in his time allocation speeches.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the hon. deputy House leader, through you to him, some caution. I want to be very clear and make sure my friends at *Hansard* get this. To continue to rise in the Chamber and accuse the government of cancelling three weeks of morning sittings when, in fact, the Official Opposition requested repeatedly that that took place is shameful. I want to caution him that he should probably check in with his boss. He should check in with his boss, the Official Opposition House Leader.

If he does that again, I will release every House leader agreement that was made between the Official Opposition and the government this session for the public to see, to make that clear, Mr. Speaker. Second, I will release it so that they can know that the Official Opposition has not, in fact, been doing their job the entire time they were here and have spent most of their time focusing on trying to make sure that they could go home early and not sit during this session. So I suggest that the hon. member not go down that road.

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader has moved Government Motion 60. The Official Opposition has up to five minutes to respond. The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think my first thought is that we all here represent Albertans. We represent our constituents, and this Legislature should never act as a rubber stamp for this government's agenda. Every single member of this House is accountable to their constituents, not to their party.

This piece of legislation is amending more than 12 pieces of legislation, and they are not red tape. The minister gets up and every time he says that Alberta has become the fastest and freest moving economy and hasn't changed his talking point since then. I don't see the economy moving at that pace.

I think, again, this motion will limit the debate on those important pieces of legislation that also interfere with the municipal power to plan municipal reserve land, all those important issues that they didn't consult with municipalities, and municipalities have been calling out for bypassing them on these important changes.

Again, government is just using these high-handed tactics to curtail debate, to curtail democracy, and I urge each and every member of this House to stand up for your constituents, to stand up for democracy, and to stand up for a debate in this House that Albertans sent us to do to hold this government to account.

Thank you.

[Government Motion 60 carried]

Time Allocation on Bill 47

57. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 47, Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in Committee of the Whole, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on this motion, which I had been delaying in an attempt to work with the Official Opposition for several weeks on this piece of legislation. The Official Opposition had indicated to me that this is one of the

primary pieces of legislation that they wanted to work on in their time in the Chamber.

Unfortunately, they have spent 10 per cent of the entire debate time on Bill 47 only in second reading and have not been able to move it into Committee of the Whole to begin work on the amendments that they have indicated, both to me and to the press – I would point out, Mr. Speaker, amendments they have not provided the government, which makes me question how serious they are actually working with those amendments. Nevertheless, they have indicated that this is something they wanted to spend their time on.

For weeks I have been encouraging the Official Opposition to get to that stage so that we could help accommodate them on that. I would submit, Mr. Speaker, through you to the House that 10 per cent of the total debate time on one reading of one bill is significant and shows the government's commitment to working through that process with the Official Opposition. It had been my hope that even today we'd be able to work through giving those members time to be able to work on their amendments. However, it has become clear over the afternoon, as we watch the Official Opposition play games with calling division votes, which is their right, even on titles and those type of things, that they are not serious about actually working for their constituents, as they have said. Instead, their main goal is to disrupt this House.

To be very clear, the business of Albertans will have the ability to be voted on by members of this Chamber in reasonable times. That will take place tonight when it comes to Bill 47 in Committee of the Whole.

The Speaker: The Official Opposition has up to five minutes to respond to Government Motion 57 as moved by the hon. the Government House Leader. The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall has the call.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government House Leader says that we spent 10 per cent of the time on this important piece of legislation. I think, for context, that this is a piece of legislation that is taking rights and supports away from working Albertans, those who are injured in workplaces at a time when they are going through a global pandemic. That bill does deserve scrutiny, does deserve debate because under this new regime, under this new system, Albertans will get less. They will get less.

8:00

They are capping maximum insurable earnings. For instance, if some Albertan is working in the oil and gas sector, where jobs are tough and are relatively highly paid, they won't qualify for any benefits under this piece of legislation. On one hand they are giving \$4.7 billion – that's on their 2019-2023 business plan, page 144, line 8 – but on the other hand they are taking away from Alberta workers. They are removing presumptive coverage for psychological injuries, where a worker experiences a traumatic event. I will submit that for all those working on the front lines during this pandemic, there is a possibility that many of them may need that coverage because they are on the front line of a global pandemic that has taken more than 600 Albertans' lives. They are taking that presumptive coverage from Albertans, and on that very bill they are trying to shut down the debate.

Mr. Speaker, under this bill, if a social worker and a police officer respond to the death of a child, the police officer will be covered but not the social worker. The psychological impacts may very well be the same. That's what's happening in this piece of legislation, and that's where you're trying to cut down and curtail debate. This bill is taking Albertans' rights. It's taking supports away from them, all to pay for their \$4.7 billion failed corporate handout. That's

heavy-handed, that's undemocratic, and that's unfair to Albertans whose rights will be impacted by this bill.

We will do everything we can in our power to stand against this piece of legislation and against this motion, too. I urge every member of the House that your constituency doesn't consist of only businesses. There are people working in those businesses. This bill is attacking those people. Stand up for those people.

Thank you.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 57 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 8:04 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Luan	Rutherford
Allard	Madu	Savage
Copping	McIver	Schow
Dreeshen	Nally	Schulz
Glubish	Neudorf	Toews
Goodridge	Nicolaides	Turton
Hunter	Nixon, Jason	Walker
Issik	Nixon, Jeremy	Wilson
LaGrange	Panda	

Against the motion:

Carson	Irwin	Sabir
Ceci	Nielsen	Sigurdson, L.
Goehring		

Totals: For – 26 Against – 7

[Government Motion 57 carried]

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 46 Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2) (continued)

The Speaker: Is there anyone else wishing to join in the debate? The hon. the Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and speak, with the short time that we have this evening, on Bill 46. I hear the Government House Leader heckling that we only have 60 minutes because of the undemocratic, you know, rules that he's imposed against us. [interjections] And now they're heckling me. The fact is that over my five, almost six years in this Legislature I have never seen a government and a party so disrespectful to the democracy that we all were elected on and hold so true to our hearts. The fact is that when we were in government – and we had a Wildrose opposition at that time – I never saw government ministers or private members have a relationship that has devolved so much, truly, for the most part, because of the disrespect that this government and its front bench have shown to not only the opposition but to all Albertans.

8:10

You see it on social media and in the public that this government's popularity is nosediving by the day. Today is a perfect example of why that's happening, because of their willingness to use powers like closure over and over again, several

times in a single day, to silence the voices of Albertans and in this instance the voices of important experts like the Information and Privacy Commissioner, who has said quite clearly that there is – by no means should this legislation be being moved forward at the rate that it is or in the way that it is currently written.

So it's absolutely frustrating, once again, that this government is so excited to get out of here because of the failure in their legislation and their failure to consult with Albertans and to be accountable to those Albertans that put them here. It is so frustrating and quite shocking that they are so excited to stand up and vote over and over again to limit debate.

Mr. Speaker, I remember the conversations that we had when the NDP was in government. You know, it's unbelievable that here we are now in this position, with a government who is just completely unwilling to hear the voices of Albertans and especially, once again, experts like the Information and Privacy Commissioner that we have here in Alberta, who laid out very clearly that through Bill 46 Albertans' health and privacy were going to be negatively impacted if this legislation continues in the way that it is.

The Health minister stood up this evening and said: oh, all the problems that have been raised by experts and by the opposition will be fixed through regulations. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough. We should be doing everything in our power to ensure that the legislation is ready to go and in a position that is going to protect the well-being and the lives and livelihoods, as this government continues to say over and over again, of Albertans. In this instance by no means is the legislation doing that, and by no means is it protecting the privacy, that we should be working day and night to protect, of Albertans.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner made it very clear that primarily by the changes that are happening to the Health Information and Data Governance Committee, that this government is essentially scrapping with very little information about what it will be replaced by – I mean, this was a committee that is in place and has experts that make expert recommendations to the minister, and unfortunately we are losing that very important body.

Beyond that, the expanded access that this minister and this government are willing to hand over to health service providers outside of Alberta – I do not know what this government has against protecting the privacy of Albertans, but whether we're talking about this piece of legislation, whether we're talking about changes that are being proposed through Bill 41, whether we're talking about several other pieces of legislation, this government seems to be interested in, well, not protecting Albertans' data.

I really have a hard time understanding why, considering the roots and the heritage of some members of the opposition. We know that some of them come from, you know, the very well-lobbied Progressive Conservatives at the time, and they have been able to quickly take on all of the arrogance that we saw from that party, but several of the members came from the grassroots movement of the Wildrose Party. One thing that those members, when they were members of that party, held true to their hearts was protecting Albertans' privacy and ensuring that governments were not overstepping their bounds in terms of accessing and giving out that privacy.

Yet here we are, Mr. Speaker. We have a government that is willing to, by and large, sell off Albertans' privacy to the highest bidder. It's absolutely frustrating that here we are on such an important bill, Bill 46, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2), which has incredible, overreaching qualities within it for the minister to make decisions, and we really, based on the Information and Privacy Commissioner's recommendations, do not fully understand the negative consequences and the implications that are going to result from this terrible piece of legislation.

Once again, I find it very hard to understand why we are now rushing through this legislation, why this government has taken the opportunity in the middle of a pandemic to weaken the privacy rules in place to protect Albertans' health care information. Of all information we should be doing our best to strengthen the ability to protect that information and not allow it to go to other jurisdictions who may not even have the same privacy rules in place as Alberta does, who may not consider ensuring that protected servers are in place to protect the privacy and information of Albertans, and the list goes on and on. It's truly unbelievable that in the middle of a global pandemic here we are, a government pushing through several pieces of legislation to weaken privacy protections for Albertans across the province and in this case their health care records.

Everyone is incredibly concerned now and for many years about what happens with their health care information. You know, it's truly unbelievable that, once again, this minister thought that now, if ever, was a good time to try and pass this piece of legislation and that the backbenchers – or, excuse me, the private members in the UCP – are just going to sit by and let it happen and clap while Albertans' privacy protections are eroded.

With that, Mr. Speaker, you know, it's truly unbelievable that we're here this evening seeing the incredible overreach and undemocratic actions of this government and that they are so excited to make that so. It's truly unbelievable.

With that, I know my other colleagues would like to speak. I wish there was more we could do, but at this time this government has sealed the deal and are willing to give away Albertans' privacy.

The Speaker: Are there others wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise this evening and speak on this bill, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, to address health care in this province and the needs of Albertans, especially in the time of a pandemic.

Now, as I walked over to the Chamber this evening from the Federal Building, I took a walk outside, as I try to do, and for the first time I noticed all the beautiful lights on the Christmas tree and on the other trees on the side. There were people walking around admiring that, and I had to give pause to the beauty of all the Christmas lights juxtaposed by the ugliness of the debate and the fear and the smear demonstrated by Her Majesty's opposition in the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, I love this job. I do. I love my constituents. I love the opportunity to come here in this Chamber and represent their concerns, and there are a number of them. God's country, as I affectionately call my constituency of Cardston-Siksika, has some amazing people with diverse needs, unique needs, and those needs stretch across a number of ministries, all of them. We're talking about health, for example, this evening. We have a small hospital in Cardston that is serviced by some of the best doctors you will find in this entire country. I love the fact that those doctors who work in that hospital by and large live in the community. They do service in the community. They're incredible people, and they need to know that the government is addressing the issues facing our province all the time. We're updating the Public Health Act as needed.

I feel that the Health Statutes Amendment Act is a piece of legislation that addresses the concerns of Albertans. Mr. Speaker, health is so important. I have people coming to my constituency on a regular basis. [interjections]

I hear the NDP heckling. I hear them heckling. I hear it all the time. They are experts at it. It's about the only thing they do very well.

Member Ceci: Talk about starfish.

Mr. Schow: I hear the former Minister of Finance, Alberta's worst Finance minister in history, heckling as well, talking about starfish, referencing a story told by the hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction earlier in his moving of his bill into third reading – I'm glad he enjoyed that speech, but somehow that's become a heckle – doing what he does best, because apparently being Finance minister wasn't really up his alley, wasn't his bailiwick, if you will, Mr. Speaker.

I've done my best this session to focus my remarks specifically on the bills and the motions at hand, but I have really struggled in the last 48 hours as I've watched the NDP continually spread misinformation and try to disseminate fear, sow fear among Albertans. It is really quite shameful, Mr. Speaker, and it's unfortunate that it's happening here when Legislatures across this beautiful country are meeting and addressing bills that their constituents need in what I think is a parliamentary manner. Civility reigns in many of the Legislatures across this country. [interjections] Unfortunately, that is not the case this evening. I hear members from the opposition heckling, and I wish that as they would stand up, they would actually address the bills rather than spend the majority of their time heckling.

8:20

Now, I will say, Mr. Speaker, that health needs to be addressed in this province. The Health Statutes Amendment Act is important to Albertans. It's important to ensure that this health act is updated and the evolving needs of Albertans are addressed. I'm very grateful. I'm very grateful to the Health minister for his tireless work. I heard one of the members opposite say that if the Minister of Health is too busy to speak to his own bills and if he's too busy dealing with COVID, why would he move a bill? Why would he move such a bill if he's too busy? I'll tell you why. Albertans need these bills, but they also need a Health minister that's going to address the pandemic that we currently face. The members opposite: they stand and they wave their arms and they talk about, "Oh, not in a pandemic; not in a pandemic; you do X, Y, and Z in a pandemic," as if we're just supposed to shut down this Legislature.

I remember back in March, when we would meet at the dismay of the members opposite, that we would dare to convene the Legislature to address the needs of Albertans in the middle of a pandemic. Heaven forbid, Mr. Speaker. Yet we did it because we have not forgotten on this side of the House for whom we work, and that is for Albertans. We do what we need to do for our constituents, our bosses, the ones who elected us into this Chamber to represent them. I'm grateful to the good people of Cardston-Siksika, all the way from the U.S. border up to highway 1, from Gleichen and Siksika to Cardston and Vauxhall and Vulcan and everywhere in between, wonderful people that I have met regularly and continue to speak with. Their concerns are being met.

I am grateful that the Health minister works tirelessly to bring forth meaningful legislation to this Chamber like this bill, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, while also working in the Priorities Implementation Cabinet Committee to address this pandemic and also addressing the public on a regular basis with updates about the pandemic and addressing the evolving needs so we can keep Albertans safe, which is our number one priority. If the members opposite don't like that, then maybe they should appeal to Albertans across the province, because they did a really bad job of it prior. There's a reason why they sit on that side of the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this bill, and I suspect that that should not come as a surprise to anybody in this Chamber, not because I'm a member of the United Conservative caucus but

because I believe that this bill is in the best interest of Albertans. I believe that the opposition has grossly mischaracterized this bill and mischaracterized the spirit of what we are trying to do here, under the logic that if it's not explained to them in their terms or in a way that they can understand – maybe I can use a crayon or something – there's something nefarious going on. It is unfortunate that there's such a low opinion of their colleagues on this side of the House.

Now, I would like to think that we operate in good faith, that the members opposite are going to point out what they believe to be mistakes of the government. That is their job as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. They would not be serving their constituents well if they didn't. But to spin it and try to find some angle to suggest that what the government members on this side of the House are doing is not above board is in bad faith and given that we have time-allocated this debate because the members opposite couldn't move into Committee of the Whole fast enough to actually bring forth meaningful amendments to this bill, referral amendments in second reading, as if they're just trying to stall for time – then they're talking about: we want to come to work. Maybe if they showed up to work, got down to the amendments that they actually had in mind, we could have gotten to Committee of the Whole faster and heard those amendments.

We do, Mr. Speaker, have a legislative calendar ahead of us that needs to be fulfilled. We are now overtime, past what was originally scheduled, which is fine. There are certainly precedents for that, and it's almost become convention. But if the members opposite are going to bellyache about not having enough time, maybe they might want to get down to doing the work and bringing those amendments forth a little earlier, getting to Committee of the Whole, which is the proper place for those amendments.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that we have vehement disagreement between this side and that side on this bill, and I respect that. I anticipate that. But some of the characterizations of members on this side and reasonings for not getting up and speaking to this bill or what they believe the intent of the government is are just flat-out, plain false. It's quite disrespectful to their own constituents because they're not actually passing along the truth. They're coming in, making up these false arguments about what they think the government is doing, throwing it on Twitter, and then the echo chamber picks it up and passes it along as fact.

That's just unfortunate because if you're getting your news from Twitter, from your politician's Twitter feed exclusively, you might need to get out a little more. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I would hope that as I post articles on my own social media – I don't have Twitter because that's a cesspool – my constituents, whether they're supporting me or not, would read the articles that I post, would read the things that I post, and read other opinions about it, not just get information exclusively from one source. Unfortunately, that seems to be the case for many people. You know, I think it's important that we stay informed.

Mr. Speaker, all I'm saying here is that I respect the opposition's role in this Chamber. I think it's a vital role. I will say that I respect the opposition members. I think that each and every one of them worked very hard, diligently to get elected, and they earned their place in this Chamber. But while here I wish that we could engage in more robust debate about the issues rather than speculating about what may or may not be nefarious motives of the government. And I do sincerely mean that. I think that we all have a role to play in this Chamber.

It is unfortunate that we are now into the evening session in December, past the originally planned, scheduled legislative calendar, again, which is fine, and rather than the members opposite bringing in their amendments in Committee of the Whole, which they should have been prepared for earlier on, for this Health

Statutes Amendment Act, which, I hope, is at top of mind for members of the opposition – I know that though my constituents and their constituents live in different parts of this province, they have similar concerns about the health and safety of their families, of their loved ones, about, dare I venture into other water, labour concerns. Mr. Speaker, if only we could get back to what I believe is meaningful debate in this Chamber, rather than the opposition just casting aspersions about the motives of this government, and talk specifically about the Health Statutes Amendment Act.

With that, I do appreciate this opportunity to speak this evening. I suspect it won't be the only time that I speak this evening. Of course, that is at the call of the chair, but I will do my best endeavour to be recognized by the hon. Speaker and address other concerns that might be brought up by my hon. colleagues across the aisle and by some of my colleagues right here on the government benches.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment for the hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika.

Seeing none, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs caught my eye.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this evening to speak to the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2). I find it ironic that the previous member took his entire time to complain about not debating things in this House and making such statements that it's our side of the Chamber that's creating the concern with this piece of legislation. That is definitely part of it, but we are actually joining the Information and Privacy Commissioner, who has expressed concerns to Albertans.

8:30

This isn't just something that we're coming up with off the top of our heads. This is something that she came forward with and made public, that she had concerns with this piece of legislation going forward the way it was. When that member stands in this Chamber and says that it's us standing here and it's a difference of opinion, that is completely incorrect. It is more than a difference of opinion. It is someone whose job it is to protect information and privacy of Albertans saying that there is concern with this legislation.

I think that it would have been beneficial for the government to take our amendments that we had proposed on this piece of legislation and requested that, perhaps, it be held at this point and a more thorough consultation happen, perhaps even meeting with the Privacy Commissioner instead of pretending to meet with the Privacy Commissioner, which this minister did. He had stood and said that he actually had met with the Privacy Commissioner, and that was not true. The Privacy Commissioner released a letter indicating that she had not been consulted on this and felt it important to let Albertans know that that was the case.

Here we are. Despite the recommendation from the person whose job it is to control and oversee information and privacy in this province telling the government that this is an absolute incomplete case of legislation, we're here moving it forward. Not only are we moving it forward tonight, but now it's on a time allocation to do so, which is very concerning because I know that my constituents have some very, very significant concerns about this government, specifically this Health minister. We've heard from hundreds of doctors pleading with this government to listen. We're in the middle of a global pandemic, and the members opposite stand in this Chamber and try to articulate that this is something that people are asking for. I can tell you that I have never heard a single constituent

come forward and say: "Please make our privacy less. Please make sure that my health information is accessible outside the province." Not once, Mr. Speaker.

What I have heard is from our very, very hard-working health professionals pleading for supports to help with this pandemic. Even prior to the pandemic we had physicians and health care workers coming forward, identifying that the way this government is treating them is an attack on our health care system, and we haven't seen them ease up on that attack on this health care system. Instead, they're coming after health professionals. Now they're coming after our privacy. We know that this minister has a very blurred line about what it means to have people's private information private. He's reached out to Alberta Health, asked for private cellphone numbers of doctors, phoned those doctors to express concerns.

Having this information and still pushing forward with this piece of legislation is very concerning. I know that this is definitely not something that we should be in this Chamber discussing right now. We should be talking about what is really happening in the province and how this government isn't paying attention to what Albertans are asking for. They are certainly not asking for less privacy restrictions when it comes to their health information.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will cede my time. I would encourage all members of this House, if they were actually listening to their constituents talking about what health matters – it is not this – to vote against this piece of legislation. Thank you.

The Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment.

Seeing none, is there anyone else wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore has the call.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity this evening to add some final thoughts and comments around Bill 46, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2). Let me start with this:

I am hopeful that the government will either make amendments to the bill or ideally pause deliberations to allow for further consultation on the implications these proposed amendments have for the protection of Albertans' health information.

That is Jill Clayton. She is the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the number one stakeholder, an independent office of this Legislature that the government has access to and they did not consult with regard to the information around the privacy of health. We have seen multiple news stories over the course of the years where we have seen breaches of privacy with regard to Albertans' health information, and we've seen the repercussions that have come from that. Here we are saying: well, if you breach Albertans' health information here in the province, you will face some very stiff penalties, and we will not relent on this.

Yet the language – because the Member for Cardston-Siksika wants to talk about the bill. The language contained in this bill, which, I have to admit, seems rather rushed considering the form that it was presented to us in, says that if information goes out of the jurisdiction of Albertans, the government has not been able to demonstrate that that information will be safe. They have not been able to demonstrate who and who will not have access to that information. They have not been able to demonstrate how that information will be stored and who will have access to that information should it be stored anywhere outside of the province of Alberta.

When I hear comments like, "This bill is in the best interests of Albertans; they need this bill," are we saying that we are telling Albertans, "You need your information to be at risk should it go

outside of the jurisdiction of Alberta”? The Information and Privacy Commissioner has been very clear, unless, of course, maybe members of the UCP want to start accusing her of being an NDP hack. We needed to take that very, very seriously, and that’s what the Official Opposition did. We hear complaints about how we were stalling. We were stalling it because of these implications to Albertans, trying to get the government to reverse their direction on Bill 46.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I had quite the conversation in my house with my spouse, who used to be in charge of records management for one of the departments. She was absolutely flabbergasted at the implications of what this bill meant for the health information of Albertans. By allowing Bill 46 to proceed, you are deliberately putting Albertans’ information at risk. I don’t think Albertans need that. I don’t think that is in the best interest of Albertans for that.

Mr. Speaker, as you can imagine, I am adamantly against Bill 46 on that, and I would suggest that members of this House vote this down and do not put at risk Albertans’ health information. If you’re going to be true to repercussions for that happening in Alberta and you can’t guarantee it happening outside of jurisdiction, due diligence says that you can’t let this bill proceed.

With the short timeline that’s left, I will leave my comments there. Hopefully, we will see members opposite do the right thing.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment.

Seeing none, are there others? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall has risen.

8:40

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to this bill, and I do have an amendment to move as well at this time.

The Speaker: If the hon. member wants to wait just one brief moment. Once I have the original copy and the table has it, I’ll ask you to proceed.

Hon. members, this will be referred to as HA1. Hon. members, if you would like a copy of the amendment, please raise your hand, and the pages will be happy to deliver one to you. Otherwise, they will be on the tabling table.

Mr. Sabir: I will read that into the record, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Calgary-McCall to move that the motion for third reading of Bill 46, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2), be amended by deleting all of the words after “that” and substituting the following:

Bill 46, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2), be not now read a third time but that it be read a third time this day six months hence.

Mr. Speaker, I will try to outline very succinct reasons for the Government House Leader and government members’ consideration that this is an important piece of legislation that has bearing on Albertans’ health care records and their privacy.

Alberta’s Information and Privacy Commissioner has very clearly outlined that she has not been consulted on it and that she had serious concerns about this piece of legislation. Those are the concerns, at least, that all Albertans have a vested interest in, and government should address those concerns.

This amendment, if the Government House Leader and government MLAs choose to support this, will give government an opportunity to address these concerns that are raised by the Privacy Commissioner.

Mr. Jason Nixon: I might. I might.

Mr. Sabir: Now, the Government House Leader: I just heard that he says that he might, and that makes me really happy as well.

I will outline some of the concerns that the commissioner outlined. The first thing is that this bill changes Alberta Health as the manager of these electronic records, Netcare, and makes the minister in charge of those records. We all know that that’s a concern. That’s a huge concern. Now that the minister will determine the administrative, technical, and physical safeguards of our information, I think we should all be very scared and concerned about that.

The second thing is that it allows access to electronic health information outside the province. The concern there is that the Privacy Commissioner will have no jurisdiction if that information moves unchecked outside the jurisdiction of Alberta. That was the concern raised by the commissioner.

There are a number of concerns that the commissioner raised and provided a really good, detailed explanation of those as well. Also, this bill removes the requirement for privacy impact assessments when information is shared between AHS, Alberta Health, and the Alberta Health Quality Council.

These are some of the concerns that Alberta’s Information and Privacy Commissioner raised. These are important concerns. These changes impact Albertans in every riding, constituents in every riding. I think it would be wise that we take a break, put this bill on hold, address these changes, and bring back this bill in six months and talk about that at that time.

With that, I urge each and every one of you that it’s another opportunity for all members of this House, notwithstanding how you voted on time allocations on previous motions, that you can do the right thing. Vote in favour of this and create that opportunity for this bill to be fixed.

With that, I urge again each and every one to vote in favour of this amendment. Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, is there anyone else wishing to speak to amendment HA1? The hon. the Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: Yeah, just briefly on the amendment brought forward by my colleague the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall. You know, I think we have been raising the concerns of the Information and Privacy Commissioner over and over and over again, and it’s challenging because what we are relating doesn’t seem to be sinking in at all. I know that the Minister of Health said that we’re going to fix all the things that are identified by the commissioner during regulation. But I think it’s a useful amendment because it says: “We want to believe you, Minister of Health, but why don’t you take a break, fix the things now, and then come back to this House, and we’ll look at passing third reading?” The minister is saying: “Trust me; I’ll do it. We’ll do it in regulation. I’ve got officials who will make it happen, and you can take my word to the bank, in a way.” But over and over again that individual has shown by his actions that we and the citizens of Alberta are right to put a question mark behind that: just trust me.

We know that the AMA contract was ripped up by that person. That’s a long-standing agreement in place with the Alberta Medical Association ripped up. We know that the minister took pains to go to a doctor’s house in Calgary and stand on his driveway and berate him in front of his family. We know that the minister used his power and position to access private phone numbers of other doctors and berate them for their beliefs in his inability to address things properly. We know that 98 per cent of doctors who voted on whether they – this minister is saying: trust me – trust him or not, believe he is in the best interests of the profession, didn’t feel that was true. This amendment really gives an opportunity for the

minister to put paid to what he's saying, and what he's saying is: I'm going to fix all the things identified.

I just want to quote the commissioner.

While many jurisdictions around the world are introducing new or enhanced privacy laws to build public trust and ensure accountability mechanisms are in place to protect personal or health information, many of the proposed amendments to HIA are heading in the other direction. Alberta has been considered a leader in health information privacy law and we should aspire to remain that way in the years to come.

I don't know how much clearer it can be said that the minister is offside. We know from experience, Mr. Speaker, that this government cares little about the views of the independent officers of this Legislature. With respect to the former Election Commissioner: fired. With respect to the Chief Electoral Officer, who believes that there needs to be money in place to address the needs of municipalities in the upcoming referenda and Senate elections: no money put there. With regard to this officer we know that they're not being listened to.

Mr. Speaker, I think there's good reason why my colleague from Calgary-McCall put this amendment for delaying third reading, because, frankly, we need to see this minister produce before we give him carte blanche to go on and do this in regulation. Who knows? Who knows if it's going to be done?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to address this amendment.

8:50

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or a comment.

Is there anyone else wishing to speak to amendment HA1? The hon. the Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess, just because I know the time is quite limited because the government has limited our debate on this very important bill, I am going to speak sort of about two main pieces of it. One is about the concerns that we have talked about already, that my hon. colleagues have talked about, the concerns of the Alberta Privacy Commissioner. The second is specific to the Alberta College of Social Workers, the separation of the regulatory body and the association. I am a registered social worker in this province, so it impacts me directly. I have some deep concerns about – I feel it's sort of the decimation – my professional body as I've known it, and I'm concerned about that.

Certainly, this government has been so cavalier about – I don't know; maybe I'll even use the word "sacred" – institutions of this, you know, Legislature, that we have independent officers of this Legislature that are meant to give us oversight, to help us make sure that we're going in the right direction. Certainly, your office, Mr. Speaker, is another area that we hold great reverence for. For institutions to work, these aspects of it must be respected, but so sadly this government is so cavalier about all of this.

I'm just going to use the words of the Privacy Commissioner and what she said about Bill 46. She said that she's extremely disappointed that her office was not consulted before the government introduced this omnibus bill. You know, it sort of was shocking to her that she would not even be included. I guess this is just another good indication of this government's, really, lack of interest in consulting, even with the very institutions that make up government. She goes on to say: it goes without saying, as the person responsible for the oversight of Alberta's privacy rights, that I would have expected the opportunity to review and comment on these changes prior to the bill being introduced in the Legislature. Like, saying the obvious,

obviously. This government needs to hear that because they don't seem to respect these independent officers, and that's very disturbing.

A spokesman for her office said: significant amendments made to privacy laws in Alberta, across Canada, and, quite frankly, around the globe typically involve extensive stakeholder or public consultation before a bill is brought forward; we are struggling to think of a situation in the past 25 years when the commissioner has not been consulted on substantive amendments made to one of the acts our office oversees. Well, that's a slam dunk. That just shows how uncaring this government is about the very institutions of government in Alberta.

You know, if it was in this one area, which I think is abhorrent enough – but it's in so many areas. The first thing they did when they came in was that they totally decimated the office of the Seniors Advocate. They said that they were rolling it into the Health Advocate. Of course, we know that only one-third of complaints that seniors or people who are advocating for seniors have are health related, so two-thirds of the work of that office is no longer. Seniors don't have a place to go. And then guess who they appoint to be the Health Advocate? It's someone who was the CEO of the UCP, so it's not someone with an extensive background in health care, someone who understands seniors. Dr. Sheree Kwong See, who was appointed as the Seniors Advocate: she's a PhD from the University of Alberta, a professor specializing in gerontology studies. I mean, it's so disturbing. Again, another example of this government's lack of respect, really.

Then another thing that happened just recently. I'm a member of the Private Bills Committee, and a bill was brought forward, Bill 206, on property rights. The MLA who brought it forward was the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat. We all know that he's a large property owner. He has property all over Alberta, some in B.C., some in Saskatchewan. Of course, we're talking mostly about Alberta because this is an Alberta private member's bill. He brought forward this bill, and I just asked him . . .

Mr. McIver: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, a point of order has been called. The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Point of Order Items Previously Decided

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under 23(f), "debates any previous vote of the Assembly unless it is that Member's intention to move that it be rescinded." She just started going into a diatribe about a previous bill that was passed in the House. You know, she didn't seem to be getting on to relating it to anything relevant to this bill. I would just ask politely that you direct the hon. member, remind her which bill is actually before the House and to – because, of course, they have gone to great pains over there talking about how much time they don't have to debate this bill, yet they've wandered off into debating other ones. It seems a little insincere.

I'm just trying to help my colleagues out on the other side of the aisle to do what they complained about not being able to do, to talk about this bill, when the hon. member just was heading off into talking about a bill that's come and gone. Perhaps since time is so short, they might actually talk about what they say time is so short about.

The Speaker: I appreciate the intervention from the Deputy Government House Leader. In the name of saving time, I don't think that I will even call upon a submission from the opposition as this is clearly not a point of order. The hon. member has a wide swath of opportunity to speak to third reading. Given that the

opposition only has an hour or so to speak to this, I think that we can provide some latitude to them to do so.

Debate Continued

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, I guess what I am trying to demonstrate is a pattern of behaviour. It's not just in one situation where this bill – you know, the independent officer that's responsible for making sure that Albertans' privacy is respected and the proper processes are in place is not even included in consultation regarding Bill 46. I just am very clearly identifying so many other examples of exactly that, really, arrogance of this government, that they don't even include independent officers of this Legislature and don't think that it's important to really do their due diligence.

The example I was giving with the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat was that he brought forward a bill, and he didn't even bother to ask the Ethics Commissioner whether: "Is this a conflict for me? It's all about property rights. I'm a big landowner. I own lots of property across this province." I asked him that, and he said that he had not. He subsequently did, so good on him. He did find that he may be in conflict. She suggested that he not put forward that bill, so his name was taken away from it, because he didn't do a simple act that is what the Ethics Commissioner is about, to make sure that we don't get ourselves into situations where there is a conflict.

I myself consulted with her not long ago on this very bill, on Bill 46, because I'm a registered social worker in this province. This bill talks about social workers, so I contacted her, and I asked her, you know: I'd like to speak about this; am I in conflict? She asked me questions, and we had some back and forth. At the end of it she says: "No, you have the right to speak to this. This is a broad-based bill; you're not going to be benefiting or inhibited at all by it." I did my due diligence, and I just would really ask this government to respect this Chamber enough, respect the processes of government enough to also do that.

I mean, I could go on with many other examples, but I won't. I think the point has been made that in this particular case, it is extremely egregious that this government has not included the Privacy Commissioner in their preparations for this. I think this amendment is going to help very much to give the government time to indeed do that so she can make sure that, you know, everything is being done in the appropriate way.

I would certainly recommend to all my colleagues in this Legislature that they vote in favour of this. I think this would save some face for them, considering, you know, the foolhardy way they've brought this forward without doing their due diligence.

With that, I will take my seat.

9:00

The Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment. Are there others wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. the Minister of Transportation on HA1.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to attempt to, just for something completely different, talk about Bill 46. You know, I think the opposition is not wrong to remind the government that the Privacy Commissioner asked the government to make improvements to the bill. We've heard from the hon. Health minister that they are committed to working with the Privacy Commissioner and sorting out the concerns that the Privacy Commissioner has, and I think that's the right way to go.

You know, independent officers of the Legislature must be respected. They're there for a purpose, Mr. Speaker. They're there to basically, I guess, keep an eye on the rest of us, on all sides of

the House, and to make sure that, each in their own areas of responsibility, the House and those of us that operate within the House operate in a way that's in the public's best interest. I think we all should respect that.

In another piece of the letter that the Privacy Commissioner wrote, Mr. Speaker, it says that

one of HIA's key purposes is to "enable health information to be shared and accessed, where appropriate, to provide health services and to manage the health system." Balance is struck by additional purposes to "prescribe rules for the collection, use and disclosure of health information", and to "establish strong and effective remedies for contraventions."

It also says that

Netcare enables sharing of health information and is defined in HIA as follows:

[The EHR] means the integrated electronic health information system established to provide shared access by authorized custodians to prescribed health information in a secure environment as may be further defined or described in the regulations.

Mr. Speaker, what the bill is about is providing better health care information at the point in Albertans' lives when it might mean the very most. Heaven forbid, but it happens, that any Albertan – it could be somebody in this Legislature. It could be another Albertan. I don't wish it on anybody – I don't wish it on anybody – but there could come a time when an Albertan gets injured. It could be through some activity they're doing, some sport, a motor vehicle collision. There are a whole number or range of issues.

It could be fairly common that somebody has a heart attack, that they have, you know, a diabetes issue. I mean, I'm not a doctor, but I think we all know enough people in our lives that have health issues, so we know that there are times when minutes count, Mr. Speaker. That's really what this bill is about, making Netcare possible, so that wherever it happens to be, whether it's out on the highway after a motor vehicle collision or out on the highway with a heart attack or some other medical condition or after the ambulance gets to one's home for whatever call, whether an injury or someone has cut themselves, whatever the medical incident is – what this bill is about is enabling. It's enabling a more timely provision of professional health services to Albertans at the time of greatest need. That is intended to happen by making it possible that the health care provider first on the scene is able to more instantly access the information of the person.

There are a whole number of things that matter, Mr. Speaker. For some of us, there may be nothing, but for other people it's important in many cases for the health care provider, for example, to know what medication the person is on. You know, certain conditions have people on blood thinners. People need to know that so that they maybe take a higher priority in stopping somebody's bleeding. The health care professional may be aware of contraindications on that medicine so that in some cases, depending on what care somebody needs at the time of the help that they need the most, the health care provider can actually (a) provide the medication that a person needs or (b), probably just as important in this case, in the case of Netcare maybe more important, not provide the medication that is contra and counter to the other medications they're already taking and that might have an unexpected negative, adverse effect. That's what we're talking about here.

The opposition is hung up on an issue that the Health minister has said he's going to solve, but what they're ignoring in the whole debate is the actual benefit to Albertans by having their health care information more readily available at the time of need. You know what, Mr. Speaker? We all live different lives – we all do different things, different activities – but the fact is: don't we all hope, on all sides of the House, that when ourselves or somebody that we love

needs that care and the health care provider shows up, they have the best and most current information available for us or our loved one? That's what this bill is about, making that possible, activating that.

I just thought that before this debate ends, we should actually have somebody stand here and talk about why Bill 46 is before the House, talk about the benefits for Albertans, talk about how it might benefit us, that Netcare, if it's done right, may well save lives, may well keep Albertans safe, may well save those valuable seconds and minutes, the difference between life and death or the difference between how much negative impact there is from something that happens to people. That's what this bill is about. That's why our government is supporting it, Mr. Speaker. That's why some of the members on this side say: some Albertans will need this bill. We don't know who they're going to be, and we don't know when it's going to be, but we do know that if that happens, won't we be glad that we or our loved one . . .

The Speaker: Well, hon. members, I hesitate to interrupt, but pursuant to Government Motion 56 I am required to put all the questions necessary to dispose of third reading.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment HA1 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 9:08 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Carson	Irwin	Sabir
Goehring	Nielsen	Sigurdson, L.

Against the motion:

Aheer	LaGrange	Savage
Allard	Luan	Schow
Copping	McIver	Schulz
Dreeshen	Neudorf	Schweitzer
Glubish	Nicolaides	Toews
Goodridge	Nixon, Jason	Turton
Hunter	Panda	Wilson
Issik	Rutherford	

Totals:	For – 6	Against – 23
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[Motion on amendment HA1 lost]

The Speaker: Now on third reading of Bill 46, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2), as moved by the hon. Minister of Health.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 9:13 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Luan	Rutherford
Allard	McIver	Savage
Copping	Nally	Schow
Dreeshen	Neudorf	Schulz
Glubish	Nicolaides	Schweitzer
Goodridge	Nixon, Jason	Toews
Hunter	Nixon, Jeremy	Turton

Issik	Panda	Wilson
LaGrange		

Against the motion:

Carson	Irwin	Sabir
Goehring	Nielsen	Sigurdson, L.

Totals:	For – 25	Against – 6
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[Motion carried; Bill 46 read a third time]

Bill 48

Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (No. 2)

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction has 12 minutes remaining, should he choose to use it.

Seeing none, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore has the call.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Appreciate the opportunity to add final thoughts to yet another bill this evening that's had time allocation placed on it, a piece of omnibus legislation, which the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction claims to be adamantly against seeing presented within the House. Now, I do understand that, you know, the associate minister during the course of the debate tried to maybe rethink what people would call an omnibus piece of legislation – as we've seen, it's approximately 12 to 14 changes across eight different ministries – and even tried to maybe redefine a little bit what an omnibus piece of legislation is. That still doesn't change the definition of it, for which Bill 48 is, so again I can't help but ask: why is it that it's okay to present a second piece of omnibus legislation from his ministry when he's so adamantly against them? Nevertheless, it is before us.

I couldn't help but write down quickly some of the opening comments for third reading here of Bill 48 from the associate minister, talking about how, you know, his mandate is to assist in creating the freest, fastest economy in North America. When I look at what's contained within Bill 48, we are, of course, removing the legislation around the Alberta Centennial Medal Act. I can't help but wonder: how does that make Alberta the freest, fastest economy in North America? What conditions will change to allow that to happen?

9:20

I see things like changes to the Post-secondary Learning Act around how cadavers are brought to postsecondary institutions, and I must ask: how does that assist in Alberta becoming the freest, fastest moving economy in North America? Just on those two pieces of legislation alone I would have loved to have seen some data around how many jobs are projected to be created out of things like that.

For the most part, Mr. Speaker, this bill is a bunch of little odds and ends that government ministries have thrown together to try to help the associate minister justify the \$13 million it's costing Alberta taxpayers to run this ministry. I suppose that when you're looking to try to justify that, you will take help from absolutely any direction you can get. It kind of makes me wonder, then: why, at that kind of a cost, are we spending our time giving plaques to our colleagues for, apparently, red tape reduction? Why are we spending time posting stories about how we've cut red tape and saved Albertans \$5 for paperwork that they still have to fill out when going to look for Christmas trees over on Crown land? All I would say is that you've saved Albertans \$5. You haven't actually cut any red tape. You've not assisted in creating the freest, fastest economy in Alberta. I'm not saying that you didn't do a good turn

to Albertans. I'm sure they'll be grateful to save the \$5, but you can't call that red tape reduction.

You know, we've heard comments about how sad it is when we criticize the legislation that is being brought forward. The whole point of the ministry was to get government out of the way of job creators and help create jobs. That was, apparently, the mandate. But we're giving plaques away, and we're calling reducing the fee to fill out the paperwork red tape reduction. I don't think that's being entirely accurate for Albertans. I really wish that they would simply just call it like it is. I mean, if you want to save Albertans \$5 – like I said, it's not a bad thing – just call it that, that you're saving them \$5. You're not cutting red tape.

Now, we do have two pieces contained within Bill 48 that are at odds with each other. As we all know, governments usually, when they bring in omnibus legislation, will pack it around with a bunch of almost meaningless stuff, and then you'll put something really, really good within the bill that I'm sure folks couldn't really disagree with, but then you'll also put something really, really bad in there. That gives you the ability to point the finger and say: oh, look at you; you're opposing this.

Well, the problem is this. We have two pieces of legislation around the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act and the changes contained within the MGA. I would absolutely agree that these are important pieces to be talking about, so important, in fact, that I wonder why they ended up under the ministry of red tape's purview because other than saying, "Well, we're reducing red tape," any kind of administrative burden required after that goes back to those respective ministries. It won't even be handled by the red tape reduction ministry. People will be thinking, "Oh, I need to call the red tape reduction ministry on this," and they're just going to get redirected to another department.

These pieces should have remained within the ministries themselves, especially considering the changes with regard to the MGA. These are quite significant and I think go to a little bit of a pattern that we've seen with the government around stepping on the toes of municipal governments across the province, you know, downloading responsibilities on them that should be maintained at the province or just simply trying to interfere with their ability to make decisions, which is what this potentially does. While we're in the midst of a pandemic, we're busy, I guess, trying to go around municipal leaders. What this piece does is that it allows developers – should they not get the answers that they really want from the municipal government, they now get to go around to the province and say: "Hey, I didn't get the answer I wanted. Can you change that for me, please?" Of course, the provincial government now gets to override.

When I think – as I've mentioned throughout debate, in my area where I live, there's potentially some reserve land that could be used for different projects like, for instance, maybe a housing project. I know that the city of Edmonton is very, very focused and very, very committed to reducing and eliminating homelessness within the city of Edmonton, and I'm sure that other municipalities across the province are just as dedicated in that pursuit. So if they are looking at a certain area in which to build a project, now we have developers that could be interfering with that.

I think this piece of legislation does a disservice to that but, again, kind of goes to the pattern that we've seen thus far by the government, wanting to just get their fingers in all kinds of pies that I don't think they should be in, which is kind of funny because they always seem to point fingers at the federal government for interfering in things, yet they turn around and do the exact same thing. Is it true, then, that you actually disagree with that, or don't you? Sort of like coming back to the whole thing of the omnibus legislation to begin with: do you actually agree that omnibus

legislation is bad? Then why have you brought forward the second one?

The changes, of course, within the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act: it's unfortunate that we didn't see any of the recommendations included within the child panel. I think that was an opportunity that perhaps we could have taken to enhance that a little bit, but for the most part we're not really seeing anything that would make significant changes within that. I think the ministry still has the ability to make all the changes that are necessary within regulations to the benefit of Albertans, but again it's an opportunity for them to put something in that's good and try to get it to butt up against something bad.

Because of the implications around the changes to the MGA, I'm unable to support Bill 48 going forward. I don't think this does a good turn towards municipalities, and I would certainly urge all members in this House to vote against Bill 48 here in third reading.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there others wishing to join in the debate this evening? The hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise again this evening to speak to Bill 48. I share many of the same concerns that my hon. colleague from Edmonton-Decore has so eloquently put. Overall, the main concern once again is that we are seeing this government use a pandemic to push through omnibus pieces of legislation that in most instances are doing nothing to support Albertans, whether they are concerned with their health and the well-being of themselves and their family, whether they're concerned about, you know, the prospects of finding a job in the current economy. Unfortunately, we see neither of those things supported through Bill 48.

We've seen this minister stand up in the past. Thankfully, I think that the original press conference on this went a little better than the previous omnibus piece of legislation that that member brought forward because this time he was able to at least answer some of the questions that reporters had, which was not the case by any means in the first instance. It really begs the question that we continue to raise: is this a ministry that's actually needed for anything, or is the person just there to – I don't exactly know – find more ways to cost the government more money? That's really often what it seems like.

9:30

You know, we have frustrations, as the previous member spoke about, that this minister specifically is going around to different ministers and handing out plaques or awards, once again, in the middle of a pandemic, completely tone-deaf to the situation that Albertans are facing, saying, "Wow, great job, Minister; pat on the back," to his own colleague. It's incredibly frustrating that we're seeing this. I believe that each ministry is able to handle reducing red tape on their own, and I would say that they are the best people to do that within their own ministry and that, once again, this ministry was created simply, well, to cost the government more money. But it's just unbelievable, once again, that this minister feels that handing out plaques and awards in the middle of a pandemic is a good use of his or the entire ministry's time. It's absolutely unbelievable.

[Mr. Neudorf in the chair]

When we look at what are some of the large changes that we're seeing within this legislation, primarily the changes to the MGA and the ability of municipalities to have an additional 5 per cent of reserve land if so needed – and this government has spoken to this piece and said: well, it's never been used before, or it's rarely been

ever used. Once again we have a government going through pieces of legislation and finding problems that aren't actually problems in the first place, just looking for things to get rid of so that they can justify this expense that they've created within this new ministry. It's truly unbelievable.

I mean, we think about the important work that municipalities do – it's been talked about – whether they are looking for reserve land for new public facilities, whether it be fire halls or whether it be a new park or whatever it might be, Mr. Speaker. These are important conversations, and what this minister is once again doing is undermining the ability of municipalities to negotiate or facilitate relationships with developers in this instance. So it's absolutely unbelievable that with all the different changes in here, we see this government making changes to the MGA with very little consultation to stakeholders, specifically our larger municipalities in the province, who are focused mainly and primarily right now on the issues of the COVID pandemic and issues of homelessness and trying to build affordable housing for Albertans, when really what we see here is this government doing the exact opposite and undermining municipalities' ability to make these changes.

We see further in this legislation changes to approval processes for developers and telling municipalities, as listed by media on this legislation, over 15,000 in population that they will be beholden to new rules based on development timelines that this UCP government has made up. I know that across the province, municipalities and counties have different processes for approving and ensuring that there's ample time to evaluate projects that are going forward, but once again we have this UCP government saying that they know better than our municipalities across the province. Really, we've seen this before on many pieces of legislation, but it's extremely frustrating because we know that municipalities by and large do an amazing job of, one, using taxpayer dollars efficiently and for what they should be used for and ensuring that they are doing the best they can to support the constituents that they have and that they've been elected by.

We have this UCP government undermining Alberta's municipalities in the middle and in the midst of a pandemic. We know that this UCP government is no friend to many municipalities across the province, whether it be the changes to policing and this government taking more of the funding that municipalities traditionally get from things like ticketing for traffic violations and the changes that they were proposing around the tax revenue that they get from energy projects around municipalities. The list really goes on and on.

But this government seems to be very set on creating more burdens for municipalities and creating more red tape for them and costing them more money and downloading more burdens onto these municipalities and, you know, wiping their hands clean and saying, "We did a great job, you know; we got rid of this regulation that's not actually going to help anyone, but at least we can say we did it, at least we were able to say that we got rid of one-third of the red tape," as this government likes to go on and on about.

Unfortunately, in many cases we see that the red tape that they're cutting was potentially regulations that were put in there for good reason. The 5 per cent reserve piece that was stipulated in the MGA: I imagine that there was an important conversation that happened to have that requirement in there in the first place. Unfortunately, we have not seen an ample amount of consultation on that piece specifically to even be able to accept that that is the right decision for Albertans and for municipalities across the province.

[The Speaker in the chair]

We see further changes, this government creating the new land and property tribunal act, which is combining four boards: the

Municipal Government Board, the New Home Buyer Protection Board, the Land Compensation Board, and the Surface Rights Board.

While I know that boards and our tribunals across the province traditionally do incredible work, I also have concerns about the tradition that this UCP has created of putting their own people onto positions where they get to make decisions on behalf of Albertans. We saw it. As the Member for Edmonton-Riverview spoke about, the Seniors Advocate: I believe that this UCP government took somebody that was within their own party and put them in such an important role, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think I need to explain to you why there at least might be a perceived conflict of interest in the fact that this government is appointing people that are their own party members and are at the top of their party, in this instance, to be the voice for Albertans who are potentially being affected negatively by the decisions of this UCP government.

That continues to be a concern as we talk about amalgamating four boards into one. We have very little reassurance that this is actually a decision that is in the best interest of all Albertans, whether they're buying new homes, whether they're trying to get fair compensation for their land or have concerns about surface rights. It's absolutely frustrating, once again, Mr. Speaker, that this government is now limiting debate on such an important omnibus piece of legislation, with absolutely very little time to consult on the massive amount of changes, whether they're minor or major, through Bill 48.

The point here is that this government continues to limit the ability of Albertans to, first of all, be consulted before the legislation comes forward and, once the legislation actually makes it to the Legislature, has very little time, as the Member for Cardston-Siksika mentions that, you know, just because a group of people, say, on social media, in this instance Twitter – the member goes on about how that group of people is a cesspool. Now we're in a position, Mr. Speaker, where we're saying that because people, a majority of people, disagree with us on whatever platform it might be, you're just writing them off completely. This is coming from a party, of course, that is sending out e-mails out of their constituencies saying that the worst of the pandemic is behind us, yet they are trying to make decisions on what method or medium is the best way to consult with our constituents. It's absolutely unbelievable.

I know that my other colleagues want to speak to Bill 48 and the major changes that we're seeing in it. I appreciate that I've had the opportunity, a very short opportunity because of the decision of this government to invoke closure on these important pieces of legislation, but I appreciate the time nonetheless.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment.

Seeing none, is there anyone else wishing to join in the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 48, the Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (No. 2). I agree with my colleagues' overview of this omnibus legislation. We have legislation here that we're time-allocated to speak to, that is an omnibus. There are so many acts that are being impacted by this, and they're calling it red tape reduction. However, I don't see that the majority of the changes that they're making are actually a reduction of red tape. There are things in here that absolutely make sense, some general housekeeping which I think could have been done by any one of the ministers that are responsible for these pieces of legislation and these acts. However,

in an attempt to justify this associate minister's job, here we are with a giant piece of legislation that impacts many, many different acts.

Just to fully understand all of the acts that are being implemented here, I'm going to read them out, the ones that are being impacted by this piece of legislation that we now only have an hour to debate: Alberta Centennial Medal Act, Animal Health Act, Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, Fatality Inquiries Act, Historical Resources Act, land and property rights tribunal act, Land Titles Act, Maintenance Enforcement Act, Modernized Municipal Government Act, Municipal Government Act, New Home Buyer Protection Act, Post-secondary Learning Act, Professional and Occupational Associations Registrations Act, and the Wills and Succession Act.

9:40

It's confusing to me why we need an associate minister that is responsible for red tape reduction when any of this is really the responsibility for each minister in their own ministry to go through and tidy up, if you will. If it really was an intention to reduce red tape, I question why one of the pieces that this omnibus legislation is removing is no longer having the Alberta centennial medal award. When we look at red tape reduction, to me, that means changing some paperwork, looking at taking out some wording, some redundancies, if you will, within different pieces of legislation, which makes sense. Each minister, like I said, could be responsible for doing that. However, this piece of legislation has some really concerning things slipped in.

One of them, like I said, would be no longer having the Alberta centennial medal award. This is an award – I would like to explain what it is. The government of Alberta website says:

The Alberta Centennial Award honours students who have contributed to their communities through outstanding characteristics in citizenship/social responsibility, leadership and community service. Each year 25 young Albertans receive a \$2,005 scholarship.

To me, what this is doing isn't reducing red tape; it's taking money out of pockets of students. It's a scholarship that is given to students who have to be – it says:

To be considered for the Alberta Centennial Award, you must also be enrolled full-time in a post-secondary program for the fall or winter term.

These are young people in our province that are going above and beyond, are being recognized for their contributions to Alberta. They're being given a scholarship, and now that's gone.

I'm curious if the government, when they were doing their red tape reduction, talked to any of those previous recipients about what that scholarship meant to them, what that recognition meant to them. Now, why it's being taken away is concerning to me. I don't believe that any consultation would have been done in this regard, in why they would remove it. What they did keep in this legislation is the minister's ability to revoke the award from people who have already won it. They're taking away the award, but they're still giving the ability that if you had won it, we can take it back. This doesn't make sense to me, Mr. Speaker.

When I think about some of the awards that some of Alberta's youth have received, the one that is most recent in my mind is a young man by the name of Jesse Drwiega. I had him come to the Legislature this summer. He was a young man who was honoured in the arts and education area. He won the Queen's golden jubilee award. It was during COVID, so the awards were done via being virtual.

He had submitted his acceptance speech. Unfortunately, someone from the ministry of culture reached out to him and said: you know, I'm not trying to tell you what to say, but I have some concerns with

your speech, so we're going to need you to rewrite it and resubmit it. This was quite concerning. This is a young person who was receiving an award for his incredible work that he's done within the arts community, and he was told that his speech wasn't appropriate. He indicated that he thought about it and felt that he didn't want to be censored and so did not change his acceptance speech. During the airing of this award ceremony, all of the members' videos were played for their acceptance. When it came time for Jesse's speech – he was so proud; he had so many of his friends, his peers, his family tuning in to watch – it was cut off. His speech was not shown. The ministry censored this young man from saying his speech. Why? Because he questioned the words that they were saying, talking about supporting young people, talking about supporting the arts community, talking about supporting education yet cutting so many of these important programs that actually do support young people, that do support the arts, that do support education. When I look at how this government has treated young people and the awards that they receive, it's quite upsetting to know that this summer they were censoring those that dared to speak truth to their experience, that dared to speak about the cuts and to challenge this government on what their words say as opposed to what their actions say.

Now they're taking away an award that acknowledges incredible youth in our province and gives them scholarships. To me, Mr. Speaker, that is more than a red tape reduction. That is something that this government has shown over and over and over to do, to take our young people and disregard them. We have so many stories that have been shared in this Legislature about the concerns that our young people have. One of the things I keep hearing from our young people is that they're going to vote. They're paying attention. They're talking to their friends. They're talking to their parents. They're following what this government is doing.

To call this red tape reduction and to put it in this omnibus piece of legislation is so frustrating. There's so much that's hidden in this legislation that I think if they took the time and didn't squash our ability to fulsomely debate this topic, debate this bill, people would be outraged when they saw what this government is calling red tape reduction. I don't believe that removing an award and a scholarship that acknowledges the incredible contributions that our young people are making to our province is simply red tape reduction. This is cutting the ability for students to be able to shine. This is something that perhaps could put them ahead when they're looking at their university applications. This is something that they can put on their applications and resumé going forward. This is something that is taken quite seriously, and it's an incredible honour for those young people that are not only receiving the financial support but are also receiving this recognition. The fact that it's being removed and called red tape is very, very concerning to me.

I would love to hear from the associate minister, from the Minister of Education, from the minister of postsecondary about how this was determined, how these ministers came together and said: "Yes, please take away these 25 scholarships and awards from Alberta's incredible youth, and call it red tape. This is just something that's red tape. It's bothersome in our ministry. You take the heat for it. We'll put it under red tape reduction. That way the Minister of Education doesn't have to answer for it; the minister of postsecondary doesn't have to answer for it. Put it under the associate minister, call it red tape, bury it in this omnibus piece of legislation, and hope that nobody notices." Well, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that young people are paying attention. They're seeing the actions of this government and what they're doing to come after those important young people that are such great minds in our province. They're paying attention, and they're voters. They're talking to their friends; they're talking to their peers. I hope that

those that are previous recipients speak up about this, speak about what that money, that scholarship did to impact them, what having this on their application for university or college or that job meant.

I know when I was in high school I received an award and a scholarship for citizenship, and that was something that helped me immensely. When I put in my application for social work, that was something that I really focused on because it was an award that I received from my peers and from my faculty in high school that acknowledged that I had something that stood out. So to be able to bring that forward on my application for Grant MacEwan, I think, gave me a bit of an advantage. There was such a small group of students that were selected, and the fact that I was selected to be part of the program – I truly believe that being able to identify that award helped. That money that I received from it absolutely helped. I was able to put some money aside for my son at that time. Knowing that there are so many things that young people have barriers with, giving them that extra boost is something that I see that is definitely more than red tape.

9:50

I'm just very disappointed that on top of the municipality decisions that they're making to take away the control of the additional 5 per cent of reserve lands – and what does that mean? That's the land that they use for schools, fire halls, playgrounds. They're seeing that as red tape, taking away responsibility from municipalities. They're just putting it under the banner of red tape reduction so that they can parade around saying that they're doing things that they promised to do in their election campaign.

Unfortunately, Albertans don't believe it. This is something that I think anybody in this Chamber, if they're being honest with themselves, can really say that this is not red tape reduction. This is a way to sneak in pieces of legislation to get rid of some really important programs that are around, awards that are around, and responsibilities that really should be left up to municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, I think that when it comes to this Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (No. 2), I would really, really hope that the majority are really paying attention to what this omnibus legislation is actually saying, and it's not something as simple as reducing red tape. There's so much more in this legislation, and I really hope that my colleagues do not support this bill moving forward.

With that, I will wrap up my remarks. Thank you.

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

Seeing none, is there anyone else wishing to join the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to also speak to Bill 48. I do have a copy of the bill before me here, and as everyone can see if they have looked at the bill, it's a book, really. It's, you know, quite a volume, 143 pages of legislation, and this legislation covers – how many is it now? – 12 pieces of legislation across eight government ministries. Again, it is, as my colleagues have already said, an omnibus bill. This seems to be a habit of this UCP government. They want to sort of ram through as much as they can, and they have sort of a soup-to-nuts collection of legislation in here. Really, it's kind of a – certainly, when we were government, if we dared to bring forward this type of legislation, there would be ridicule. They'd say that they need more time to review it, but with us it's like we're stalling. But no, no; the facts of the matter are that it's kind of ridiculous that we're being asked to review this. This isn't just one piece of legislation that's an omnibus bill, that's a hefty tome. There are many this session that are like that. I just want all Albertans to know that.

Then I also want them to know that they've invoked closure on this bill, so we have one hour to go through, you know, all these pieces of legislation and debate it now. Again, this is just another example of the government ramming through their legislation, really caring very little about the democratic process.

To give you just a clear indication that it is kind of soup-to-nuts or even if you want to look at lifespan, it covers things about birth. If you want to think about adoption, it covers legislation that covers adoption. But it also has this golden girls provision. That's people, perhaps like me, who have grey hair and are older, and it talks about seniors living together, and I'll go into that a little bit because that seems like legislation that's completely unnecessary. So there's no point in even putting it in this. Then, of course, there is the whole provision about the Post-secondary Learning Act that has a whole section on cadavers, you know, because, of course, medical students, different students need cadavers so they can dissect them, learn about the human body. But apparently that's no longer needed, so they have taken some provisions out because of that. Anyway, it just shows you sort of this kind of mishmash of legislation all in one bill that doesn't really make a heck of a lot of sense. But, of course, the government is the government, and we must respond to what they put before us, so myself and my hon. colleagues will look at some of the pieces of legislation that they've put forward.

As I mentioned just a moment ago, the Post-secondary Learning Act: the changes in this act make it so that cadavers are no longer immediately given to universities under the law. The UCP has said that this is no longer necessary because bodies are often already donated, so they're wanting to clean up that legislation, so that makes sense, you know, from what I can see.

The next one is the Historical Resources Act. This I'm a bit more confused about. Certainly, I care very much about the history here in Alberta and that we do preserve historical sites, you know, homes of people who may have lived and were leaders in our community at the turn of the century, sacred burial grounds of indigenous people. These are all registered historic resources, but this is now being taken out, and actually it's kind of being downloaded onto municipal government.

It's concerning because, of course, I think sometimes in Alberta we have been kind of not really respecting some of our historical sites. I know people have often said that architecturally, certainly in Edmonton, many buildings have not been protected, and now we've lost them. We know that that takes away from the richness of our city.

Having this act is very important so that sacred areas, historical buildings, historical areas, you know, are actually acknowledged and protected, but now it's the municipal government who is expected to manage all that. It's not the provincial government. They're sort of washing their hands of it, and with this legislation, this omnibus Bill 48, they are now moving to say that the municipal governments need to be responsible for all of that.

That puts another burden on them, and certainly there are many concerns with municipal leaders right now because so much of, really, the provincial government's work is being downloaded onto them without being given the resources to be able to fulfill what needs to be done. Are there resources that are going to be given to municipal governments so that they can do their due diligence regarding historical sites? This bill doesn't say anything about that. It's silent on that. I think municipalities need to know that.

Certainly, we know that a lot of municipalities in Alberta are very unhappy with many of the decisions this government has made. Taking away some of their tax base is just one key example. I just wonder how much the provincial government has actually consulted with the municipal government regarding this. Now the

burden of being sort of the gatekeeper of all this information – how are they going to protect historic sites? What funding will they get? What's the provincial government doing? These are all questions that I have, and I certainly hope that the minister will address them, you know, and be respectful of these historic sites, these buildings, these sacred grounds for different groups in our community. Again, that's sort of mashed into here with all the disparate, different kinds of legislation that this UCP government has put into this, as I said, large, really a book, tome, of legislation.

I guess a pretty significant piece of this legislation is around the Municipal Government Act. You know, if I was a municipal leader, I guess I'd be pretty concerned about some of the decisions this government has made because it seems to not really respect that level of government.

10:00

Now they're dictating. The provincial government is dictating to the municipal government in this legislation how long they need to take to do certain things in terms of, you know, development. It gives specific things like 20 days to determine whether a development permit application is complete, 40 days to approve or deny it, and 60 days in total to approve or deny an application from the time it was received. It's telling them how they're supposed to do their work, what seems to be micromanagement and, really, perhaps overreach by this government, that they should be dictating how a municipal government sort of weighs all the factors, makes decisions about their community. It seems like it's a bridge too far, being too prescriptive of what another level of government can do. I'm concerned about the UCP not being respectful of other levels of government, specifically here the municipal government.

Another piece of the MGA is that municipalities also lose the right to an additional 5 per cent of reserve land. This land is used for schools, fire halls, playgrounds, that kind of thing. You know, that's taking away some of their opportunity for collective green space that all people can use. That is a concern also and another reason why I will not be supporting this bill.

Then there's that piece that I spoke about early on, that golden girls provision, that really is not necessary. Seniors can live together. You know, adults can live together. They don't need to have special legislation to allow them to live together, so I'm not really understanding: what's the purpose of this? I guess it was in the UCP platform, so they wanted to bring in – I'm not sure. I guess, for some reason, there was a request of some kind. I know it seems to be copying something from the Ontario Conservative government, so they're just sort of following in their footsteps regarding that. It's really legislation that's not needed at all and sort of doesn't make any sense, so I'm just confused why the government would even bother to do that.

There's another section – you know, this is like a whirlwind tour of all these pieces of legislation – the Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act. This is concerning to me, and it reminds me of Bill 46 a bit because it sort of takes away powers of professional colleges and associations. It seems to give more authority to the minister. Certainly, this legislation is sort of umbrella legislation that grants title protection and regulation-making authority to 23 self-governing professional regulatory associations and organizations under this act.

The amendments deal with registrations for associations. They seem to make the process less prescriptive. It is a little bit more unique, which, I would say, is a good aspect of it. But it does seem to give the minister some authority to decide that a professional college is no longer needed, it says, if it's not serving the public interest, and it doesn't really explain what that means. That seems to be kind of sweeping powers again. I mean, a professional college:

it says that it's, you know, a self-regulating body. It should have some authority about that, but this seems to be in the hands of the minister. They can cancel a professional association. That seems to be a pretty heavy-handed aspect of this legislation. As I said, like, what do they mean exactly by the public interest?

I mean, I think that if you looked at the policies of the UCP government and looked at the policies of the NDP government, you could see that the public interest is very different. Our values are very different. Are we about equality and fairness? Well, certainly, that's what the NDP is about. We know that the UCP are about elitism and certainly have created tremendous inequality in our province, so I question how the public interest will be defined. I feel like this is an overreach, again, of the minister, making decisions about, you know, self-governing bodies, and certainly I think there needs to be so much more explicitly stated about what they mean by the public interest. I think that that is a key issue.

Anyway, as I said, like, it's soup to nuts in this bill, everything under the sun mashed into one, you know, large volume here. Of course, we're almost out of time in our debate on this, and it just feels like there's been, really, a travesty of the democratic process and the disrespect of this UCP government in terms of doing their due diligence and respecting this Chamber and respecting the tenets of democracy.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment for the hon. member. The hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction under 29(2)(a).

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to talk about a couple of points that the hon. member just brought up. She talked about how this bill really does not help equality in Alberta. I can't think of a better way to be able to create a level playing field than to reduce red tape, to be able to get out of the way of everyday Albertans.

The other day we made an announcement as a government to be able to make it so you didn't have to put the little date stickers on the licences. You know, Mr. Speaker, the NDP would say: well, that doesn't matter; that's just a little thing. But you know what? We've received lots of phone calls, lots of texts, lots of e-mails that have said: "Thanks; you know what? It was irritating that we had to do that. It was redundant." The police officers had the ability to be able to run the plates. They didn't go up and take a look to see what the little stickers were.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is just an example of how being able to reduce red tape gets out of the way of everyday Albertans. We respect the time and the money of Albertans. We respect it so much that we're willing to be able to get out of the way of that time, their time, and to be able to try to free up that time. I can't think of a more important initiative than the work that we're doing in terms of red tape reduction.

To date, Mr. Speaker, we have saved Albertans \$476 million in terms of compliance costs. [interjections] The hon. member is heckling because the hon. member knows full well that when they had four years to be able to work with the people of Alberta, they didn't find any red tape. They couldn't find any, so they're embarrassed by it. They're embarrassed by the fact that they could not find any red tape. All regulations were great regulations in their minds, and they didn't care about the time of Albertans; they didn't care about the fact that there are compliance costs to our job creators.

And you know what? I think, Mr. Speaker, that goes to show why they weren't elected again. They were the first government in Alberta that was a one-term government. Now, that stings. I can see that that stings. I know they're stinging over it still. It's a year and

a half later, and they're still stinging over it. The reality is that their record is that they had zero ability to reduce red tape. Actually, they had all the ability in the world; they just didn't do it, Mr. Speaker. In fact, they got F after F after F with our businesses in Alberta on the report card, and that's got to sting as well. In the first year we were able to receive a B minus – a B minus – in order to be able to show that this is actually from the . . . [interjections] See, they're heckling because they know. It really stings that they didn't do anything and they have a terrible record, and this is why they're so upset about this.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will say this in closing, that the hon. members don't realize that red tape reduction is actually a nonpartisan issue. Everywhere in the world, whether it's a left-leaning or right-leaning or centrist party, they're all trying to approach red tape reduction. You know why? Because they recognize that it's a win. It's a win-win for everyone. It's a win for the governments that don't have to spend as much money to be able to do all of these things to create these hoops. It's a win for the people who don't have to jump through the hoops. Yet for some strange reason the NDP are the only ones – their cousins to the west are still working on red tape reduction. They're still actually approaching red tape the same way that the Liberals did. But for some strange reason this NDP won't get it. This is the quintessential problem with the NDP. They seem to not get what Albertans are looking for, but we on this side of the House will work hard to make sure Alberta is the freest, fastest moving economy in North America.

10:10

The Speaker: Hon. members, there are approximately 40 seconds remaining in Standing Order 29(2)(a) if anyone has an additional brief question or comment.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will just quickly address some of the things going on here and try and correct the associate minister's record because he said that we don't get it, but I can tell you that the RMA doesn't get it, Mr. Associate Minister. They said that they're "concerned that Bill 48 proposes reductions in municipal autonomy." You know what that is? It's municipal autonomy. It's people being able to have their own agency and act, Mr. Associate Minister, "based on limited evidence from the development industry." That sounds like the UCP right there, doesn't it? Limited evidence from the development industry, not really caring about finding out what citizens think about this. It's those job creators, Mr. Associate Minister, who have had your ear, Mr. Associate Minister.

Mr. McIver: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order is called. The hon. member and Minister of Transportation.

Point of Order Addressing the Chair

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to have the hon. member express his opinion, and I think he was all wound up, except I think he addressed his remarks to the associate minister about three times in a row rather than through the chair. It might be time for you to remind the hon. member, as if he was brand new, to speak through the chair. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. The hon. the Member for Calgary-McCall, should he choose to provide an intervention on the point of order.

Mr. Sabir: There is no standing order reference, and I don't think it's a point of order. It's just a waste of time, that they already have

curtailed through their motions this evening. I think members shouldn't raise these kinds of points of order in this House still.

An Hon. Member: Frivolous.

The Speaker: I'm not sure that I entirely agree with the assertion that it might have been a frivolous point of order. I think it's very reasonable to remind the members that speaking through the chair is the thing that will have the most positive effect on decorum this evening, and I remind the member to do just that.

Debate Continued

Member Ceci: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will address you, but the associate minister does wind me up because the things he said are so egregious, that, you know, we don't care about red tape reduction, blah, blah, blah, blah. I just want to point out that the RMA is concerned about the associate minister's views, and they said that limited evidence from the development industry is bringing the changes to the MGA forward, that he is so happily championing. The development industry said "that the changes will have a meaningful impact in reducing red tape or supporting economic growth," but there is limited evidence of that, RMA points out. They also point out, Mr. Associate Minister, that "red tape reduction" cannot be used as a catch-all to justify reducing municipal authority over land use planning and other areas without understanding the potential benefits and consequences of such a reduction."

I don't think the associate minister understands any of those consequences at this point in time. He's just happy to get – what was it? – a B minus or something from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. He totally ignores the fact that the C.D. Howe Institute said that our NDP government had the best transparent financial books in the country. Your Finance minister has come – sorry.

Speaker's Ruling Addressing the Chair

The Speaker: I just reminded you that you might direct your comments to the chair. You were looking at me. There's a difference between looking at me and speaking through the chair. If you might say, "their," not "your," or "them," not "you," I think that will have a positive impact. Just because you're looking at me doesn't mean you're talking through me.

Debate Continued

Member Ceci: I appreciate the instruction again and again and again. You know, we've brought up several times from the children's ministry critic, the seniors critic, the red tape reduction critic over here, the Municipal Affairs critic, me, that the work you're doing here, Mr. Associate Minister, through the chair, is not valid. The work needs to be put on the shelf. I'm not going to support it.

With regard to the MGA changes, you're making things prescriptive. You're removing the autonomy of local governments around the province, and you haven't gone and broadly consulted with Albertans about this. You've listened to the development industry, but everyone else's opinion doesn't mean anything to you. You know, there's no what-we-heard document anywhere on the website. There's no balance in what you're bringing forward, and frankly there's no way that Albertans should support what you're bringing forward. Municipalities will be lesser as a result of what you're doing.

I certainly appreciate that the former Municipal Affairs minister believes he did some consultation, but the RMA, the AUMA, the cities, the planners: they would say that this is a one-sided, jaded approach to the legislation that's before us, and I won't be supporting that.

Thank you, Associate Minister, for listening to me and my views about your views. Thank you.

The Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment. The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for recognizing me. I thought I beat the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, but I was clearly not fast enough in my old age. His speech was interesting, no doubt.

I would simply like to say that when you're talking about red tape, you're talking about one of the most important mandates of this government. One of the most important mandates of this government. [interjections] When I was talking to my constituents, knocking doors – and I hear them laughing. The only laughingstock is the NDP as they sit over there. I'll tell you what. The vantage point from there even on a good day is nothing compared to the vantage point of the government, and they know it.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that red tape reduction is something that this associate minister, the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction, has been focused on long before he became the associate minister. Like a dog on a bone, he is absolutely focused, laser-focused on finding inefficiencies in government and eliminating them, and did an excellent job.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I hesitate to interrupt, but pursuant to Government Motion 60 all questions . . . [interjections] Order. All questions must be put with respect to Bill 48, the Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (No. 2).

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:18 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	LaGrange	Panda
Allard	Luan	Rutherford
Copping	Madu	Savage
Dreeshen	McIver	Schow
Glubish	Nally	Schulz
Goodridge	Neudorf	Schweitzer
Hunter	Nicolaides	Toews
Issik	Nixon, Jason	Turton
Kenney	Nixon, Jeremy	Wilson

Against the motion:

Carson	Gray	Notley
Ceci	Irwin	Sabir
Goehring	Nielsen	Sweet

Totals: For – 27 Against – 9

[Motion carried; Bill 48 read a third time]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

The Chair: Hon. members, I would like to call the Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 35

Tax Statutes (Creating Jobs and Driving Innovation) Amendment Act, 2020

The Chair: There are no amendments currently being considered. Are there any members wishing to join debate? The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to be able to rise to speak to Bill 35 in committee. This bill is a fundamental piece of legislation that will, I think, provide sort of a foundational touchpoint for a number of decisions made by this government going forward. For that reason, it is deeply distressing that we are getting only an hour to debate this bill as a result of the very oppressive use of this government's majority to shut down debate on . . .

I think we're December 8?

Member Ceci: Eighth.

Ms Notley: . . . December 8 of this year for no apparent reason. No reason why we couldn't spend time talking this through and asking for at least some of the information that we've been asking for for a long time to justify why the government is pursuing this particular policy approach. It is very unfortunate that we are seeing debate being cut so short. To be clear, the House leader has in the past made sort of broad, random assertions, as he is inclined to do, about how we've been filibustering the bill and yada, yada, yada. In fact, it hasn't even been called for debate for over two weeks, and now we're going to have an hour.

So what's in this bill? Well, as members in this Assembly understand but people watching may not know, this bill is a bill that accelerates the government's previous decision to slash corporate income tax from 12 per cent to 8 per cent, what we often refer to as the \$4.7 billion corporate handout, except in the long term, I suppose, it will cost more than the original decision ultimately would have cost, and it will continue to cost Albertans for years and years and years to come through lost revenue. Of course, picking the actual cost to Albertans is a bit hard to do because it's the gift that keeps on taking, Madam Chair.

Let's just go back to when the government first introduced this plan, this plan to move the corporate income tax from 12 per cent to 8 per cent. Now, I will give them credit. It's definitely something that they ran on, so when they introduced it in the late spring of 2019 after the election, it was hardly surprising. You know, we fundamentally disagreed with it, and we thought it was profoundly bad public policy, but it was certainly something that they had told electors that they would do.

The thing is that in conjunction with this plan, this promise to Albertans that they would cut the corporate income tax from 12 per cent to 8 per cent, was another promise, one that is far better remembered. I think it went something like jobs, economy, pipelines if I recall correctly. Now, what we know is that they've not delivered so much on those things.

Now, as I've said before – and I will remind people who are watching this particular debate again – it's helpful to get a sense of the value of accelerating a particular policy by looking at the success of that policy before it was accelerated, simple common sense. Sometimes you have a policy that you think is a good idea, you put it in place, and it doesn't create the outcome that you expected or that you promised. It makes good sense to assess whether, in fact, it created the outcome that you expected or promised before you run headlong into accelerating it roughly 300 per cent at the expense of Albertans. To be clear, there is a downside. There is an opportunity cost to this bill in that it, of

course, reduces revenue to a government that is in great shortage of that particular resource right now.

What was the report card on this initiative first taken in the late spring of 2019? Well, as we all know, the report card for this particular policy initiative would be found in the annual report of the Auditor General of the successes and failures and general outcomes arising from this government's first year in office, 2019 to 2020. That's a good thing to look at. The annual report, the final numbers: how did it work out?

Now, as you know, I'm sure, Madam Chair, the law used to say that the government was compelled to introduce that annual report, otherwise known as a report card, on how they did in managing the fiscal issues of the province by June of the year following that fiscal year, so by June 30, 2020, was when this government should have introduced its report card.

Now, that's what the law said. Transparency, accountability, responsibility, good fiscal management: that's what you would do. But, "Oh, no," it turned out we were still sitting. These guys didn't want their report card to be subjected to the scrutiny of this Legislature, so they actually introduced legislation to delay the introduction of their report card, including an assessment of the success of their \$4.7 billion corporate handout. They introduced legislation to delay it to – wait for it – the end of August, when no one would be watching and they could cover it up with a whole bunch of other exciting news.

10:30

At the time we said: "Jeez; why are you doing that? That doesn't make sense. That doesn't look like transparency, accountability, and, oh, pride in your first year of work to me." They said, "Oh, well, the Auditor General asked us to do it because, you know, there is a pandemic, and they couldn't possibly get the work done." The only problem with that explanation was that the Auditor General came out the next day and said, "No, no, I didn't, actually; I did not ask to do that; I'm perfectly capable of doing my work to get this annual report," otherwise known as the report card on the UCP's first year of managing this province's fiscal issues. "I am quite prepared to have that done in time for when the legislation told me to do it by." Nonetheless, these folks carried on, persevered, and passed their law to be able to introduce their own report card late in August, when the House wasn't sitting. That's what they did, and of course not a lot of people paid attention to it because that was the time that they also announced that they were heading towards a \$20 billion deficit for the year 2020-21, which, of course, not surprisingly, got most people's attention.

But let's just look at their report card for their first year in office, managing the fiscal concerns of this government. What did we see in that report card? Well, they lost 50,000 jobs. Remember that set of promises that were attached to this brilliant policy initiative that they said was going to completely turn Alberta's economic fortunes all around because they're the only ones that know how to understand numbers and business? Well, you may recall that one of the things they promised was jobs. It turns out that before the pandemic, we had lost 50,000 jobs. This Premier with great relish and flourish went out and announced to the world: "Come to Alberta. We are going to slowly reduce your corporate income tax over the course of three years" – I believe it was three years – "and clearly that's the only thing that you care about and therefore you will flock to Alberta and create lots of jobs." Often, you know, even the announcement of such a thing would create some outcome, but apparently it didn't, or it created the wrong outcome because what happened was that we lost 50,000 jobs.

What else happened, Madam Chair? Ah, right. The deficit. The deficit doubled. Doubled. After all the years we sat on that side and

listened to those folks over there lecture us about how they're the only people on the planet that can actually manage the economy and manage numbers and manage fiscal responsibility, it turns out that they took a \$6.2 billion deficit, which, to be clear, was \$200 million, I believe, less than what we projected it would be when we transparently and accurately told the people of Alberta what to expect from our budget when it turned out that, in fact, we overperformed once again, and it was a \$6.2 billion deficit. Not a number to be proud of, to be clear. It should be zero. That's where we're all trying to get to. Nonetheless, we told Alberta voters that they could expect the '18-19 fiscal year to end up with a \$6.4 billion deficit, and I believe we delivered a \$6.2 billion deficit. Nonetheless, the first year of these guys in office managing our fiscal situation, because they're the best at it, and what happened? What did their report card show? A \$12 billion dollar deficit before the pandemic. Before the pandemic. Clearly, their \$4.7 billion corporate handout was a brilliant success at creating jobs and helping to balance the budget, something that these folks dream about each and every night.

The other thing that they promised that our \$4.7 billion corporate handout would deliver to Albertans was economic growth: jobs, economy, pipeline. Remember economic growth? It turns out – you know what we saw in that first year, that report card? The economy shrank. It shrank in the first year of this government's time leading this province. Clearly, a reasonable person looking at the Auditor General's report card on this government's effort at managing the fiscal interest of this province, including their primary policy piece, which was the \$4.7 billion corporate handout, would ask themselves: "Huh. That didn't turn out quite the way we expected. Sheesh. You know what? Maybe we should take a second look at this puppy before we accelerate it by 300 per cent." I don't know. Call me crazy. I think that's what a reasonable Albertan would do.

So our Finance critic, the Member for Lethbridge-West, and many other members of our caucus asked this government: "Hey, before you go ahead with accelerating that \$4.7 billion corporate handout, you know, the thing that didn't work, do you have any evidence to suggest that it would work or that accelerating it will work better or that this will work at all in any way, shape, or form? Above and beyond the editorial opinions of one or two economists at the U of C, who did not have access at the time to all the internal documents of the government of Alberta, do you have independent studies that you commissioned when in government?" That's a luxury that you have when you're in government. You can get that work done for you. You can ask people to do that. "Do you have studies? Do you have multiple economists who will tell us how this will flow through and what kind of job numbers we would get?"

What little information we were able to discern from the documents associated with the budget was that, in fact, it was not going to create the job numbers that the members opposite promised. So then we have a corporate income tax reduction that didn't deliver what these folks promised Albertans. The reason I mention that is because they like to say: we ran on this and therefore we should do it, and the fact that we're doing it faster is good because we ran on this, and Albertans would like to see us do it faster. The key thing is that the other things Albertans voted for were jobs, economy, and pipelines, and, to review, a year in we haven't gotten any of that; we've gotten the reverse. So why don't we have that information? In the absence of that information, Madam Chair, we are left with just looking at the public documents: the Auditor General's report card, information that is found in budget documents, the clear example of jobs being lost, companies moving headquarters, actually firing people, not investing, you know.

Companies act in different ways for different reasons. I was interested the other day to discover, for instance, that Extencicare, a private company that delivers continuing care to Alberta's most vulnerable citizens, from the federal government, in the form of the Canadian emergency wage subsidy grant, received \$82 million. Well, great. They paid out \$21 million in dividends. They were in such great crisis that they had to take \$82 million from Canadian taxpayers so that they could then pay it out to their shareholders, many of whom do not live in Canada. So we see that the private sector doesn't always operate quite the way you expect them to.

Another example, of course, is Imperial Oil. They received \$120 million in the Canadian emergency wage subsidy. They also received the benefit of the \$4.7 billion corporate handout, and at one point they booked it. I can't remember what that number was, but it was in the hundreds of millions of dollars, and that was publicly reported. To be clear, Extencicare also, just to remind people, received the benefit of that \$4.7 billion corporate handout. What did Imperial Oil do? Well, they laid off 200 people – I don't know – less than a month ago in Calgary, but they certainly did manage to pay out \$324 million in dividends to their shareholders. So take \$120 million of the Canadian emergency wage subsidy, take their hundreds of millions of dollars in the \$4.7 billion corporate handout and then pay out \$324 million in dividends to their foreign shareholders and then lay off people in Calgary. Doesn't seem to be working quite the way it was expected.

If this acceleration of the \$4.7 billion corporate handout doesn't work, what, then, does it do? Well, it puts pressure on this government to attack fundamentally important public services like, for instance, supporting or maintaining per-student funding in education so that our schools were not in crisis going into the pandemic, like continuing population and inflation funding in health care so that we're not threatening the jobs of 10,000 front-line health care providers in the middle of a pandemic, like being able to pay a fair income to disabled Albertans and giving them an income increase aligned with the cost of living because we're good human beings and we care for vulnerable Albertans. Those are the choices that we are forced to make because we've blown a \$4.7 billion hole into our budget to not achieve the very things these folks promised voters they would achieve.

10:40

That is why I strongly believe we should not be thinking about accelerating this bad idea. We should think instead about supporting our teachers, supporting the people that run our schools, supporting those brave front-line health care providers who are doing everything they can to keep Albertans safe, supporting disabled Albertans so that they can actually stay in a home rather than finding themselves struggling to put food on the table because these guys are playing games with their budgeting and pulling their cheques and giving them to them after their bills come due. Let's make choices that help Albertans, let's stop beating up on the most vulnerable Albertans, and let's develop an economic strategy that will actually focus on targeted economic growth and economic support.

This government on that one, I must say, took a small first step today with their \$20,000 grant. We called for \$25,000, but we also have called for about eight or nine other strategies that would support small businesses who are now heading into a very long and difficult period of time. We would urge this government to consider those kinds of supports. Take the gift to the currently profitable corporations, many of which don't reside in Alberta or invest back in this province, and use it to support our struggling small and medium-sized businesses that need all the help that they can get to

stay viable over the course of the next few weeks and, ultimately, months as we look to the end of this pandemic and the ultimate economic recovery of this province.

That is a better way to use that money rather than throwing it out the door for more failed attempts at creating jobs, which are simply eliminated as these companies continue in their efforts to find efficiencies at the expense of Alberta workers and Alberta families and Alberta landlords and, frankly, Alberta municipalities, all of whom need these folks to keep Albertans employed and are standing on the sidelines watching them aggressively find efficiencies while paying out hundreds of millions of dollars in dividends to their foreign shareholders. How about standing up for these small businesses? How about not nickel and diming them? How about giving them the support that they've been begging for for months. I would certainly urge people, if they want to find out more detail in terms of what we've recorded as far as what they're looking for, to please go to albertasfuture.ca. We have a number of recommendations that we have put there.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to join debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. Appreciate the opportunity to add some brief comments here. I do want to thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for very clearly pointing out the path that we have been on here for the last little while, what would be probably considered a colossal failure. I mean, I suppose, I guess, from a perspective I almost feel sympathy for the government wanting to bring in time allocation on this bill with such a failure in what they said was going to happen. I'd probably want to get it out of here really quickly, too, so as not to have to face Albertans with that everything that we promised up to this point hasn't happened. The jobs haven't happened. The economy hasn't happened. The investment hasn't happened. I mean, we clearly remember the Premier saying: well, you know, companies would be irresponsible to not move here to Alberta. Well, we're still waiting. They haven't been coming in droves, yet we did things like take away the digital media tax credit, which then caused the businesses that were getting ready to come to stop.

I mean, I've gone over this over and over again. That digital media tax credit, just within one simple industry, would have given us access to a \$200 billion industry by 2023. We decided to bet the farm on this, and it hasn't turned out. As the leader said, these people took that money. They paid their shareholders. I mean, one just outright left town, and that's what we got for it. You would think that at that point in time someone would say: "Okay. You know, maybe let's hold on a second here. Let's maybe rethink this a little bit." But, no, no. What have we decided to do? We have decided to double our efforts and go even faster on a plan that clearly proved not to work.

It's distressing, because we're making these decisions to put Albertans in a position where they're going to be on the receiving end of nothing. We just simply have not seen the evidence that this \$4.7 billion corporate handout – yes, the one that's located on page 144 of your very first budget, the one that you keep denying is there. We could have been making investments right here on the things that were actually happening. And this was just the first year.

I'm certainly not blaming – well, actually, based on what we've seen over the last little while on how this pandemic was handled, I am. We've made very, very poor decisions, and now we're in a place where we could have prevented where we are.

An Hon. Member: They did it, not us.

Mr. Nielsen: Good point. Yeah.

This government had the chance. They could have taken our suggestions, Madam Chair. They were offered in all sincerity. It was only about Albertans, their businesses, protecting health. We didn't have to go into a situation of: well, it's got to be one or the other. Both could have been protected, and accelerating this \$4.7 billion corporate giveaway is not going to fix that. We've already seen that it doesn't work. Why keep going blindly ahead with a plan that hasn't produced the results?

We don't see businesses coming here. I hope the Premier has been on the phone over the last week calling them all up, letting them know, "You're making poor decisions by not coming to Alberta," because we know – we've seen the debate go forward – that a low corporate tax rate is not all it takes to attract business. They look at all the other things. They look at the infrastructure, they look at the social supports, and they look at postsecondary education because those companies will be looking for highly trained people to be able to work there. But if you're shortchanging in all of those departments, as we can see, they're just not going to choose Alberta. They're going to go to jurisdictions where those things have been invested in as well.

Madam Chair, because we are under time allocation, I don't want to take my comments too long. I know more of my colleagues want to say more about Bill 35. I'm hoping the government will reverse direction on this, just put it on pause. Let's just rethink this. We're more than happy to try to provide some suggestions that will benefit all Albertans.

10:50

The Chair: I see the hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to get up and respond to a few of the statements and assertions on Bill 35, assertions that are simply incorrect. There was also the request for additional study. We've heard that request time and time again. I'm happy to point to some studies. There is almost an inexhaustible amount of research out there that demonstrates the correlation between a very competitive business environment, of which a low-cost tax structure is a key part, and ultimately investment attraction and job creation.

Madam Chair, I do have to note again, with the hon. Leader of the Opposition, just a disdain for job creators, that tone coming through as she spoke about Bill 35. On this side of the House we don't have a disdain for job creators. We recognize the great contribution that they make to our province, and we know that when job creators are successful, Alberta workers are successful and the province is successful, because job creators create wealth for all of us in this great province of Alberta. Businesses create wealth that ultimately ends up in the Alberta fisc, which supports our health care system, education system, and every program.

Madam Chair, I do want to just again correct the assertions around our year-end, March 31, 2020. In February in the global economy COVID was already worrying. The uncertainty of the pandemic in China was already at play. As a result of that, energy prices were starting to come down even in February, and there was a great amount of uncertainty. By the time March hit, we were in pandemic mode in this province. The global economy was collapsing. Energy prices were collapsing. That was before our fiscal year-end, and that had a grave impact on the financial results for the year ended March 31, 2020.

I also want to talk a little bit about the challenge that we inherited, the challenge that we worked to correct, began to correct in Budget 2019. We inherited an upward trajectory of 4 per cent per year on operational spending, and that's on top of the highest per capita

operational spending amongst comparator provinces in this nation. Madam Chair, we put a budget in place, Budget 2019, to begin to carefully and thoughtfully correct that overspend. We presented and passed Budget 2019 in October 2019.

When we released the third-quarter report, Q3, in February 2020, we were very, very pleased with our results year to date. We were projecting at that point a lower deficit than we projected in Budget 2019, to the tune of \$1.2 billion, Madam Chair. We were actually projecting based on real, hard data, based on revenue collected and our ability to hold spending flat and in some cases turn it down. We were able to project a much better result than we had even predicted in the budget a few months earlier.

But then COVID hit, Madam Chair, the largest contraction in the global economy since the Great Depression, and an unprecedented collapse in energy prices, all the while dealing with the pandemic within our own borders. This province has not had to face that type of economic challenge since the '30s. Yes, it had an impact on the actual results for our year-end of March 31, 2020.

Madam Chair, the Leader of the Official Opposition also spoke about the fact that we're not seeing any response in the economy, but I would suggest that that is not accurate. If we take a look at January and February 2020, the year-over-year data – and this is only a few months after we passed our 2019 budget – we were already seeing some early economic indicators that pointed to the fact that 2020 was going to be a turnaround year, that pointed to the fact that our economic approach, including the job-creation tax cut, including ensuring that we had the most competitive tax jurisdiction in the nation, was already beginning to work.

We were seeing energy investment go up for the first time in some years. In fact, drilling rigs in the field were up significantly year over year over 2019. Nonenergy investment was projected to rise. Energy investment, again, was projected to be up \$1.5 billion. Building permits were up. Exports were up. Oil production was up. Retail and vehicle sales were all up year over year. Madam Chair, our policies were working, and this was only a few months after we had passed Budget 2019.

Madam Chair, we hear the requests for backup for research, and I could start to cite a whole number of research papers, certainly: McKenzie and Ferede, University of Calgary School of Public Policy; Dahlby. Here is one, Geloso and Guénette, Montreal Economic Institute, and I'm going to quote from this piece.

Corporate income taxes reduce the profitability of investments.

In other words, raising these taxes drives investors to look elsewhere when they decide where to place their funds. . . . The mobility of capital, which has been accelerating since the 1990s, is such that an increase in corporate taxes can scare off potential foreign investors and local investors as well.

. . . The literature on the effect of taxes on foreign direct investment shows that the effective corporate tax rate has a statistically significant effect on investment.

. . . A 2010 study published in the *American Economic Journal* . . . found that an increase in corporate taxes reduces the investment levels of businesses already in the market, as well as reducing entrepreneurship.

. . . Researchers at Oxford University studied 23,000 companies in 10 European countries. In the short term, 54% of all effective corporate tax rate increases resulted in reduced overall compensation. In the long term, each \$1 increase in effective corporate tax rates led to a reduction in overall compensation of more than \$1.

Madam Chair, it's no wonder that wages in this province decreased after 2015, after the members of the opposition pushed corporate taxes up.

And I go on:

The actual effects of corporate taxes on workers must be taken into account in debates on tax rates, which too often portray the interests of companies and workers as being at odds with each other. On the contrary, economic analysis demonstrates that corporate taxes have negative consequences on the entire population.

Madam Chair, I could continue to cite piece after piece after piece, but I will just turn to a case study. I will turn to the case study of the members opposite. Shortly after they took office, of course, they implemented a carbon tax, a tax that they did not campaign on. They brought in a ton of red tape and bureaucracy. They raised business taxes by 20 per cent. What happened? Billions of dollars of capital fled the province.

Mr. Kenney: Tens of billions.

Mr. Toews: Tens of billions of dollars, and it fled to the United States.

Madam Chair, the global energy industry was not in trouble, but Alberta was simply not a friendly jurisdiction for investment, and investment fled and with it tens of thousands of jobs and opportunity. Moreover, over the next three years the government collected \$5.8 billion less – less – of tax revenue, business tax revenue. We have a case study. We have innumerable research documents that demonstrate the correlation between a competitive tax jurisdiction, a competitive business environment, and increased investment. We have a case study presented to us by the members opposite, unfortunately at this province's expense.

11:00

Madam Chair, we will not stand idle. We will move forward with the commitment we made to Albertans during the campaign and that is to ensure that we have the most competitive business environment possible, one that will attract investment, create jobs, opportunities, additional fiscal capacity to fund social programs. Our plan was working. Our January and February economic data were already showing that. We will continue to implement our plan, that plan that will result in increased opportunities, jobs, investment, and eventual increased fiscal capacity.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to join debate? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will speak briefly to Bill 35. I think we have been asking for studies. We have been asking for information from government, and the FOIP request returned four blank pages, so there was no analysis done on this \$4.7 billion handout, how it will impact jobs, how it will impact investments.

Also, as a student of economics it's economics 101. When an economy is growing, if you give a tax break, it frees up some capital. That gets invested into the economy, that creates more jobs, that creates economic activity, and that generates revenue. But when the economy is already in a decline and you provide a tax break, corporations use that to pay dividends and buy back shares, and that's exactly what happened with this corporate break. We saw layoffs, mass layoffs, in Alberta after this break. Those who actually benefited from this break like Husky, like Cenovus, all those corporations who got money from this tax break, laid off Albertans right here in Alberta. Calgary has a 30 per cent vacancy rate after this tax break. It has completely failed.

I think when we talk about these theories, we have to see evidence. What's happening in our cities? What's happening in our province? There is enough evidence that this has not worked. I think that's trickle-down economics, not even economics, the trickle-down scheme, where you just lower corporate taxes. Eventually you

run out of money for other services. Then you end up cutting from health care. Then you end up cutting from education. Then you end up readjusting AISH payment dates to kind of save some money in the books, not actually. I don't think this policy is working. If the minister has done any analysis whatsoever on this from Treasury staff that he can table, I would urge the minister to do so so that we can see how it's working.

Thank you.

The Chair: Are there any other members wishing to join debate? The hon. Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just going to speak for a moment about this. I just wanted to talk a little bit about what the Minister of Finance had mentioned with regard to Dahlby and the other folks that had done work on this report. I'm sure that the Official Opposition understands this – at least, I hope so – that when we're looking at economics and we're looking at the work that needs to be done, we're talking about a long game. There has never been anything more important stated than when these initial numbers and what was being looked at was stated by the experts. It's about a long game, it's about attraction of investment, and it's about making sure that you are the most attractive in order to make sure that people come here for various reasons. In a long game it means that you understand what your numbers are going to look like at the end of the day. It's not about looking at what's happening right now.

Yes, the NDP is right that 50,000 jobs did go away right away, but what about the 180,000 jobs that disappeared before that while they were in government, oil and gas jobs from chasing away oil and gas from this province, manufacturing, agriculture? So many opportunities that were presented to them at that time, and instead it was the ideology that led that discussion, Madam Chair, versus the numbers.

The most interesting part about when the NDP was in government is that they were in a structural deficit. When you're in a structural deficit, Madam Chair, you want people out spending money. You want to make sure they have money in their pockets so they're actually out spending money and contributing to the economy, to help turn the economy around. Anybody who understands small business understands the importance of that. We know that, especially right now. You want to make sure that people can go out, that moms and dads are able to take their kids to hockey games and actually play hockey, to go to ballet lessons, to do music lessons. Fail to do all of these things – make sure that they have money in their pockets so that they can go out, spend that money on their families, and contribute in a meaningful way to the economy.

But the NDP also forgets about the fact that they brought in a carbon tax that actually stopped people from having the ability to spend money during a time of a structural deficit, which is an interesting concept when you consider the fact that if you're actually wanting to help Albertans and help them have the best lives and livelihoods that they could, you want to make sure that they have as many dollars in their jeans as possible to make sure that they can have the best life. I mean, the Minister of Municipal Affairs often says this. She talks about the good old days. Can you remember where we were a year ago, in the good old days, when you could just go to ballet lessons, when you could just go to your swim lessons?

It's a very different world that we're living in now, and the fact that the NDP continues to suggest that somehow there are no jobs coming, especially given the fact that COVID came into our midst and stopped absolutely everything in its tracks, is disingenuous, Madam Chair, to not recognize the fact that there was a downturn

happening when they were in government and they did nothing – absolutely nothing – to turn that around. To that point, when they raised the taxes, there was no marked change in the increase of dollars that came into the government. It's interesting.

One of the things that was interesting in the data that came from the information from the economists is that there's this statement about everything else being equal. All of the economists say: at the time, given the circumstances, everything being equal, this is an opportunity that can happen. I don't believe that COVID gave us an even playing field, and even then, even with all of that, with relaunch and the ability to see the amazing opportunities in front of us, people are looking at Alberta. We're seeing the tech industry increase. There was an article just this week on Benevity here in Alberta and their incredible ability to attract talent and people, and they are attracting tech. They are incredibly thoughtful, organized people that have seen an opportunity and are taking that. They're doing it here in Alberta. Why? They know that this is the best place to invest, and they're going to be able to attract talent here.

We talk about the 30 per cent decline in downtown Calgary. Think about just in the near future here, when we get a vaccine and we get through COVID, the opportunities that are there. Our economy is going to rebound because – you know what? – the government has faith in the organizations, companies, and corporations in this province, which is why investing in those corporations – look at small business in this province; 95 per cent of people are employed by small businesses in this province. It's an incredible number when you think about the resilience and what these companies have had to go through over the years and the niche markets that they're able to find. Why do you think that that's possible, Madam Chair? That is possible because of the large-scale corporations that were here, that attracted business here in the first place for people to be able to start up small businesses. These are all interconnected pieces of how an economy works.

When you have a structural deficit, you want people spending their money. You want them out there. I know we all long for those days when we're going to get to go to the movies again or to go see the opera or the ballet or a football game. That will happen. It will happen because we have faith in the people in this province, because we're investing back into the people of this province, because we speak with kindness and love and compassion about the people of this province. We don't call them sewer rats. We don't call them embarrassing cousins or nutbars or the thousands of other things that have come out and the character assassinations on the very people that sent us here in the first place or attacking conservative women. That was my favourite day in here, suggesting that a conservative woman should die sooner. That was a very interesting day for me, I have to say, sitting across over there watching that. That was a defining moment. That is the kind of language that we hear versus elevating the people of this province that put us here in the first place, Madam Chair.

11:10

I also wanted to clarify. Earlier one of the members had mentioned in a different bill discussion about the medallions and about that somehow we were taking away – we were taking away – the opportunity for a student to get a scholarship or a bursary with a medallion. Well, the centennial medallion, for that member, was offered during the centennial. But this is the kind of language that is used and the twisting of information, Madam Chair, that is incorrect. It's important to be factual.

When we talk about that, we talk about investing in the people in this province and the importance of what is happening with this bill. Look at the investment that has gone into STEM, STEM for women, Women Building Futures because we know that these are

amazing, phenomenal jobs for women to get into. They're not just breaking barriers; they're crashing through them. We have a major opportunity here to be able to grow this wonderful, wonderful opportunity here in this province in so many different fields, to get ourselves back on track again. But with the rhetoric that comes and the continued character assassinations and the misleading of information – the member that ranted on about the medallions being taken away and scholarships being taken away: that was completely incorrect, and she knows that. It's in the bill, Madam Chair, but instead she uses a little piece of information from a red tape piece of legislation to try and twist this intricate story of something that does not exist. It is similar to the language that is coming from the NDP now about this particular bill.

This is about investing in Alberta. This is about making sure that corporations and small businesses and everybody can thrive here, and it is a long game. All of the economists, every single one of them that spoke about this, that came back with information, all of them said one to two years, maybe a little bit longer, to see a turnaround in this economy. Madam Chair, we're in the worst economic downturn this province has ever seen for oil and gas. We are seeing the COVID pandemic and that combination, this horrible combination of things. Even with that, we see the resilience of amazing people coming forward.

I think probably one of the most profound things that I've seen throughout this crisis that we've been in is in the nonprofits, in the volunteers, in our front-line workers, in just the kind care and compassion that has come forward. These are the things that our province is known for, not the rhetoric and language that is coming out from the opposition side. That's not who we are. We have faith in each other.

When we talk about shopping local and elevating those businesses, these are our neighbours that are selling all manner of things. I don't know if you've seen those chocolate bombs. That is the biggest thing right now. It is a trend. Everybody is making them. But talk about pivoting. There's a place called Dobre in Strathmore, Madam Chair, and it's actually a Ukrainian restaurant. She figured out that if she pivoted to making these chocolate bombs that she could – and she's selling, like, 300 or 400 of these things a day. Amazing. This is the kind of people I'm used to dealing with. This is the strength of our people, of the ability to pivot and change and alter. All of my friends who are musicians are all doing music online, music lessons online. My son is taking tae kwon do online. I mean, these are all things – the Minister of Finance and our government understand the resilience of the people of Alberta, understand that with a little bit of understanding and investment and the ability to reduce those corporate taxes and the ability to sieve through this crisis that we're in right now, there is tremendous reason for optimism, incredible reasons to be here.

We believe in Alberta, Madam Chair. We believe in the people here. We believe in the sentiment of hard work, of having the strength of a job, what that means for the economy, and that that healthy economy means that our services and that our people will be taken care of, but without a healthy economy nothing is possible.

I want to thank the Minister of Finance for his incredible work on this, for staying true to the principles of those things so that we can make sure that this province can build back up. We know that they're capable of doing that. We have complete faith in the people of this province, and I look forward to the day when we all get to spend time together in large gatherings with our family and friends. I look forward to the day when we see our economy rebound, and the economy isn't going to rebound because of anything we've done in here in particular. It's going to rebound because of the amazing people in this province and because they were given an opportunity to find their way and forge ahead. I'm also really looking forward to

attracting a lot of new people into this province because I know our Premier is obsessed with bringing that talent in here.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's always an honour to rise in this House, and I'm always reminded of the privilege that we have to be able to do this job. As I like to do the first time I speak during a week in the Legislature, I just want to give a shout-out to all the front-line workers right now, who are doing so much for all of us. That's our incredible health care workers, but it's also those folks who are working in grocery stores and those who are working in education, those who are working in mental health. The list goes on. I just need them to know that we on our side of the House see them, we support them, and we will continue to fight for them.

You know, this is just so hard that, in the midst of a pandemic, this is the conversation that we're having to have, that we're having to try to convince this government that the wrong course of action in the midst of a pandemic is to give billions of dollars away to profitable corporations. Despite what some of the government members might have to say, arguing that their constituents seemingly want this and have asked for it, I can tell you that I've not heard from my constituents in Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood that what they want is more money given to profitable corporations.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Expand your circles.

Member Irwin: I hope that the Member for Calgary-Klein, who is heckling me at this moment – perhaps he will stand up and speak to what he's hearing from his constituents because I can tell you that no one in Highlands-Norwood is telling me that they want this. What are they telling me? They're telling me that they want this government to stop their attacks on health care. They want this government to support health care workers. They want housing. They want investments in education. They want to know that their kids are going to school in a safe way.

They're seeing a government that's taking wealthy corporations more seriously than they are health and safety, and this Finance minister talks about the jobs that they're creating. Well, jobs being created in Houston are of no benefit to the constituents of Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

You know, I've talked a lot in this House about the conversations that I've had with folks on AISH. I'm proud to have met with countless constituents in Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood who are on AISH. They tell me the stories of how they struggle day in and day out to make ends meet, and right now they know that they're not getting their AISH cheque until late, far after Christmas. It's not going to be a very merry Christmas for a lot of those constituents, yet what do they hear from this government? They hear that this government has billions of dollars to give away to large corporations, yet they're deindexing AISH, and this Premier said in this House not too many months ago that his attacks on AISH would not be too onerous. It's unfathomable that this government would continue to prioritize large corporations over the most vulnerable Albertans.

11:20

Job creators: I kept hearing this government tonight talk about job creators. It's clear that the UCP policies are not creating jobs. You know what creates jobs? You know what stimulates our local economy? Workers. Workers having spending power: that creates wealth. Things like wage top-ups. Oh, wait, that wage top-up for essential workers, essential workers in my riding of Edmonton-

Highlands-Norwood? It wasn't accepted by this government, not at all. Instead of accepting and accelerating a wage top-up for our front-line heroes, this government is accelerating a wage top-up for multibillion-dollar corporations. Unbelievable.

It's about priorities. Governing is about priorities. We've said this many times in this House. This government is prioritizing those corporations over all of us. Let's think about something like child care. The evidence is clear that child care is a huge stimulus for the economy. That's a proven job creator. That gets women back to work. But instead of prioritizing investments in child care: corporations. Why support the working women of this province when you can support CEOs instead?

Again, no one in Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood is asking for this. I can tell you that on this side of the House it's not what we're hearing from our constituents. There's a whole heck of a lot of research and evidence to support this. You know where there isn't research and evidence to support? Trickle-down economics. Over and over again the promised jobs from Conservatives from corporate tax cuts never seem to materialize. What happens instead? The rich get richer. Good jobs disappear. The most vulnerable are hurt, and we've got numerous case studies in front of us that show just that. You know what? My constituents, they don't need case studies to know that some of them are struggling. They're not benefiting from a \$4.7 billion giveaway. [Member Irwin's speaking time expired] It's unfortunate because I had more to say.

The Chair: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt, but pursuant to Government Motion 53 the question will now be put on Bill 35, Tax Statutes (Creating Jobs and Driving Innovation) Amendment Act, 2020.

[The remaining clauses of Bill 35 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Any opposed?

[The voice vote indicated that the request to report Bill 35 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 11:23 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

For:

Aheer	Kenney	Nixon, Jeremy
Allard	LaGrange	Rutherford
Copping	Luan	Savage
Dreeshen	Madu	Schulz
Ellis	McIver	Schweitzer
Glubish	Nally	Toews
Goodridge	Neudorf	Turton
Hunter	Nicolaides	Wilson
Issik	Nixon, Jason	

Against:

Carson	Gray	Sabir
Ceci	Irwin	Sigurdson, L.
Goehring	Notley	Sweet

Totals:	For – 26	Against – 9
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[Request to report Bill 35 carried]

Bill 47
Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020

The Chair: We are on amendment A2. Are there any members wishing to join debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. We are currently discussing amendment A2 on Bill 47, and for those who are watching the debate in the Legislature this evening, I do want to just let everyone know that we have been time allocated. We will only have an hour, so what I am going to attempt to do is very quickly move through amendments on this.

[Mr. Neudorf in the chair]

Now, the minister has responded to A2 once already, so I will make my comments very, very brief. Simply put, PTSD and presumptive coverage for PTSD being removed during a pandemic, when we know that there is an increase in what we call “moral injuries” at certain sites likely to happen, asking workers who have experienced a traumatic incident or have direct personal experience with a work-related incident – removing that presumptive coverage during a pandemic is something shameful, and I hope that the government would consider supporting amendment A2.

Now, the government in its fact sheets has claimed \$230 million of savings through this change alone, which does not make sense given the fact that that would essentially be saying that workers who have experienced traumatic incidents in their workplace would not be covered because of the removal of presumption. To be clear, although workers with presumption have fewer hoops to jump through, they still need to meet that determination that they have PTSD and that there has been a work-related incident.

We’ve also introduced evidence that shows that a number of different occupations other than emergency first responders do have higher incidence of PTSD. The minister talked about using evidence, but I would point out that the ministry is removing the requirements for regular reporting on occupational illness and disease. The occupational disease advisory council is being removed.

11:30

The time frame in which these things will be assessed is being lengthened. At the same time as saying, “We will listen to evidence,” they are actually stretching out the time frame for listening to evidence.

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

The minister in his rebuttal also talked about private health care systems. That may have been a Freudian slip, but I will say that given the fact that Bill 47 also removes employer benefit plans makes it harder for workers to get support through their WCB claim.

Removing this presumption for all occupations means people will have to jump through more hoops. We know that with PTSD, the adjudication process can at times be retraumatizing. We know that an adjudication process can cause more time to be needed to review this. And we also know that one of the symptoms of PTSD is avoidance of things that remind the individual of a traumatic event, and that’s one of the reasons why presumptive PTSD coverage, making sure that workers know that they have that as a benefit, is a priority.

Amendment A2 has been put forward in good faith, and I hope that the government members will vote in favour of it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A2?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

The Chair: We are back on Bill 47. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much. I would like to introduce another amendment.

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A3. Hon. member, please proceed.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Amendment A3 has to do – oh, sorry. You need me to read this into the record?

The Chair: Please.

Ms Gray: Thank you. We will get into a pattern.

I would like to move that Bill 47, Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020, be amended in section 3(8): (A) in clause (a) by adding the following after the proposed clause (a): “(b) appeals from decisions of the Board under section 89.3” and (B) by striking out clause (b).

Essentially, what this amendment does – Bill 47 allows the board to suspend or reduce benefits if an injured worker doesn’t participate in mandated vocational and rehabilitation training. There may be very legitimate uses of that ability to suspend or reduce benefits, but honestly, if we are talking about balance in Bill 47 – and that is terminology that the minister has used throughout – there should be a provision for reasonable explanation by the worker. There should be a right of appeal before someone is removed from WCB benefits. Right now, as drafted, Bill 47 does not offer a worker an appeal process when they are essentially going to be kicked off WCB.

Now, my colleagues have already through the bill debate described a number of different scenarios and circumstances where a worker may not find a vocational training appropriate, may feel that it doesn’t make sense for them. The fact that Bill 47 allows them to have their benefits suspended or reduced without that right of appeal I think is a glaring error.

So I hope that the government and all members will support amendment A3. Thank you.

The Chair: Any members wishing to speak to amendment A3? The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It’s a pleasure for me to rise and talk about Bill 47 and speak to amendment A3. But I also want to take this opportunity to speak to a number of mischaracterizations and misconceptions that have been brought up by the other side as well as to speak briefly to the 24 amendments that were tabled earlier today in the House.

First, in terms of dealing with the misconceptions being put forward by the other side, we’ve heard time and time again the other side reporting that Bill 47 will reduce health and safety outcomes. Madam Chair, that is simply not the case. Bill 47 is designed to reduce prescriptiveness, reduce processes, and allow the parties to focus on what’s important, and that’s identifying the risks and mitigating those risks.

Madam Chair, we have heard from members on this side of the House that care deeply and passionately about the health and safety of workers. That’s important, that people can go home to their families, and it’s important for both employers and employees to be

able to do that. This bill will improve health and safety outcomes. It's been flat for seven years, despite the changes made by the other side, recognizing in good faith, but what we heard from health and safety experts is that it was too prescriptive. We are reducing that prescriptiveness, and we're allowing the parties to focus on what's important, and that's identifying the risks and mitigating those risks.

Secondly, another comment made by the other side is that Bill 47 takes health and safety back 50 years. Madam Chair, that's ludicrous. We are making changes to make health and safety work better for employers and for employees. Five years ago – not 50 years but five years ago – there was no requirement for health and safety committees. That requirement still is in Bill 47. It was just introduced, and it still is there. We're just making it easier to use and make more sense. Five years ago there was no requirement for a health and safety program. That was put in by the previous government, and we're keeping it in there because we agree that it makes sense. It makes sense for employers to have a health and safety program, but we're reducing the prescriptiveness so we can get better outcomes. So to say that Bill 47 is taking us back 50 years is ludicrous, and we need to stand up to that and set the record straight on that.

The third misconception I want to deal with, Madam Chair, is that Bill 47 eliminates WCB benefits, that it rolls them back entirely. Again, nothing can be further from the truth. What we're doing with Bill 47 is ensuring that there can be ongoing – that the financial sustainability of the system is maintained. We are making some changes, but these changes – like we just spoke of earlier and we just voted on in regard to the presumption of coverage, those who are injured at work because of PTSD will still be covered. That doesn't change. Presumption: all that we changed is that presumption will not apply to all sectors but just certain sectors. This reflects what's going on in the rest of Canada. The approach that we're taking here brings balance back to WCB. It brings balance back for the purpose that we can have fiscal sustainability.

There's one other thing that it does. It reduces red tape. By reducing red tape, Madam Chair, we reduce the costs to employers, and by reducing costs to employers – guess what we do? – we keep Albertans employed, and we get Albertans back to work. That is more important now than ever, that we do that. That's what this bill is about. It's about restoring balance, it is about improving health and safety outcomes, it's about reducing red tape, it's about reducing costs to employers while maintaining key benefits for employees, and then it's about getting Albertans back to work.

Now, I want to just talk briefly in regard to the 24 amendments that were tabled earlier today. Granted, Madam Chair, I don't have a lot of experience – I'm relatively new to the House – but even I, looking at this, can see this as something that's relatively unprecedented, tabling 24. What that shows to me is – what's unfortunate, and I think our Government House Leader earlier today spoke to this, is the fact that, you know, Bill 47 was introduced on November 5, over a month ago. We spent 17 hours in stage 2 of the bill. That's 10 per cent of all discussions that we've had this session, as indicated by the Government House Leader. What's truly unfortunate is that we didn't get into this discussion that we're having right now until two weeks ago, and what's very unfortunate is that these 24 I didn't see till they got tabled today. If the opposition was truly serious about making changes to improve the bill, then they could have shared this weeks ago. We could have been talking about it, but were we? No, Madam Chair. I only saw it today, and we're only debating it right now.

That's truly unfortunate and signals to me that the opposition is not really serious about improving it. When you even take a look at these 24, you know, eight of them, roughly a third, are just about

deleting elements – key elements that we consulted on and that we want to change – that are a key part of the bill, to actually drive improved health and safety outcomes and maintain the fiscal sustainability of the WCB fund. Roughly a third are adding back more detail into the bill. There's one, actually, that was in there twice – it must be really important, but we'll get to that – and then some other substantive changes.

11:40

Madam Chair, I wanted to open the comments. We will talk about these over the next period of time and we can respond to them – and I'm happy to do so – but it's unfortunate that it came so late. I would suggest that perhaps, even though I appreciate the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods and the thought she put to a number of them, the opposition may not be serious about making meaningful changes to this, given us receiving it so late.

Let's talk about amendment A3. Amendment A3 deals with appeals under the WCB. We're making changes to our appeals process. Previously under the act there was a double-step appeals process. It was complicated. We're removing that extra step. That was the purpose of the amendment that we're making, to remove that other step. There is still an ability to appeal if there is a decision by WCB to roll back the benefits. That still exists. By adding the provision that's here, suggested by the members opposite, the appeals from decisions by the board under section 89.3 – what that does, in effect, is that it adds that double step back, and we're trying to reduce that. What's really important is that we have a streamlined process to get it done. While I appreciate the sentiment behind what the hon. member is doing, there still is an ability that if benefits are reduced, the person can still appeal it. We don't want a double step to that.

For that reason, I can't support this amendment, and I would ask that the members of the House vote it down. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to join debate on amendment A3?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion on amendment A3 lost]

The Chair: We are back on Bill 47.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to introduce a new amendment.

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A4. Hon. member, please proceed.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I move that Bill 47, Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020, be amended in schedule 2 by striking out the proposed section 17(10) and substituting the following:

- (10) When a worker has refused to work or to do particular work under subsection (2), the employer shall not request or assign another worker to do the work until the employer
 - (a) has determined the work does not constitute an undue hazard to the health and safety of any person or that an undue hazard does not exist, and
 - (b) has advised that other worker of the first worker's refusal.

Madam Chair, there have been a number of changes made to the right to refuse unsafe work, and what this amendment is attempting to make very crystal clear to someone who might be cursorily reading through the act is that a second worker should not be sent in to start doing work without having been told that the work has been refused. Right now the right to refuse, the way it's been

rewritten in Bill 47, is adding in red tape, to use the language that has been used in this House so far. It means that someone has to refuse. The employer needs to come in. The employer needs to write a report. When the worker gets the report, then they send it to OH and S. There are a number of new steps, and what seems to be missing is just the clear answer to: hey, if somebody has refused, can the employer just throw someone else in? If a senior person looks at the situation and says, "This is not safe," can a more junior worker then be told, "Oh, go and do that" without knowing that the senior person has refused that work?

I think this is a glaring gap. If the minister feels that this is covered under the existing language, I would say that that is not clear when someone, a layperson, reads through this language. The right to refuse unsafe work is critically important to keep workers in Alberta healthy and safe.

Finally, I will just quickly remark to the minister that absolutely the opposition is serious and committed to a fulsome debate on this legislation. It takes a serious amount of time to be able to draft amendments, to plan this out, to talk to stakeholders. This was an omnibus piece of legislation that touches on two major facets of workplace health and safety, both OH and S as well as WCB. The fact that the government has curtailed our ability to introduce these amendments to a single hour is not because the opposition is unserious.

The Chair: Any members wishing to speak to amendment A4? The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of the process for right to refuse – and I will agree with the hon. member that the right to refuse is a critical component of occupational health legislation. It is the final line, when there is an issue that is brought before a worker that they have an honest belief is unsafe, that they can address it. We've made some changes to this. A couple of them, as mentioned by the hon. member, are that we made a change in regard to the definition in terms of a change that deals with a condition that's not a normal condition, an undue hazard. The reason we did that is that we want these issues to be dealt with, ideally, in the health and safety committees, to be identified so that we don't need to use the right to refuse as a last resort. But if a person believes that the issues aren't being addressed, then they still have the right to refuse it and can do that.

Now, in terms of the changes we also made another change, and this was in regard to: how do we address an issue when someone refuses? The employer investigates, notifies the health and safety committee, does the assessment, and then once they do the assessment, they advise the employee in terms of the assessment, whether it's safe or not, and then the employee can choose to agree or disagree. We laid this out that they have to provide a report. And then at that point in time, if they agree and health and safety and everyone is fine, then that's great. If they disagree, then they can go to an occupational health and safety officer, file a complaint, and they'll come in.

The issue we were trying to address, Madam Chair, by changing the language is that even if the health and safety committee agrees that the issue is addressed, under the previous language there was requirement to still tell another worker coming on to it, even though it's been addressed and everyone agrees that: by the way, there was a previous time that someone had a concern about this. They never called the occupational health and safety officer – right? – but it was addressed. So we changed the language to be clear. And, yes, we added words. I admit that we added words, but we changed the language to be clear, to say that when you get to the point that, you know, there is an agreement that there's not an issue, then you don't

have to inform because the issue is done. It's been addressed. The employer has addressed it. They've given a report to the employee. The health and safety committee is notified. The employee says: we're good. So we're now good. We don't have to raise it anymore. Health and safety has been informed. The committee has been informed as well.

But if they don't agree and it goes to the next step, the occupational health and safety officer, then if the employer wants to bring someone in, they have to tell them that. So what we're doing is that we're addressing this issue of it going on – because there's no timeline on this either under the previous language to address the issue. But the employer cannot put an employee on it until they determine that it's safe, and that's how the process is laid out.

When I take a look at the language being proposed here – and I understand the intent behind it, because you're worried about a gap. You're worried about a gap between the employer determining that it's safe and someone being – but it's still an unsafe condition and there's not an agreement. I can tell you that with the way the language is written, there is no gap because an employer cannot put someone on there until there is a determination that it is safe. And if it's still determined that it's not safe and it's going to the occupational health and safety officer, which is the next step – there's a complaint – then they have to tell. That still is there.

So while I appreciate the sentiment behind this, there is no gap here. The language is clear. For that reason, I would recommend that this is not needed and that we vote it down.

The Chair: Are there any other members wishing to speak to amendment A4?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion on amendment A4 lost]

The Chair: I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

11:50

Ms Gray: Thank you very much. I would like to introduce another amendment, please, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A5. Hon. member, please proceed.

Ms Gray: I move that Bill 47, Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020, be amended in schedule 2 as follows: (a) in the proposed section 8(2) by adding “, prior to commencing work and on an ongoing basis,” immediately after “and any employer, prime contractor, supplier or service provider on a work site is informed”; (b) in the proposed section 10(10) by adding “, prior to commencing work and on an ongoing basis,” immediately after “and any employer, supplier or service provider on a work site is informed”.

This amendment, again, is intended to make sure that it's really clear in the act, when it comes to occupational health and safety, that prior to that right to refuse, now we're talking about the right to know, the right to know about workplace hazards. As it is currently drafted, right now it's not clear that somebody has the right to be informed of hazards prior to entering that work site. It now says that they need to be informed of the hazards, but at what point?

I think that this is a reasonable amendment that simply makes clear, prior to commencing work and on an ongoing basis, that the worker needs to be informed of hazards. Informing someone of hazards after work has started is counter to the point. It's not going to keep them safe.

This is a straightforward amendment that is intended to add clarity. Let's tell workers about hazards before the work starts. I hope all members will be able to support this amendment.

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again I would like to comment. In this amendment what we're seeing is a different approach between the opposition and our rewrite of it. You know, the opposition generally – and don't get me wrong. I fully appreciate that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods is doing this in good faith, but the approach is: "We want more detail. We want to add, and if we can write it in three sentences, let's do that as opposed to one sentence, because that will actually lead to better outcomes." Our approach is actually not that. We want less detail. We want a main statement, and that statement applies without adding "including," without adding qualifiers. That is a main statement that you are responsible for the health and safety of the workers, of your contractors, that that is the level of responsibility.

When we take a look at the changes being suggested here, "prior to commencing work and on an ongoing basis," these are qualifiers, right? But the statement is that there is a right to know, and there is an obligation of the employer or the prime contractor to inform, and that obligation is absolute. From our perspective and in conversation with health and safety experts and with our legal team, that's actually a stronger statement, the absolute statement, than actually adding the qualifiers, because they are responsible for that.

Again, I appreciate that this is a different approach in terms of: how do you get the best outcomes? Given that the obligation is absolute that we are writing in the act and that adding qualifiers adds redundancy and makes the requirement less clear, there is a requirement to inform, and that requirement to inform is "as necessary." For some people showing up who have never seen the site before, you need to inform them before they go into work. If things change, you need to inform them right away. It's about health and safety, and adding in qualifiers actually can take away from that.

Again, while I appreciate the sentiment behind this, our view is that we will actually get better outcomes by making an absolute statement, and for that, Madam Chair, I recommend that we do not support this amendment.

[Motion on amendment A5 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to introduce an amendment.

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A6. Hon. member, please proceed when the crowd quiets down.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not going to wait for that. I'm going to move that Bill 47, Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020, be amended as follows: (a) by striking out "section 3(21)(c)", (b) by striking out "section 3(23)", (c) by striking out "section 3(34)".

This amendment can be characterized, as the minister did, as one of our removal amendments. Essentially, this amendment is saying: don't do that; put on the brakes; reconsider. On the previous amendment I will simply say to the minister: I disagree. Unfortunately, because we only have an hour, because our time to

debate has been limited, we won't be able to go back and forth on each.

For this particular change, what we are doing is trying to fix one of the most heartless changes in Bill 47. In the middle of a pandemic the UCP is stripping two really important requirements out of the workers' compensation for injured workers. The first is the right to have their health benefits covered for the first year following an accident, and the second is the right not to be fired if they are injured and they've made a WCB claim.

Now, let's be really clear. The UCP members like to say that the health benefits provision isn't needed because they will still get health benefits under the WCB benefits. I want to be very clear: these are not the same things. The WCB-covered benefits cover physiotherapy for rehabilitation, yes; specialists and treatment for the injury, absolutely; but prescription glasses to see to drive to your appointments, no, won't be covered; blood pressure medication, no; inhalers to control asthma, no; medication to control chronic conditions other than the injury, no; getting sick and needing antibiotics, no. Your kid's braces: these are things that your health benefits account, your private insurance, helps you cover and manage those expenses.

By removing those health benefits, that obligation for employers to make sure that somebody is kept whole – I mean, when we think about an injured worker, the workers' compensation system is there to help them rehabilitate. Because, through no fault of their own, they have sustained a serious injury, they cannot work; they cannot go out and get another job. That is the state that they are in, and now they will be losing their health benefits because the benefits provided by the WCB are not the same thing. The workers should not be punished and losing those benefits.

Secondly, making sure a worker isn't fired for being injured: the stat that the minister has shared is true; 90 per cent of the time employers are rehiring and it is going smoothly. We need a hundred per cent of the time. The 10 per cent of workers who are fired because they put in a WCB claim: their lives can be ruined. They can lose their homes. It puts a chilling effect on other workers getting the benefits and rehabilitation that they need. This is counter to the system. It doesn't help workers. It doesn't help employers. Employers want the system to be there to support their workers.

Knowing that there are 10 per cent where this doesn't happen smoothly, where workers are not rehired after their injury, the impact that has to the system and the impact that has to individual workers is unacceptable. Making sure that those 10 per cent of employers who are exhibiting that bad behaviour – they should not be awarded. They should not be granted two years until the human rights complaint comes along. The system needs to be able to handle that fairly and quickly because when it doesn't, lives are ruined, and I do not say that flippantly. I have had constituents come to my office when things don't work properly and when people are fired after their claim. I've certainly heard about it from certain bad employers. This Bill 47 is going to make that worse.

I would encourage all members in this House to support amendment A6. Thank you.

The Chair: Any members wishing to speak to amendment A6? The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I appreciate the passion from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, but with these changes that we are making here, which are a key part of the bill and on which we consulted, really what we're addressing is the significant overreach by the previous government in extending benefits and putting in place obligations which were outside of the norm in the country. You know, the members opposite have talked

about them trying to balance and moving to the middle of the pack. This is not the middle of the pack; this is way beyond the front of the pack, right? What we're concerned about and why we're making this change is to ensure that we have fiscal sustainability of our workers' compensation system so that it can be here not only for the core benefits for people that get injured today but those that get injured in the future. In addition, it's also about managing the costs of the system so that we can keep Albertans employed and get Albertans back to work.

12:00

Madam Chair, as you are well aware, one of the key benefits that we have provided during the pandemic is to pay 50 per cent for small and medium-sized businesses of the workers' compensation benefit cost because it is a cost that makes it difficult for them to maintain employment. We wanted to address that. This is a significant cost, and we need to do this to keep Albertans working and get Albertans back to work.

Let's talk about these two issues. Let's talk about the obligation or the duty to reinstate that was put in by the previous government. You know, it's interesting. There is a jurisdiction or two in the country that have duty to reinstate, but that duty to reinstate is qualified. Did they qualify it? No, Madam Chair. They didn't qualify that, right? What we're doing is that we're bringing it into line with B.C., which doesn't have a duty to reinstate. Unlike the Leader of the Official Opposition commented yesterday, even prior to doing business it was north of 90 per cent; 94 per cent of individuals who got hurt got back on the job. That was even before the change was made. After the change was made, there's been no appreciable change in terms of that number.

What did happen, Madam Chair, and what we heard was that there were employers who were small employers who had to reinstate, but they didn't have the job to reinstate to, and that was an issue for them. Actually, the duty to reinstate even went further than the previous duty, which is under the human rights legislation, the duty to accommodate, but the duty to accommodate recognizes that you accommodate up to the point of undue hardship. It recognizes that small employers can only do so much, right?

Are those employees now left in the lurch? No, Madam Chair, they're not. Workers' compensation is an insurance system, so if you cannot be reinstated in your previous job or with your previous employer, then workers' compensation will work with you to try to find a job elsewhere, and there will either be a payout or a top-up associated with that, so they're not being left in the lurch.

We've made a change. We've made a change. We've eliminated the duty to reinstate, but the House needs to know that the duty to accommodate remains, and we've put in place a duty to co-operate. Now, the Leader of the Opposition talked about the duty to co-operate for employees only. Well, we also have put it in place for employers, Madam Chair, because we wanted teeth in workers' compensation so that employers would have to work with them to focus on getting them back to work because that's what workers' compensation is all about. But they need flexibility at a minimum so that we can apply the notion of duty to accommodate so that employers and small employers who may not be able to accommodate in a particular circumstance can be able to do that and not go to the overreach. We're correcting the overreach that was done by the previous government.

That's the first option, the duty to reinstate, and we are removing that. That's a key component. It's rational and it's just, and we need to bring our WCB program back into line with the rest of the country.

Similar with health benefits, right? The previous government instituted a requirement that health benefits – and this is not the

WCB benefits – would need to be in place for a year. Is this done in B.C., Madam Chair? No. Is it done in Saskatchewan? No. Is it done in . . .

The Chair: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt you. It is very hard to hear the minister speaking. I would suggest that for those that would like to have conversations, perhaps outside of the Chamber is the best place to do so.

Hon. minister, please proceed.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Madam Chair. Is this done in Manitoba? No. It's not done anywhere in the west – right? – that this requirement is in place. It's not done in most jurisdictions. The reason that it's not done is because this is outside the realm of WCB. WCB: the purpose there is to provide wage protection if someone gets hurt, and the purpose of that is also to provide benefits to deal with their injury, and those will continue.

We heard, again, that this is an added cost to employers, making it difficult to employ Albertans. We are bringing this back into line, restoring balance for our labour legislation, and that's why we are making this change. It's a core component of what we're doing. We're concerned about the fiscal sustainability of our system. We're concerned about keeping Albertans working and getting Albertans back to work. That is why I am asking the Assembly not to support this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I simply need to say that the government has chosen to remove the duty to reinstate, the obligation to reinstate. The minister acknowledges they could have qualified it. They chose not to do that. The right of recourse will now go to the human rights system when it doesn't work. That's going to be two years rather than it being able to be dealt with within the system.

Secondly, benefits are part of people's wages. The benefits package that your employer pays you – when you talk about WCB and say that it's only for wage replacement, let's please consider that the benefits package that someone gets is often part of what they consider their wages. This is how they survive. This is how they afford the braces for their kids. Even by the minister's own argument I believe that all members should support amendment A6. Workers losing these benefits hurts them, hurts their family, hurts their potential recovery.

They won't have access to additional supports outside of the WCB system at a time when a worker cannot work another job because of an injury that is in many cases due to completely no fault of their own. WCB and that system should be there to support workers.

I encourage all members to support A6.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A6?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion on amendment A6 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main bill. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to introduce an amendment.

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A7.

Hon. member, please proceed.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much. I move that Bill 47, Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020, be amended in schedule 1 by striking out section 3(5) and substituting the following:

(5) A lump sum payment made under subsection (1) is considered a benefit paid under the Worker's Compensation Act, but is not considered a benefit for the purposes of sections 70.1, 71, 72, 73, 76 and 77 of that Act.

This amendment is attempting to introduce some clarity around one of the key pieces that the government wanted to talk about when they introduced Bill 47, and that is the heroes fund. The heroes fund, as described in this legislation, does not address everything that WCB does, and the coverage is ambiguous. The platform commitment was that this would be a top-up to the federal program. It would apply in all cases where the federal \$300,000 program covers, but the federal program covers suicide, and this does not.

In 3(3) it clearly states that coverage is for if a worker dies of an accident, which has the same definition as the Workers' Compensation Act, and, further, that the payment, though it does not come from the accident fund, is deemed to be a benefit paid under the Workers' Compensation Act. This amendment clarifies that the hero death payment is in addition to any further benefits that may be allowable under WCB. It adds in the relevant sections of the WCB that would provide benefits in the event of a death because we know how expensive funeral costs and other challenges can be. We do not want someone accessing the heroes fund to no longer be able to access other death benefits, pension funeral costs under the WCB section 70.1, and some of the other pieces.

This amendment ensures that families will still be able to access existing WCB benefits and that the heroes compensation fund is additional instead of rather than. Without that clarity I think Bill 47 could be interpreted to prevent access to those existing benefits, leading to next of kin actually receiving less compensation than before the bill, and I should qualify, Madam Chair, that I said that "I think," but we've also consulted with legal counsel on this.

This is a clarifying amendment that I believe meets the intention of the government, and I know the heroes who are covered by this fund would appreciate that clarity.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

12:10

The Chair: Any members wishing to speak to amendment A7? The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair. Again, this is another example of another amendment providing more language where it's not needed. Again, this is one of those ones where, you know, had I known – because we had legal counsel weigh in on this one as well. I said: do we need this? The answer we got was: no. Had we been able to chat earlier, we might have been able to get the legal counsels to be able to talk together to do this.

Even as I do a read of the act, you know, the intent behind the heroes fund is in addition to, and that's a separate part of the act. We actually can see this in the bill. When we look at the existing act in terms of the benefits outlined in 70, which is compensation for death; 70.1 is a lump sum death payment; 71 is compensation to child not residing with dependent spouse or dependent adult interdependent partner; 72 deals with additional payments to child; 73 deals with payments to dependents for illness; 76, compensation to other dependents; and 77 deals with funeral and other expenses – when we take a look at that, there is no provision which would suggest that there would be a reduction in any of those. These are two separate articles in the act. As I get it, the legal opinion on this is that the intent, which is the original intent behind this, which is

\$100,000 additional payment: that's how it will be read. I can tell you, that's how we will be applying it.

As a result, again, I appreciate the asking for clarity. The necessity to make the change is not there. We're trying to have less in the act than more, so, again, while I appreciate the intent, our approach here is that it is in addition to. The additional language is not required because it's in both sections of the act, with nothing to take away from it. It's both there. For that reason, I would recommend that we vote this down, not because it's not in addition to but simply because the language is not required to be able to clarify that.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A7?

Seeing none, I will call the question on amendment A7 as moved by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

[Motion on amendment A7 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to introduce an amendment, please.

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A8. Hon. member, please proceed.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I move that Bill 47, Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020, be amended in section 3(21) by striking out clauses (a), (b), (d), and (g). This is another "Don't do it; it's the wrong way to go" amendment. Specifically, this is touching on the earnings cap, putting a cap on eligible earnings that can be compensated for.

When there was a cap in before, it was around the \$90,000 mark. What that meant, how it applied out in the field is that if you have somebody who's working a job, possibly working lots of overtime hours, making \$180,000 a year and perhaps is the sole earner for a family of five, if that person is injured under Bill 47 there will be a cap, a cap on how much the WCB will actually compensate that injured worker for. Now, to be very clear, we are talking about a situation where a worker is no longer able to work because of a workplace injury, because that person got up and went to their job, perhaps in the oil fields, to make \$180,000 a year doing something very difficult, possibly manual labour, possibly skilled labour. Whatever job they were doing, if that worker is injured, they should not be put in a position where they lose their house. That's what having an earnings cap will do and has done to people in the past, because someone who was the single earner for a family of five, used to getting \$180,000 a year, will now get half that while trying to recover from their injury.

The earnings cap is the wrong thing to do. The workers' compensation system is there to support injured workers, and I would entreat all members of this House to support this important amendment. Reinstating the cap on eligible earnings, having that added back in through Bill 47, is the wrong way to go.

I will conclude my comments there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Madam Chair. The member opposite correctly characterized this as being: we just want to get through making amendments that we didn't actually get through in terms of second reading of the bill, because we just don't want you to do it. But that is misguided.

Let's take a look at what is being suggested here. If we go to section 21(a), there's a recommendation that we repeal the rewrite of the section. It was talked about before, which is why I wanted to raise it. This goes to the 90 per cent. Right now under WCB it's statutorily required that a payment be 90 per cent of earnings. That's in there. There was discussion earlier on – this is why I wanted to clarify – that we were actually removing that statutory requirement. We are removing it, but we're removing it because it's redundant. It's in two places in the act. We're removing one of them, which is a section that was added by the previous government. But it's still in the act, the requirement for 90 per cent. So I just wanted to be crystal clear on that because that actually goes to one of the items that are being suggested.

In terms of maximum insurable earnings, which is something different – let's be crystal clear here, Madam Chair, that it's something different – this again is correcting overreach by the previous government. The 2017 panel, their own panel that they established and asked to actually look at some changes, did not suggest going here. It was overreach, and we actually took a look at what's going on across the country. There's only one other jurisdiction that has no cap, and that other jurisdiction is Manitoba. They are actually eliminating that change and reinstating a cap.

The reason for that, Madam Chair, is because it provides a benefit to a very small percentage of the people at a very large cost, and that's a cost that's borne by employers, that increases the cost to employ Albertans, and then therefore you have fewer Albertans employed. So we are reinstating the cap.

Let's talk about the cap. The cap is set at a level, and previously it was set at just under \$100,000. It was \$98,000 and change. It was set at a level, and the easiest way to do it is at the 90th percentile, so the earnings of 90 per cent of workers in Alberta would be captured by that cap. I appreciate that some who earn above that will not have all their earnings compensated, but this is an insurance system. It's an insurance system that is designed to cover the majority of the earnings, so it's set at the 90th percentile – right? – and the benefit that is provided is a substantial cost to the system. That's why there's a cap in every other jurisdiction in the country with the exception of Manitoba, and they're putting theirs back as well.

We are concerned, Madam Chair, about the long-term fiscal sustainability of the program, we're concerned about the cost to employ Albertans, and we are concerned about getting Albertans back to work. For those reasons, I recommend that we do not support this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A8?

[Motion on amendment A8 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to move an amendment.

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A9.
Hon. member, please proceed.

12:20

Ms Gray: I move that Bill 47, Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020, be amended in section 3(14) in the proposed section 24.3 by striking out "10" and substituting "5" wherever it occurs.

Madam Chair, Alberta has never had a problem with reviewing legislation too often. When we embarked on our review of OH and S and WCB, there hadn't been major legislative reviews and consultation followed through with changes in 30 years in one case, in 40 years for a different piece. This change is specifically relating to the review of the provisions and regulations relating to occupational diseases.

Right now Bill 47 says that occupational diseases should only be reviewed every 10 years, and 10 years is an incredibly long time to wait to find out what's happening in the ever-evolving landscape of medical knowledge when it comes to occupational disease. Ten years is a huge amount of time. In 2010 Netflix came to Canada. In 2010 Instagram was launched, the first iPad was released, and a lot has happened since then.

This amendment reduces that time frame from every 10 years down to every five. The information that comes from these reviews is used directly with the compensation and things like presumptive coverage for cancers for firefighters, as an example, or other pieces. Medical knowledge changes and evolves. Scientific knowledge changes and evolves. Every 10 years is too long, especially because the minister has talked repeatedly about using evidence. When he removed presumptive PTSD coverage from all workers, he used evidence. Well, if you're only looking for that evidence every 10 years, that's a long time for people to wait.

If we are truly looking to change outcomes, frequently looking at the data and the evidence should not be a burden. Reviewing this every five years is reasonable. I would mention that this Bill 47 also removes the occupational disease advisory council, so there are a number of changes.

In this case we are simply asking the government to reconsider reviewing every 10 years and dropping that to every five. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any members wishing to speak to amendment A9? The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Madam Chair. The hon. member is correct that we are seeking to change our approach in terms of the review, but it's not necessarily going to be every 10 years. I'd like to point out and read the language.

24.3 The Minister shall ensure that a review of the provisions of this Act and the regulations relating to occupational diseases is conducted within 10 years after the coming into force . . . and within every 10 years after that.

We were very purposeful in terms of the language, that it's within that 10-year period, because we recognize that occupational diseases can change and do change over time. Our experience is, however, that there's often a long lead time in terms of those changes. Our occupational health and safety director can identify diseases and ask them to be reported on by doctors, and that director then reports in to the minister. So if there are changes over time, the minister can adopt them earlier than 10 years.

The reason why we're removing the committee is because with the committee meeting quarterly to look at these types of issues, it's a much longer time frame in terms of identifying the diseases and then addressing those diseases. The recommendation was to do this, at a minimum, within 10 years in terms of the review of the act.

The hon. member was correct that there was a period of time that it went 30 years, and that's just too long. We're going to redo the whole act again within 10 years. The sense is that parties become exhausted doing it every five years. It is a significant piece of change for every 10 years. We lined it up with that, but we also said that it could be within 10 years. But there are long lead times,

Madam Chair, associated with this. Again, I would not recommend that we would actually move down to five; I would keep it at 10.

I'd actually like to take a moment, because we are running out of time on this one, and I'd like to talk on a few of the other items. There were 24 tabled, and we didn't have a chance to get to it. Again, it's unfortunate that this was just shared with us today in that the opposition didn't choose to move from stage 2 into this stage earlier, but I did want to chat on a couple of the other items here. As indicated in my earlier remarks, a number of these changes are eliminating the key changes that we are having in the act, and a number of them are dealing with small, minor changes. For example, three of them are making changes. We want to move the words from "may" back to "shall", right?

Now, one of the reasons why we changed it from "shall" to "may" is to provide flexibility. One example of this, Madam Chair, is in regard to an occupational health and safety officer making a decision on how they want to address an issue in the workplace, right? In terms of their obligations and their powers we see they may do a series of things. Really, the change we're making – and you see this in other places – is to give optionality to the occupational health and safety officer in those particular cases of: what is the best option to fit the circumstance? This is really about ability to focus on outcomes and ensure that the action that they're taking will appropriately match the circumstances and that they have additional flexibility associated with that.

A number of the other ones – we've talked about some of them – are just eliminating some key components of the act. These include the elimination of dealing with the Fair Practices office. This also deals with the Medical Panels Office. Madam Chair, I just needed to comment that, you know, only the previous government would set up three separate offices when one will do the job, and one is doing the job for every other jurisdiction. Now, I appreciate them setting up separate offices because of the independence, but we are addressing that issue by ensuring that the key services being offered by the Fair Practices office continue: the supports for employees, the support for employers. They will continue to be independent because we're moving them over to the Workers' Compensation Board's Appeals Commission, which is an independent body.

The same with the medical panels. We are continuing to use medical panels, but instead of having a large office with the administration, we are going to have the medical panels being run by a single physician that will report into the Workers' Compensation Board's Appeals Commission: again, independent. But this is the benefit you get from that, Madam Chair. When you have one person responsible for the whole process, then they can make changes to the process to streamline it. As the members opposite have indicated previously, it's critically important that we make decisions quickly and that when we make those decisions quickly, we can get resolution so that people don't go on – I think the hon. member mentioned a story; I don't know whether it was Alberta; I think it was actually Saskatchewan – for eight years or something waiting for a decision.

The Chair: Hon. minister, my apologies. I hesitate to interrupt you, but pursuant to Government Motion 57 I shall now put the question.

[Motion on amendment A9 lost]

[The remaining clauses of Bill 47 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Any opposed?

[The voice vote indicated that the request to report Bill 47 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 12:28 a.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

For:

Aheer	Kenney	Rutherford
Allard	Luan	Savage
Copping	Madu	Schulz
Dreeshen	Nally	Schweitzer
Ellis	Neudorf	Toews
Goodridge	Nicolaides	Turton
Hunter	Nixon, Jason	Wilson
Issik	Nixon, Jeremy	

12:30

Against:

Carson	Irwin	Sabir
Feehan	Nielsen	Sweet
Gray	Notley	

Totals: For – 23 Against – 8

[Request to report Bill 47 carried]

The Chair: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we rise and report bills 35 and 47.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Mr. Neudorf: Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bills: Bill 35 and Bill 47. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed, please say no. Carried.

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading (continued)

Bill 35

Tax Statutes (Creating Jobs and Driving Innovation) Amendment Act, 2020

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

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise tonight to move third reading of Bill 35, the Tax Statutes (Creating Jobs and Driving Innovation) Amendment Act, 2020.

This bill includes significant actions Alberta's government is taking to address the historic economic challenges facing our

province. Now more than ever Alberta must work to attract investment. We must ensure that we have a competitive tax environment and business-friendly policies to attract investment, create jobs, and accelerate economic growth. That is exactly what the incentives in this bill will do.

During debate it's been eminently clear the members opposite would want us to raise business taxes on job creators. They call the job-creation tax cut a handout to the wealthiest Albertans. I want to reiterate what I have said time and time again. When a government reduces taxes, it's not a handout. It leaves more money in the hands of job creators. Job creators are not the enemy. They take on risk to do business, hire Albertans, and generate wealth and growth in our province, and the risk that job creators take has never been more apparent than today. Like many Albertans, job creators are struggling, and when they struggle, everyone struggles, a concept the NDP just doesn't seem to understand.

I would like to remind you again, Madam Speaker, that when the members opposite raised corporate income taxes, the result was that the government revenue fell and economic growth stagnated. I could go back over the studies that show corporate taxes are an inefficient method of taxation, the brunt of which falls on workers and their remuneration, but we've done that, and we know it would fall on deaf ears across the aisle. On this side we're proud of Alberta's job creators and the work they do to create prosperity for Albertans, who share in their success.

I could also point to the economic indicators and forecasts from late 2019 and early 2020 that showed our plan was working. Alberta was getting back on track, and for the first time in years business investment was poised to turn the corner and begin rising significantly. But I think we should look at recent news from the Canadian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association that shows that Alberta will break its record for venture capital attraction this year. During the pandemic, oil price crash, and global economic collapse Alberta has attracted more than \$304 million in venture capital over the three quarters of this year, much more than ever before. This, Madam Speaker, is further evidence that our plan is working, and the results reflect that fact.

Last year we looked at Alberta's tax credits and realized that they were not making a meaningful impact. There were only approximately 150 firms that benefited from the previous government's targeted tax credits outside of SRED. Based on historical data, we know the job-creation tax cut will provide incentive to tens of thousands of businesses and create jobs and opportunity, much more opportunity than the tax credits we eliminated.

We've seen first-hand how improving the overall business environment by reducing red tape and lowering corporate taxes drives confidence in investors and businesses, and now the news out of Calgary is a clear sign that business confidence is being restored and our economic policies are working and paying off.

But the work didn't stop with the job-creation tax cut. Our government went back to work, retooling the way support is provided for research and development and reinventing it to complement the job-creation tax cut. That new program is the innovation employment grant, or IEG. It will reward small and medium-sized firms with grants of up to 20 per cent of eligible research and development spending in Alberta, and it will use an incremental approach, that is unique within Canada, rewarding growth. As tech companies grow and reach profitability, they will benefit greatly from our preferred corporate tax rate.

Madam Speaker, the combination of the innovation employment grant and the job-creation tax cut creates a unique incentive for high growth and innovative firms of all sizes to locate their operations and expand in Alberta. I'm excited to see it in action next year, and I know that stakeholders in the community are as well. Let me

remind you that these are just two important parts of our larger plan to restore Alberta's place as the best destination to invest in North America. The plan includes our work to reduce red tape and build on Alberta's recovery plan with specific sector strategies.

Finally, when government brings forward a tax statutes amendment act, it takes the opportunity to address any outstanding technical and housekeeping issues that may exist. This helps ensure that integrity of the tax system is maintained. Bill 35 includes minor technical amendments to ensure the integrity of Alberta's tax legislation. It also proposes amendments to allow Alberta to parallel federal responses to COVID-19 that provided extensions to tax-related deadlines. This ensures that Alberta taxpayers are not faced with the extra burden and red tape due to provincial timelines that are out of sync with their federal counterparts.

12:40

Madam Speaker, we're facing a great challenge as a province, but I'm always amazed at the resiliency of Albertans, and I know the changes in this bill will play a vital role in the recovery and transformation of Alberta's economy.

With that, Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to move third reading of Bill 35.

I adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 47

Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour to rise and move third reading of Bill 47, the Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020.

Madam Speaker, Alberta's government is committed to doing all it can to get Albertans back to work and support our province's economic recovery. For the past few months Alberta has faced a significant drop in oil prices, a collapse in the global economy, and the COVID-19 pandemic. That's why Alberta's government took bold action to launch Alberta's recovery plan. A significant part of that plan is getting Albertans back to work, and in order to do that, our labour laws need to be balanced, sensible, and fair while ensuring and improving workplace safety.

Madam Speaker, that is exactly what Bill 47 will do. It will cut unnecessary red tape for job creators so they can focus on maintaining and growing their businesses and keep providing the good jobs and safe jobs that Albertans need to support their families and our province's economy. Bill 47 will ensure that Albertans work in a healthy and safe environment and that worker rights and protections are in place to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses. In the unfortunate event where a worker does get hurt or suffers a work-related illness, Bill 47 will ensure a sustainable and efficient workers' compensation system, that is there to support them in their recovery and their safe return to work.

In addition, Bill 47 will also create the Alberta heroes fund for first responders to provide extra support to the families of first responders who pay the ultimate price to help keep us safe.

Madam Speaker, Bill 47 will amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to ensure that it is easy to understand and follow for both workers and job creators. It will also incorporate the Radiation Protection Act and its regulations into the OHS Act and its regulations. That means all workplace health and safety laws will be in one place, which will further help workers and job creators understand and follow them.

Speaking of clarity, I want to make it clear that the reporting of potential serious incidents will remain a requirement in this act. Having sensible, easy-to-understand rules will help job creators and workers fulfill their roles and responsibilities for workplace health and safety so that everyone can return home safely at the end of their shifts. Health and safety is a shared responsibility and is the core principle behind Canadian workplace health and safety laws. Alberta's proposed OHS laws will continue to follow this principle without overly prescriptive and confusing rules.

The focus will be on achieving positive health and safety outcomes rather than grappling with confusing rules that may not suit every workplace. Madam Speaker, workers and job creators know best what works best at their individual workplaces in terms of health and safety. We know that all workplaces are unique, so it doesn't make sense to apply a blanket occupational health and safety law or a one-size-fits-all approach to every workplace in Alberta. Bill 47 will address this by giving workers and job creators the flexibility to use innovative approaches to health and safety that suit the unique characteristics and needs of their workplaces.

Madam Speaker, I can't stress enough that workers will continue to have the same rights and protections under our proposed OHS laws. Workers will retain three fundamental rights: they will continue to have the right to know about workplace hazards, they will continue to have the right to participate in health and safety at their workplaces, and they will continue to have the right to refuse dangerous work. Workers will continue to be protected from disciplinary action for exercising these three rights or complying with workplace health and safety laws. Our focus is on improving health and safety outcomes, not checking boxes.

Now, Bill 47 goes further to balance or replace laws and ensure a sustainable and efficient workplace compensation system should a worker get ill or injured on the job. Workers deserve a system that treats them fairly and supports their recovery and safe return to work. In order for this to happen, the system needs to be affordable, sustainable, and as efficient as possible. This means reversing some of the changes made in 2018 that led to rising costs, additional red tape, and put the future sustainability of the system in doubt.

Bill 47's changes will allow the system to meet the needs of workers and job creators now and into the future. Key benefit programs and services will continue into the future while keeping premiums affordable for employers. These programs and services will be delivered as efficiently as possible with minimum red tape.

An affordable and efficient workers' compensation system helps ensure that workplaces remain viable, which is vital to protecting existing jobs and helping to create new ones. Without these jobs, Madam Speaker, there will be no point in having workers' compensation because there will be no workers. It's in everyone's interests to have jobs and to have an effective workers' compensation system when someone gets hurt on the job.

Madam Speaker, finally, Bill 47 will also create the Alberta heroes fund for first responders. I'm especially proud of the heroes fund because it fulfills a promise we made to our first responders and their families. I think everyone in the Assembly appreciates the work of our first responders and the tremendous risks they take every day to keep us and our communities safe. As I've said before in this House, there is no higher form of public service than to risk one's life to maintain public safety. First responders have our backs, and it's only right that we have theirs as well.

The heroes fund will provide a one-time tax-free payment of \$100,000 to families of first responders who die as a result of performing their duties. As I've also said before, I wish a fund like this was not necessary and that all first responders could come home safely at the end of their shifts. While I know that the payment

cannot bring back their loved ones, it will ease the financial burdens for families of fallen first responders.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to move third reading of Bill 47. I encourage all members to support Bill 47 and continue our government's work to bring balance, fairness, and common sense to our labour laws. Doing so will help get Albertans back to work, improve health and safety outcomes, ensure our workplaces thrive, and contribute to Alberta's recovery plan.

Thank you. With that, I would like to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Motions

(continued)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Time Allocation on Bill 35

54. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 35, Tax Statutes (Creating Jobs and Driving Innovation) Amendment Act, 2020, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in third reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will refer you to my earlier comments in *Hansard* on the same motion for the previous stage of this piece of legislation.

The Deputy Speaker: The Official Opposition has up to five minutes to respond. The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think it's not surprising that the government is doing everything in the dead of the night, in the middle of a pandemic to ram through its \$4.7 billion failed corporate handout, that has not created a single job, that didn't bring ... [interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Hon. members, I'm having a hard time hearing the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Hon. member, please proceed.

Mr. Sabir: It didn't create any jobs, and it didn't bring any investment back to the province. Instead, we saw job losses everywhere. We saw job losses in Calgary. We are still facing a 30 per cent vacancy rate in Calgary towers just because of this government's policies, and one of those policies is giving \$4.7 billion to the wealthiest in this province.

A result of this policy is that we are facing cuts in education. We are facing cuts in social services and in every other thing that matters to our communities. I know that the government is hell-bent on pursuing and pushing this \$4.7 billion handout ahead, but I am urging the private members of this House that we are all here to represent our constituents. Stand up for your constituents.

12:50

This is a bad policy. It didn't create jobs. It didn't bring investment back. It will result in cuts to education, cuts to health care, cuts to other social services. This motion, which limits debate on this to one hour – they're handing out \$4.7 billion, and I guess they're curtailing the debate to just one hour, one hour to decide that we will throw out \$4.7 billion to the wealthiest in this province and make every other Albertan pay for it. I urge all members of this House: vote against this motion. The job of the Legislature is not to

rubber-stamp government bills. The job of the Legislature, the job of MLAs is to stand up for their constituents, to stand up for this province, and I think this is their last opportunity to stand up on this terrible policy.

Thank you.

[Government Motion 54 carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Time Allocation on Bill 47

58. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 47, Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in third reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will refer you again to the same comments in regard to the similar motion, that will already be within *Hansard* for this bill, at the Committee of the Whole stage.

The Deputy Speaker: The Official Opposition has up to five minutes to respond. The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. At a time when we are going through a global pandemic that has cost 600-plus lives in Alberta, when thousands are being infected, we are putting forward a bill that will attack those who are serving on the front line of this pandemic. It's not a laughing matter. Those people who are working in hospitals, whether they are working in schools, whether they are working in grocery stores, whether they are in the cab industry, whether they are driving transit: all those workers' rights are at stake with this bill. Even in the Committee of the Whole during the debate the government didn't let opposition even introduce all their amendments. I think it's deeply troubling that instead of supporting those workers, the government will pass this piece of legislation, try to push this piece of legislation in the dead of the night, and attack those very workers who are on the front lines of this pandemic, who are keeping these things going.

Again, I am urging all my colleagues in this House: vote against this motion, vote for these front-line heroes, vote for workers' rights, and vote for more supports for them. If you vote in favour of this motion, that means that you're voting against those workers. Please don't. Stand up for your constituents, stand up for Albertans, and stand up for these workers. It's an undemocratic, heavy-handed motion that will curtail debate on this important piece of legislation.

[Government Motion 58 carried]

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 35

Tax Statutes (Creating Jobs and Driving Innovation) Amendment Act, 2020

(continued)

The Deputy Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to address this House. I don't always get that opportunity. Sometimes various tricks and manoeuvres are made to prevent me from having an opportunity to speak to things in the House, but today I think

it's important that I stand up and speak to this atrocious Bill 35, presented by who is, quite arguably, the worst Finance minister the province of Alberta has ever seen. And while you might think that there's some rhetoric in what I'm saying, I want to point out that it was the Finance minister himself who has essentially set the bar by which he would be measured. He did it just moments ago in this House. And using his own measure, he is indeed the worst Finance minister.

I can tell you that the measure that he used was typified by his statement that when the corporate tax rate was increased under the previous government, the actual revenues dropped, and what he did in making that statement yet again, having made that statement many, many times in this House, is that he's demonstrated a complete failure to understand the basic level of statistics that I teach my students in their very first year of social work school, the difference between correlation and causality, in that if two things happen to occur at the same time, it doesn't mean that one has caused the other. But, of course, this minister stood up in this House repeatedly to make that indication, that the increase of corporate tax rates resulted in a decrease in revenues to the province, which is a complete falsehood, statistically speaking. What I would say in academia is that he's essentially fudging the data, and he's misinterpreting the data.

But he's set the standard now. He said that it's okay to say that if two things happen at the same time, they can be used as judgment, so we can do that for him. We can take a look at a little bit of what's happened since he's become the Minister of Finance in this province, and I can tell you that it's been a complete disaster. All the measures of whether an economy is doing well or not have sunk to all-time lows, some of them to the lowest levels in the last 50 and even almost in the history of the province of Alberta, barring, of course, the Great Depression. But, you know, I guess, here we are under a UCP government, and one might say that we have re-entered the Great Depression again.

I think, just using the measure that the minister himself has used, that, you know, if you see numbers change while the government is in office, instead of actually looking at the underlying factors and causal implications of a variety of factors that may have an influence on things, you get to just say that the government is bad because those numbers have changed. So I will use the minister's standard and tell you that this government is bad. We know by their standard, by the measure that's actually been given to this House by this minister, that he is the worst Minister of Finance that we've had in many years because we have seen record levels of unemployment, and we have seen record numbers of jobs lost. We are still down some 170,000 jobs from where we were in 2019, the fall of 2019. [interjections] So using his...

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

The Deputy Speaker: My apologies, hon. member.

If the hon. Member for Calgary-Klein would like to speak, I would suggest that he wait his turn and be called on by the Speaker for that opportunity. However, I will reiterate to all members of this House who would like to have conversation that the lounge outside either one of these doors is available for your pleasure.

I will ask the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford to continue with his remarks.

Debate Continued

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's always difficult to hear the truth. I know that mumbling over truth telling is often used by people when they don't happen to have their earplugs available.

But going back to what I was saying, we certainly can say that this bill is one put forward in a long litany of failures by this government to understand basic economics. Their belief in this

ideological fantasy, generally referred to in the public as trickle-down economics, is one that's held firmly by this government, and, you know, its ridiculousness is only surpassed by the shocking degree to which this government adheres to it.

1:00

This government really has demonstrated that they've completely failed to learn from the experiences of trickle-down economics that have happened in the rest of the world and have completely failed to learn from their own record on this. We know that the reduction of corporate taxes has not overall around the world had a positive effect on the economy. We know that there are particular examples of states that have really gone full force into this trickle-down economics belief system and have demonstrably failed in the attempt to improve the economy. A famous one that I think almost everyone in the House and probably most of those people listening would know about is the state of Kansas, who did pretty much exactly what this government is doing. In the years between 2013 and 2016, after they instituted all of these regressive, backwards-thinking economic policies, they averaged a less than 1 per cent growth rate at a time when comparable states were averaging somewhere just over a 3 per cent growth rate.

[The Speaker in the chair]

We know from a variety of other studies that this is what is to be expected. In fact, when this bill was originally introduced into the House, I took some time to do a bit of research, as I often do in my academic kind of way, and went to the American Congressional Budget Office to see what they had to say about the reduction of corporate income tax. I went there because, you know, whenever we bring information, factual information, into the House, it's dismissed by this government as somehow leftist propaganda, an easy way not to hear other people and keep your fingers in your ears, but they certainly cannot refer to the American Congressional Budget Office as being leftist in any way whatsoever. In Canada we would hardly put it anywhere even toward the middle of the spectrum. It's considered pretty right wing by most of the world.

Yet when I read their assessment and analysis of corporate tax reductions, they clearly say – and I did read parts of that out when it was first introduced in the House, so I won't bother to repeat it for *Hansard* again tonight – that these kinds of deductions do not have the economic outcome that the government pretends they will have and that the government keeps repeating to the people in the community. What they do say is that corporations tend to take the dollars to shore up their own bankrolls, primarily in two different ways. One of them is to buy back their own stocks, which there may be some economic argument for. We're simply saying that as a provincial entity, then, we're going to pay major international corporations to be better off, which seems to be shovelling money from your average Albertan into major international corporations, which I think is a pretty horrendous philosophical position to come from.

The other thing that they mention is that corporations tend to use that money to pay executives excessive bonuses, which has become a major problem around North America, where we find corporations in the position, while they're laying off people in places like Alberta, of providing excessive bonuses, ridiculous bonuses, to members of their executive staff. That's what the Congressional Budget Office has to say about this policy that is being put forward by this government.

I just want to remind people that the evidence is there. You can do the research. You can go to the library. You can look up all the evidence on these kinds of tax cuts, and it consistently tells you that they do not achieve the outcomes that this minister says. Not only

does the government not learn from these international experiences and the thousands of hours of research by experts in the field who have come to this conclusion, but they also don't learn from their own experience. Shortly after they instituted all these policies, what happened in the province of Alberta? We lost 50,000 jobs, unemployment continued to go up significantly afterwards, and their deficit continued to rise dramatically.

Using the standard that has been set by the minister here in this House within the last hour, we can use correlation to describe his behaviour. We can simply say that he is the Minister of Failure. He is the minister who has brought Alberta to some of the lowest standards that we have seen in terms of employment levels and in terms of business success and in terms of business vacancies in downtown Calgary. All of that is on this minister given his own standard.

I wish they would learn either from other people's experience or from their own experience, but what we've learned about this government is that they absolutely have a failure to read what is going on around them and to pivot from their extreme right-wing ideology, which has been demonstrated to be false ideology in many places throughout the world. I'm very discouraged that this bill is here in front of this House, that it is advancing this \$4.7 billion advance into the hands of largely foreign-funded corporations. We've seen already what happens when they do that. We literally have the example in this province of a corporation taking that money and using that money to leave the province and to move their headquarters out of the province and to lay off significant numbers of Albertans while they're doing it with our money. That's what you paid for.

You know, really it, to me, seems reprehensible that a government would not learn either from others' experience or their own experiences. What they fail to do is that they fail to understand the complexity of an economy. They only see businesses having a role in the economy. They don't understand that anybody who spends time assessing an economy from an abstract level instead of from a very simplistic kind of level will tell you that while businesses are indeed job creators, they are only part of a larger set of people who are required to ensure that jobs do get created. Businesses certainly are one of the four that have been demonstrated to create jobs, but they also must remember that the other three are the employees of every business, the customers of every business, and the government and society that sets the structures within which that business will succeed.

All of those have been demonstrated by economists over the years. All of them are essential, and any competent government would find a way to work to support all four of those in order to create the circumstances for success, but this government only sees one arm. So what we have now is a government sitting on a one-legged stool and trying to keep balance, which of course they're not, which, of course, is resulting in extreme unemployment, which is resulting in the highest level of debt this province has ever seen, the highest level of deficit this province has ever seen, and complete failure all around.

Now, if this government were actually to care about the actual outcome of making sure that people had jobs, what would they be doing? They'd be investing in diversity. Instead, what we have is a minister who says that diversity is a luxury for sometime in the future and then subsequently goes on to cut a number of grants that were actually working to help create the modern economy that Alberta is becoming, whether this government likes it or not. For example, they cut the scientific research and experimental development credit, they cut the interactive digital media tax credit, they cut the Alberta investor tax credit, and they cut the Alberta capital investment tax credit. All of these were being done to actually diversify the economy.

The incredible amount of work that was done to help move Alberta into renewable energy in this province under the previous government was all thrown out the door in spite of the fact that evidence is that renewable energy is actually now the cheapest form of energy available in the world. These numbers come out repeatedly from internationally respected bodies who have done the hard work, who understand statistics and don't depend on silly correlational thoughts but instead have done the number crunching, have demonstrated that the economies of the future are going to require the input of all sectors of the economy. Simply adopting one of those is going to create failure, and it's all done for ideology. It's not done because they actually care about the jobs in the end. If they did, they would do the complex work of making sure that we had the supports necessary for businesses to be successful.

1:10

Today, after – I don't know – at least eight months of people asking them, they finally provided some support for small businesses in this COVID time. Eight months it took them to learn that lesson. That's absolutely incredible, but they also need to understand that none of those businesses will be successful unless their employees are successful, and their employees require a number of things to be successful. They require jobs that will allow them to pay their mortgages, that will allow them to live a full life as a full participant in the province of Alberta, not a part-time job that is precarious and has no benefits and makes it impossible to have stability in your own personal life. If your employees do not have stability in their financial life, they're not going to be very good employees.

What has this government done for employees? Well, we've just been hearing everything that they're doing to take stability and support away from the average worker in this province in Bill 47. They're literally attacking one of the legs of their chair, but not only that. They've been attacking consumers and they've been attacking the role of government in all of this as well.

If we are going to have successful businesses, we need to have the circumstances under which businesses are successful, and businesses need a population that has the income to buy the product. If we don't support consumers, then we are not going to be able to keep businesses alive. What has this government done? They have continuously attacked consumers in every way possible. They've taken rate caps off electricity. They've taken caps off insurance. They have increased prices for consumers in dozens – literally dozens – of ways. What we have now is the second leg of this four-legged stool being attacked.

The final one, of course, is the part that is done by government. Again, when this bill was originally introduced, I went through a little history of how the oil field was successfully built in this province because of government intervention. If Premier Lougheed and the government of the day had not invested in all of the research through places like the University of Alberta and so on, if they had not directly invested by buying some 10 per cent of Suncor when they first began to do the exploration, then we would never have been able to get into the oil sands and to develop them in the way that we have over the years.

Without government there is very little we can be sure of in terms of business growth. Businesses are very good about doing things that are happening right now, but the new things that come along are almost always supported by government. If we look at what the businesses are that are growing and are most successful right now, like Amazon and Google, what do they all depend on? They depend on the Internet. Who invented the Internet? The governments invented the Internet. They did it by funding universities. They did

it by funding groups like the American military to develop the Internet.

None of them would have been able to do their work unless direct dollars had flowed from governments around the world into those institutions who built that, so now when you pick up the phone and you call for a car service or you call for a food delivery or you call for a Christmas package to be sent to your relatives far away, you are actually benefiting from government investment. That's where it came from. No business created the Internet. That was done explicitly by the decision of government to put dollars into a new way of being in the world, so if we want to become the economy of the future, we have to start thinking that way. We have to start thinking about how we invest.

I just happened to be reading a blog put out by Bill Gates from Microsoft, who expressed this exact idea, that the role of government is to invest and to take risk. Bill Gates, one of the richest persons in the world right now and who at one time, I'm sure, was the richest person in the world, was identifying on his blog that we need government to invest because businesses can't always take the risk.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, before the Assembly is third reading of Bill 35, the Tax Statutes (Creating Jobs and Driving Innovation) Amendment Act, 2020. Is there anyone else wishing to join in the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore has the call.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity at this late hour to get some final thoughts in on Bill 35, Tax Statutes (Creating Jobs and Driving Innovation) Amendment Act, 2020. Still waiting for the creating jobs and driving innovation part, but I guess we'll have to stay tuned.

I do want to thank the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford for his comments. I think he was very, very succinct in talking about the role of government, the economy, and whatnot.

I was rather interested in the opening comments at third reading here by the Finance minister. The funny thing is that when he talks about giving the big corporate tax cut as, you know, one of the key pillars to allowing businesses to create jobs, the problem is that history is not on his side. When you go back over the last eight or nine decades and you look at every time there was a big call for a corporate tax cut, all in the name of helping to create jobs, as that tax line went down, the funny thing is that the job line followed it down very shortly afterwards. It trends that way over the last eight or nine decades.

So here we are. We have the government that came in, and business knew way ahead of time. They said, you know, pre-election, during the election: if we're elected, we are going to drop the corporate tax rate. They knew that that would be coming, yet we still had a case – before the pandemic was upon us, we lost 50,000 jobs. It was supposed to be 50,000 jobs created, and it was the opposite. We saw a doubling of the deficit. I'm always hearing this rhetoric about, apparently, the place that the previous NDP government left us. Well, how, then, did we manage to double the deficit that we had predicted in the budget leading up to the election in 2019?

Then on top of all of that, the economy shrank by over half a per cent. This was not what was supposed to happen, because the corporate tax break was going to be coming in. Businesses were supposed to be coming here. The Premier said that they would be irresponsible to not take advantage of this, yet we saw a large corporation leave. The other larger ones paid their shareholders, bought back stocks. I believe that is one of the suggestions that the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford brought up. There was no

indication that they took that money and created those jobs. Oh, there was investment, all right, from those companies, investment outside of the Alberta jurisdiction.

You know, here we have another two years to add to the long line of eight or nine decades where we're claiming that a corporate tax break is going to trickle down. We've heard about all these businesses, apparently, that the Finance minister said are going to be taking advantage of that: maybe Walmart although I don't see them paying their employees any extra because of that corporate tax break. I don't see some of the other really large employers in my riding of Edmonton-Decore rushing to the front of the line to pay some of their workers a top-up pay for trying to get through this pandemic.

1:20

So what is going on? Where is this money going? It certainly isn't going to the hard-working people of Alberta. I talked to my small businesses. The corporate tax break doesn't affect them. They're not big enough. Now, as was mentioned earlier, at the very least they're going to have an opportunity to try and access some funds to try and get through this latest round of restrictions that, of course, we didn't need to get here had there been some leadership demonstrated by this government. [interjection] But at least they're there. I know the Government House Leader thinks this is very boring, but businesses in my riding of Edmonton-Decore don't seem to think so. The businesses in my riding want some bloody help from this government.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support Bill 35. It is fundamentally flawed. We've seen the track record of this fail miserably. Unfortunately, the government can no longer point at the previous NDP Finance minister as the worst one because they have the worst one now sitting just to the right of them.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or a comment.

Seeing none, are there others wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has risen.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to bring a fresh horse to the race here this morning and add my comments to Bill 35 and make my journey back to this Legislature worth while. Hopefully, I spark a little bit of a new element in the debate this morning as we round the turn in the session that has been marked by a serious lack of new ideas, and it has been obviously marked by a response by this government to a pandemic that has been less than welcomed by Albertans in the province.

Bill 35, which is under debate right now, Mr. Speaker, the Tax Statutes (Creating Jobs and Driving Innovation) Amendment Act, 2020, was brought in in the hopes that it would be a means of promoting economic rejuvenation. It was full of energy and hope that by accelerating the corporate tax cut, by doubling down on that, jobs would be created. Yet what it did was certainly the opposite. It basically demonstrated the failure of the initial gesture; 50,000 jobs were lost. The deficit was doubled. The economy shrank. This was all pre-pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, doing things that you know, probably from the past, are not going to work yet expecting a new result is emblematic of an individual by the name of Don, that we've heard of before in history. Not that Don. I speak of Don Quixote. A new Don but an old Don. Of course, it's been a while since I've read that famous piece of literature, so I've been revisiting it. I know that the famous quote is that Don Quixote was tilting at windmills passing. The theme, of course, is that the individual, Don Quixote, the man from La Mancha: his behaviour led him to forswear the chivalric novels

that he read so voraciously, and ultimately he ends up dying from a fever and forswears all the chivalric truths he followed so fervently. I'm wondering if the lessons of Don Quixote will be lost on this government, if indeed when they look in the rear-view mirror, which is seemingly what instrument of the vehicle they've been looking at for the last year and a half in order to keep the rubber on the road, they realize that the path that they've been on has been a worn-out trail for a long time.

I note that the UCP government, Mr. Speaker, chased away investment in this province. They cut scientific research and the experimental development credit in the portfolio that I have as my critic portfolio, Agriculture and Forestry. They emasculated scientific research, cut 250 or so positions from within the ministry, basically eliminating the scientific capacity within that ministry. Now with Bill 35 the minister has cut the interactive digital media tax credit, cut the Alberta investor tax credit, the Alberta capital investment tax credit, and the results are clear. The tech firms pulled out of Alberta. Jobs were lost. The economy shrank. Once again, down the wrong path, down a beaten path that we've seen before and with what we on this side of the House can see as an anticipated result, something we warned about, yet indeed that was to no avail.

The government decided to push on with their accelerated tax cut, even admonishing companies for perhaps being irresponsible if they didn't move to Alberta as a result of these tax cuts. Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to see the wisdom of that admonishment, but it's a type of attitude that we've seen demonstrated by this government time and again, whether they be talking to Canadians across the country, whether they be talking to industry leaders throughout Canada or even internationally, whether they be speaking to Albertans from different regions across the country. We're looking at basically hearing these government members and this Premier admonish any individual who might dare to oppose their proposed fixes to the economy.

There are those that are targeted also, Mr. Speaker, by this government, and those individuals are many. There are groups I could list for days who have been hurt by this government, and I think in particular of public servants right now. We have mentioned many times in this House about how there could be help available to individuals such as our front-line workers in this province, who are wondering why this government has left \$300 million on the table in matching money that could be made available and put into pockets of front-line workers right now to spend in this economy, where it's desperately needed, with businesses that have been shut down once again unnecessarily, had the government taken steps to address the pandemic earlier by making sure that we didn't get to this infection rate that we're at.

That \$300 million is sitting on the table because this government – for what reason, I don't know – refuses to match the 25 per cent in dollars, \$100 million from Alberta, \$300 million from Ottawa. That money would flow, and it would be the top-up funds to front-line workers, which is money that is owed to these front-line workers.

1:30

I don't know if it's an ideological blockage that they've got. I don't know if it's some desire to teach the federal government a lesson by not taking the money that's offered. I don't know if it's something whereby they want to publicly penalize public servants, those very public servants, Mr. Speaker, who are working right now in our hospitals and in our long-term care facilities, where the worst of the pandemic is brutally facing them every day. Yet the response from this government is to say: "Hey, you know, take another hit. This is how we respect you. We're going to keep in the federal kitty \$300 million that otherwise would be in your pocket."

Of course, from their pockets it would be generating economic activity within this province right away because, believe me, Mr. Speaker, those individuals are behind the eight ball, like a lot of folks in this province, and they're going to be spending that money locally. Three hundred million dollars is a lot of money that is sitting in Ottawa, available for us to bring home to Alberta by simply matching 25-cent dollars to those 300 million dollars and putting them in the pockets of front-line workers, who deserve them, who deserve those dollars, who are entitled to them, and for some reason this government decides they're not worthy of it or are ideologically opposed to putting it in the pockets of front-line workers, perhaps because they are so ideologically opposed to union and public-sector workers.

Now, the money flows real fast and furious, Mr. Speaker, as we show in Bill 35: \$4.7 billion in tax cuts but also an accelerated time frame on that reduction of the corporate tax rate. Money flows fast and furious when it's going into the pockets of very profitable corporations, yet \$300 million for front-line workers, our brothers and sisters, our neighbours, our aunts and uncles and cousins – our fellow Albertans are sitting there with empty pockets and mortgages that are in arrears because this government fails to basically open the purse strings and match dollars that the federal government is willing to allow to flow. It makes no sense.

These are the kinds of things that Albertans are totally upset about right now with this government. There are a whole raft of things, but it seems as though, just like Don Quixote, this government really is looking in the rear-view mirror and doesn't get what's really going on presently in this province. It's unnecessary. The government members are fond of looking back and saying: oh, goodness, you should have listened to us, and you might still be the government. Well, I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker. Albertans are telling this government precisely that: you'd better be listening to us, or you won't be the government.

That is something that any government in power fails to listen to at their peril. Far be it from me to instruct the political leadership of the UCP, but I dearly would love it if indeed the leadership would actually fine-tune their listening devices and take the earplugs out of their ears and find in their hearts a way to determine their policy by listening to the demands of the most basic pleas from Albertans; that is, focus your attention here in the province on getting rid of this pandemic and not focusing yourself on, you know, corporate tax breaks that have been proven to be futile.

The measures that have been taken recently by this government have been something that the province right across the board has been begging for, demanding, warning about for weeks and weeks, yet we get to a point, Mr. Speaker, where now our back is against the wall. It's going to be weeks and even months yet before we can see a reduction in the infection rate. Measures like Bill 35's corporate tax rate acceleration had this government's focus rather than the actual requirement, the number one function, the number one responsibility of government, to focus on the health and safety of the individual Albertans that they were elected to serve.

That, Mr. Speaker, is your most fundamental responsibility, and I'm wondering how indeed this government forgot that. They prefer to talk about balance, yet it's an equation that is a fraudulent trade-off. In fact, it's, I would suggest, a moral question as well, where you're looking at doing such things as a corporate tax cut in the middle of a pandemic, when you are seeing the necessity of bringing forward measures that will perhaps temporarily hurt the economy but will in the long term ensure that your population is healthy.

As has been demonstrated in other parts of the world, Mr. Speaker, those are the things that are going to get us through this frightful pandemic, that is a global phenomenon, and these are

lessons that the government has failed to learn from those who have been successful globally. There have been resurgences in other places in the world, and we've failed to learn the lessons that have been implemented in other places, where they realized that the health of the economy relied upon a healthy population and that that population needed to limit severely its interactions with each other to limit the spread of the virus. That was what was done, and we saw the success of countries like New Zealand and Australia, where they had tighter restrictions, and now they're reaping the rewards of those restrictions. We failed to learn those lessons. We looked at trying to make this so-called balance between the economy and health, and certainly the decisions that were made were wrong in so many ways. The Albertan people are demonstrating that they don't like what they see.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have to respond to a few of the thoughts that we've heard from the members opposite. I won't have time to deal with all of them. What runs deep and consistent is the great dislike for job creators. It comes across in their tone in every sentence, every statement.

The statement that tax cuts are immoral: we could spend an evening on that, Mr. Speaker. What I find immoral is reaching into taxpayer pockets and spending other people's money irresponsibly, and the members opposite were masters at that discipline. That is why they fundamentally are repulsed by the fact that we are actually lowering taxes. It's not a handout. We're simply taking less of somebody else's hard-earned money, capital that was invested, where great effort was put forward, where great innovation was employed, and where a return was made, a return that employs hundreds of thousands of Albertans across the province, creates wealth for our health care system, for our education system, to pay our great public servants, that deliver to Albertans every day.

Mr. Speaker, I want to correct a myth, a myth that has circulated for far too long, this talk of billions of dollars of giveaway. Nothing could be further from the truth. I do not sign a cheque to corporations. We simply tax them less. It is their money, not ours. My department has estimated that our reduction in revenue will be approximately \$250 million a year, nothing remotely close to the numbers the members opposite irresponsibly put out.

1:40

Mr. Speaker, \$250 million a year is \$100 million less than the support we provided for small and medium-sized businesses with their Workers' Compensation Board premium relief, and since then we've supported Albertans and small businesses to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars during this year in COVID relief. The \$250 million less that we will collect as a result of the job-creation tax cut pales in response to so many of our other programs.

I heard from a member opposite that, you know, taxes are only one part of it, and the member opposite was right. On that statement, Mr. Speaker, I will agree. That is why the job-creation tax cut is one measure of many to ensure we have the most competitive business environment. That's why my colleague the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction has brought forward a bill, a bill that was passed in this House tonight. That is why every day of the week, every week of the month, every month of the year that minister works with other ministries to reduce red tape and regulatory burden, regulatory burden that the members opposite piled on and piled on.

We hear that tech firms pulled out of this province, yet the facts are this: we are at a record year for venture capital investment in the

province of Alberta. We hear that our job-creation tax cut only benefits the large, evil corporations. Mr. Speaker, 75 per cent of the businesses that benefit from the job-creation tax cut file as small businesses under CRA rules. These are entrepreneurs that have worked 16 hours a day, that have worked seven days a week. They've worked as a family, they've risked it all, and they built a business. They've employed their neighbours and Albertans in their communities. They've generated wealth not only for their employees but for the province as a whole. And the members opposite would want us to tax them more.

Mr. Speaker, we hear about diversity. We hear about their attack on balance sheets. I could go on, but I'm out of time. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Are there other members wishing to speak to Bill 35? The hon. Opposition House Leader has the call.

Ms Sweet: Oh, Mr. Speaker, I can't let this go now, now that the minister has stood up and proposed his view on the bill, because I feel like I need to counter some of his arguments in this debate this evening. You know, what I've really appreciated, actually, just before I get into that, was the respect that was between the minister of labour and our critic when they were going back and forth on amendments and how that respectful debate is nice . . .

Mr. Jason Nixon: The Minister of Finance respected you. He agreed with one of their statements.

Ms Sweet: . . . but I see that the Government House Leader struggles with giving me the same respect.

In saying that, on Bill 35, the hon. minister just stood up and talked about corporate taxes and how this is about decreasing the burden on job creators so that, you know, there can be more revenue in the treasury so that we can look at spending money on things like health care and education and personal things and how the opposition doesn't understand that this is Alberta's money and Albertans' money and that what we need to worry about is Albertans paying for that. Well, let's start there.

Over this session so far what we have seen is that personal income taxes have gone up because of the indexing being removed on personal income taxes for Albertans. What we have seen are insurance rates going up for average Albertans because of the insurance cap that has been taken off by this government during this session. What we have seen are toll bridges and the idea of toll bridges being implemented on new infrastructure in this province. What we know about toll bridges is that corporations get to write off all of the fees that they are going to have to pay to go across tolls. What does that mean? Just like the Government House Leader indicated, that is a tax on Albertans.

I appreciate that the Minister of Finance will stand up and say that this is a good thing and, you know, bringing down the cost for Albertans and how the corporate taxes are going to create jobs and that therefore it's going to make it better for Albertans. Well, I haven't seen a single thing done in any of these pieces of legislation that actually brings the costs down for the average Albertan.

Again, the priorities are very clear and very different. The government side: corporations. Everything is about corporations. Everything is about capitalism. On this side we care about Albertans. We care about the people. We want to make sure that life is more affordable for Albertans. What does that mean? We wouldn't have increased and taken off the index for personal income taxes. We put an insurance rate cap on. We wouldn't be implementing tolls so that Albertans have to pay to drive on their own roads and then ignore the secondary roads and, of course, also have surveillance because their vehicles will have their pictures

taken on those tolls. We wouldn't be looking at the fact that every single one of these things is giving corporations the ability to write off all of these costs on the backs of Albertans having to pay for it.

Although I appreciate the minister standing and saying that this is Albertans' money, you're absolutely right. Corporate taxes get invested into the treasury. The reality of it is that what has happened is that the corporate taxes that should be invested into the treasury, that are no longer going to be invested in the treasury, have now been downloaded onto the average Albertan to have to pay, so tolls, personal income tax, insurance rates, all of the other things that we have seen this government do that have made life more expensive. AISH has been cut, has been capped out. We are seeing changes to WCB. We are changing the fact that we are looking at PDD and whether or not people are going to be eligible for those supports.

Mr. Dach: Rural policing.

Ms Sweet: Rural policing. That's a great one. Rural policing will now be downloaded onto municipalities. What does that mean? The cost of property taxes are going to go up. There are a variety of things that have happened in this session.

Oh, and lets, you know, not forget that I'm sure the Minister of Environment and Parks will probably be looking at some way to make sure that people have to pay. Oh, wait. If you want to cross-country ski now, you have to pay a fee. There are many fees that every single minister in this Chamber has done. I'm sure I could go through the list and find out what they have charged Albertans for their jobs.

The reality of it is that although the government will like to say that we have a problem with corporations, it's not about corporations. It's about priorities, and the problem with the priorities of this government is downloading the costs onto Albertans or helping corporations not have to pay their taxes at the expense of Albertans.

Every single thing has gone up for the average Albertan. Property taxes, personal income taxes, insurance rates, toll bridges, one of the most favourite things that I really can't wait to keep talking about: those things are costing the average Albertans. Paying for cross-country skiing, not having police services – I don't know. Review after review after review on many other things. The reality of it is that that's what this bill is about. It is about a difference between how we approach things.

The government is all about corporations and giving corporations the ability to not have to pay their taxes, and our side is saying: that is not okay, because what is happening is all of that revenue that is not going into the treasury will have to be found somewhere else. So what this government has done is increased the cost of living for every single Albertan in this province. That is the fundamental difference. That is why we don't support this bill, and that is why I encourage all of my colleagues not to support third reading.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. the Government House Leader has risen.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do realize that we are in a time allocation situation. I don't want to take away too much time from the Official Opposition, who have finally started to get to work on legislation in the House, which is excellent.

I do want to, quickly, though, respond to the Opposition House Leader's comments. I think the Finance minister did a great job earlier of the broader issues in regard to the bill, but that hon. member, Mr. Speaker, was a senior member of the former government who brought in the largest tax increase in the history of the province with the carbon tax, brought a tax in that was a tax on absolutely everything, from the carrots that you buy in the grocery

store – they never really actually understood this. That’s because carrots got to the grocery store by trucks, which took gas, and they put a tax onto that.

Mr. Speaker, they taxed Albertans. That is absolutely their legacy. I see they’re very upset about it. They’re very upset about it getting pointed out that the course that they ran – they did not run, I should say, on bringing in a carbon tax, but they did bring in the carbon tax.

1:50

You know, at the point that that happened, Mr. Speaker, when Albertans raised concerns about that, the Official Opposition leader called them, when she was then Premier, Chicken Little, told Albertans to take a bus, told my constituents and your constituents to take a bus if they had a problem because of the carbon tax, called Albertans embarrassing cousins. The list goes on. [interjection] Oh, yeah, you’re right. I didn’t want to spend too much time on this, but the government whip pointed it out. They told Albertans – maybe these are the corporations that they’re talking about – that were struggling to find jobs in this province that they should maybe move to B.C. for the time being, while they were there.

Lecturing the hon. the Finance minister on bringing in measures to help job creators inside this province, Mr. Speaker, and to take less money from them, as he articulated very well, and then not being able to accept the fact that they brought in a carbon tax that made life more expensive for all Albertans. It’s shameful what happened there.

I want to thank the hon. Finance minister for this piece of legislation. I’ll be proud to vote for it in a few short moments, Mr. Speaker, and I think it’s very important that we focus on one thing, which the Finance minister said very, very well: 75 per cent, I believe is the number that he referred to, of corporations that benefit as a result of us taking less money as a result of this legislation from them are small businesses. Those are small businesses inside my constituency, who create jobs, who have put my constituents to work and have risked everything.

For the NDP to continue to say that taking less money from them is immoral shows the sharp contrast between the Official Opposition and this government. We appreciate job creators inside our province, and the NDP should take some time to maybe go and visit with some of them to understand how their policies that they put in place when they were in government have negatively impacted them. I’m proud to be part of a government that’s working tirelessly to make sure that we can take away some of those negative impacts that the NDP brought across the province.

The Speaker: Hon. members, a minute and 30 seconds, approximately, is left in 29(2)(a). I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Mr. Carson: Well, just a final comment since, of course, this government has brought in closure on Bill 35, an absolute travesty to democracy in our province. Just a final comment that the Finance minister opened his comments on this legislation saying that he would talk more, but “it would fall on deaf ears.” I would just point out that this is a government who walked into this Legislature and instead of listening to Albertans put earplugs in. This is the same government led by a Premier, who currently has two headphones, ignoring the debate that’s happening in the Legislature right now. While Albertans across this province are dying . . .

Mr. Jason Nixon: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: A point of order has been called. The hon. the Government House Leader.

Point of Order Criticizing Members

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on 23(h), (i), and (j), language to create disorder. If that hon. member wants to start talking about what different members are doing in this Chamber at different times, that certainly will create disorder. Let me be clear. I will start talking on the record about each and every thing that they’re doing, things that are on their computer monitors, things that they’re doing on their phones, the fact that the Leader of the Official Opposition is doing her Christmas cards. That type of abuse of another member inside this Chamber will certainly cause disorder, and I suggest if he continues to do it that you will see the disorder as a result of those comments. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order.

I’m not sure if anyone else wants to provide a submission or not. I’m prepared to rule if there are no others. While I do not believe that this was a point of order, I do think that all members should take stock of the words that they use and the way that they point out what members may or may not do as I have certainly seen many members inside this Assembly perhaps working on projects while they’re here or listening to things in earbuds, including members of the opposition. While I don’t find a point of order this evening, I do think it’s important that if we were to spend more time focusing our time and attention on the legislation and not on the actions of individuals inside the Chamber, the decorum would increase. This is not a point of order.

The hon. member has 37 seconds remaining.

Debate Continued

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to wrap up my comments, the fact is that there are hundreds of Albertans who are dying across this province . . .

The Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt, however Government Motion 54 requires that at 1:55 a.m. all questions to dispose of Bill 35 be put to the Assembly.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 1:56 a.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	LaGrange	Rutherford
Allard	Luan	Savage
Copping	Madu	Schow
Dreeshen	Nally	Schulz
Ellis	Neudorf	Schweitzer
Goodridge	Nicolaides	Toews
Hunter	Nixon, Jason	Turton
Issik	Nixon, Jeremy	Wilson
Kenney		

Against the motion:

Carson	Gray	Notley
Dach	Irwin	Sabir
Feehan	Nielsen	Sweet

Totals:	For – 25	Against – 9
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[Motion carried; Bill 35 read a third time]

2:00

Bill 47
Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020
(continued)

The Deputy Speaker: Any members wishing to join debate? The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I will be brief because, of course, there is very, very little time to address this bill, and I know that members of my caucus would also like to engage in it. It is hard to not mention, of course, that we are being forced to debate this 110-page bill where we had two hours in Committee of the Whole and a mere one hour set aside for third reading.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Before members opposite complain that we spent far too much time talking about it in second reading, let me just be clear that the amount of time that we took to speak about it in second reading essentially allowed for each member of our caucus to speak to it once and then another member . . .

Mr. Jason Nixon: Point of order.

Ms Notley: . . . of the caucus to speak to it again.

The Speaker: A point of order has been called.

Point of Order
Second Reading Debate

Mr. Jason Nixon: I rise under 23(h), (i), and (j) just to point out that the Leader of the Opposition is mistaken, Mr. Speaker. It's not just for each member of her caucus to speak once; it was 10 per cent of the entire debate time of this session.

The Speaker: If there's one thing I'm certain of, it's that that is not a point of order. I would encourage the Government House Leader in the future to use the points of order for what they are intended and not to continue debate.

Debate Continued

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, that demonstration there is exactly the kind of game-playing that we have in fact been seeing from this government in order to limit debate on this bill and to waste time and to have us debating other things instead of debating things that matter a lot to Albertans.

It's really unfortunate because here's the thing, Mr. Speaker. This 110-page bill fundamentally attacks critical measures that allow workers to keep themselves safe and protected in their workplaces. After it removes the very rules that would keep them safe and protected in their workplaces, it then proceeds to go after the compensation that they should be eligible for because they were injured in their workplace, because their safety was undermined by this government, and it proceeds to reduce the compensation that these workers would receive.

Who are these workers, Mr. Speaker? Well, many of them are among the tens of thousands of front-line workers in Alberta who have contracted COVID-19 in just the last few months. They are also the over 100,000 workers who work day in, day out in our health care system working to keep Albertans safe, getting injured because they are lifting people to bathe them, to take them to the bathroom, to change them. Those create injuries, and because of the changes that have been made, they will have fewer rights to keep themselves safe from the injuries that are caused by that kind of

work, and they will have less compensation as a result of those injuries.

Now, those aren't the only workers, Mr. Speaker. The oil field worker, who these folks claim to care about, who earns \$130,000 or \$140,000 a year, who is either permanently or seriously injured for, let's say, 12 months, will now get 90 per cent of a capped income as opposed to 90 per cent of the income they actually earned. This is something that just tonight this government voted to ensure happened.

There are multiple ways in which this government is attacking workers. I can't obviously fit them all into the short period of time that I'm allowing myself to speak so that my colleagues can join in. However, I will just reinforce this. Yesterday we learned through leaked information that the Canadian Armed Forces is in the midst of training reservists to go into long-term care centres in Alberta. [interjections] The minister across is laughing at that. I assume that the information was reported in the media based on accurate research. These folks have not denied it.

One of the things we learned that these reservists are being taught as they prepare to go into Alberta's long-term care centres is that they will likely be subjected to seeing unfortunate levels of suffering in these long-term care settings and that one of the things that they need to understand could arise from that is PTSD. I've seen the documents. Those are the documents that the Canadian Armed Forces is using to train the hundreds of reservists who are about to go into Alberta's continuing care centres. They understand that PTSD is a very likely outcome.

Interestingly, we have tens of thousands of workers already in that situation, already doing that work, who until tonight would be eligible for compensation, should they develop PTSD, on a presumptive basis. Those workers are primarily women, and thanks to the acts of this government at 2 o'clock in the morning because they do not have the courage of their convictions to have this discussion in the light of day, those tens of thousands of women will lose their presumptive coverage to the very PTSD that the Canadian Armed Forces is currently telling hundreds of reservists they need to understand they will be subjected to as a result of having to go in to clean up the mess created by this government's negligence in dealing with the pandemic. And we are debating this at 2 o'clock in the morning because they are scared, cowardly, unwilling to have this conversation in the daytime. They should be ashamed of themselves.

For this reason, we will not be voting for this bill. For the hundreds of other reasons that the members of my caucus have already outlined and for the very number of changes that should have been considered and adopted in a respectful way by being allowed to debate in Committee of the Whole for longer than two hours and perhaps during the daytime – all those reasons that were outlined and the many more that we didn't get a chance to get to are the reasons why we will not be voting for this bill.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there others wishing to join debate? The hon. the Government House Leader has the call.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those were some interesting comments from the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. She made similar comments inside question period today with regard to the Canadian military. I feel obligated again to inform the House, as I did during question period, that that, what was just said by the Leader of the Official Opposition, is categorically false, and it is extraordinarily shocking that that member would come in this Chamber, after already being informed that those were not accurate statements, and spread fear and misinformation inside this Chamber yet again. Albertans deserve significantly better from the Official

Opposition than spending their time inside this House making up things about the military.

Alberta is facing an unprecedented pandemic. At this time this House should be united. In fact, we have passed motions that say that we are united behind the government's plan, that were supported, I'll point out, by the Official Opposition saying that they were united behind this government's approach to work to be able to fight COVID-19. Instead, Mr. Speaker, you now see the Leader of the Official Opposition twice today come into this House and spread misinformation when it comes to the Canadian military. It is extraordinarily disappointing, and I think Albertans deserve better from the Official Opposition.

I will also respond briefly to the hon. member's comments in regard to debate time, that the government is scared. That's why we're working till about 2 o'clock in the morning inside the House, Mr. Speaker. This Legislature is certainly not scared. It is the busiest Legislature inside the country. It has passed more legislation during COVID than any other Legislature in the country. Its members, including members of both parties and the staff that serve this Chamber, have worked diligently every day inside this Chamber under extraordinary circumstances to advance the agenda that Albertans sent us here to advance. That is not fear.

2:10

This House sits regularly until 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning on behalf of our constituents and Albertans. We will continue to do that. There was a question period today, as there was every other day that we sat this week, where the Official Opposition asked questions, including about issues that the Leader of the Official Opposition raised today, and last I checked, question period is in the middle of the day.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Alberta and the Health minister and the minister of jobs and the economy had a full and open press conference today to talk about this issue. This government is not hiding from anything.

What is happening is that the Official Opposition continues to play games when it comes to legislation, and now they're disappointed because they spent 10 per cent of their entire debate time over this entire sitting focused on second reading of a bill. It seems to me that they either were not prepared to move to Committee of the Whole, which is why they held it in second reading and they weren't able to move forward with their amendments, or they delayed the process so long they weren't able to move forward with their amendments. If you are stakeholders of the Official Opposition, you should be extraordinarily disappointed in them, Mr. Speaker, because they did not advance your agenda in this place because they stalled it out in second reading and were unable to get it through Committee of the Whole, because either they forgot that's where they do their amendments or they just wanted to spend their time delaying.

As they sit in there today with their computer monitors, not focusing on debate and instead coming into the House and fearmongering over and over, I would suggest to them that they have about 50 minutes left. If they're actually serious about getting to work for Albertans, stand up in the House and start debating things. Stop making things up.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment. Under 29(2)(a)? The hon. the Premier.

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to rise under 29(2)(a), partly in response to the hit-and-run comments of the hon. the Leader of the Opposition in typically false and defamatory

comments: gross, irresponsible, fearmongering; categorically, completely, and utterly false; counterfactual. I can assure this place, as somebody who gets briefed on all COVID-related matters on a daily basis, that there have been zero discussions with the Canadian Armed Forces about a supplementary labour force in long-term care and hospitals in the health care system.

If it were the case, we would know about it because we have, I think, three deputy ministers who are former senior officers in the Canadian Armed Forces, including, for example, the deputy ministers leading our vaccine protocol. The Premier of this government happens to be a former Minister of National Defence as well. I appointed the current Chief of Defence Staff. I have very close relations with the ministry of defence, the Canadian Armed Forces. This is a total, irresponsible, fearmongering fabrication.

Now, perhaps if the member opposite – she went on about some Canadian Armed Forces' document about going into long-term care facilities and PTSD. Perhaps what she's referring to is a document – I don't know – that dealt with the training of CAF members who did assist by the hundreds for several months in long-term care facilities in Quebec and Ontario. They did that, so there must have been training. They were staffed up to do that. I was on calls in the first ministers' meetings and the Council of the Federation, hearing the Premiers of Quebec and Ontario interface with the Prime Minister on that issue. It's not a secret, Mr. Speaker. It's a matter of public record.

To be generous to the Leader of the Opposition, to be extremely generous, she has perhaps been misled by some aberrant source of information into attributing training for Quebec long-term care facilities, which were, let's face it, in a total crisis this spring – their deaths in long-term care facilities have been orders of magnitude higher than Alberta's. We take no pride in that. It's a tragedy. It's unfortunate. It's a benefit that we have more modern housing stock and we've had a more alert response without any call upon the Canadian Armed Forces.

Mr. Speaker, I know the member is not in a position right now to retract. I hope the member will review the Blues and will do so if that is an honourable member.

The Speaker: Hon. members, there are approximately two minutes remaining in Standing Order 29(2)(a) should anyone choose to use it. Under 29(2)(a), are you rising? Under 29(2)(a), the hon Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Briefly under 29(2)(a). This government has gone from zero to put your fingers in your ears and scream la, la, la and deny. What we found out through media reports is that Albertan reservists are being trained in case they need to go into continuing care institutes, and the fact that this government isn't aware and that their only reaction is to call it fearmongering is just a sign of la, la, la, fingers in the ear. That is all I'm hearing from this government.

There were no mistruths shared in this House. There are articles about this situation. Rather than screaming at the opposition, the government, who has full control of the situation and who should be showing leadership during this pandemic, should focus on leading, should be focusing on talking to Albertans about what's going on, and should possibly follow up with the Canadian military to find out more about the preparations that are being made in the case that things get worse here in our continuing care centres. Certainly, the stats on what's been happening have not been pretty. I believe it was 150 seniors that died in November, five a day, in our facilities in this province, and Albertan reservists are being trained in case they need to come in to help with that situation. This is reported in the media. There have been conversations with these

reservists, and the government will only call it fearmongering. It doesn't make sense. It defies logic.

We are here to have reasonable debates on important issues, and this government will only make insulting and derogatory comments towards the members of the opposition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: This essentially concludes the time allotted for 29(2)(a). There are five seconds remaining. I hope that we won't have a significant disagreement over the five seconds.

Are there others wishing to join in the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to join in the debate at third reading on Bill 47, a bill that absolutely has been rammed through the Legislature during a pandemic, with a number of comments being made about the opposition not doing their job. I would like to put on the record that in this session there have been 11 pieces of legislation, 37 stages, moved through in 24 days, a significant amount of debate, especially on certain pieces, but when it came to Bill 47 only two hours in Committee of the Whole in order to work through amendments, suggestions, and bill debate. That is incredibly disappointing. I'm very pleased that I was able to table drafts of the amendments today after question period to get on the record the number of amendments that we had prepared to talk about that we were not able to.

Now, in those two hours of Committee of the Whole I felt like we had a lot of very productive debate. There was a lot of good information shared back and forth, some serious differences of opinions, and I'd like to talk about some of those differences, starting with passing legislation that weakens health and safety legislation and weakens benefits through workers' compensation in the middle of a pandemic, having done a completely inadequate consultation in the middle of a pandemic, and now going through the final states of the bill at 2:20 a.m. in the middle of a pandemic, the government having just announced entirely new measures.

Albertans are focused somewhere else right now. They are not able to focus in and think about occupational health and safety and the impacts that the changes to workers' compensation can and will have on their families. But I would really like to reiterate a point I made earlier in second reading; that is, that these MLAs here in this Chamber, all of us, are going to see the impacts of Bill 47 through the casework that is going to start coming through our offices. To those who were not elected prior to 2019: you would not have been familiar with the casework before. Improvements to workers' compensation, a very thorough review process, were done in 2016-2017. The Fair Practices office was initiated and started helping Albertans when they struggled with workers' compensation. The Fair Practices office has also helped to identify systemic issues and support not only workers but also employers.

2:20

What will happen, following the passage of Bill 47, that is there will now begin to be more and more Albertans, injured Albertans who cannot work, turning to their local MLA for support when the system is not there for them. I'm not sure that the members of the government caucus have fully internalized that. That's certainly an experience that I know I and many of my colleagues who were elected prior to 2019 had, the volume of casework in our offices changing significantly after improvements were put in place and after improved supports were available.

Instead, what we see in Bill 47 is the removal of the Fair Practices office the way it works now, the fairness portion being devolved to a single individual. I will note that in the last annual report of the

Fair Practices office — and for anyone curious about what the Fair Practices office does, I encourage you to go take a look at those annual reports because it does a very good summary of the work that that important group processes. When it came to fairness, they had 300 fairness complaints in a single year, last year. You can find this in the last annual report. In 100, a third of the time, they found breaches to fairness. Now, there's a range of options, and in some cases for those breaches the remedy was that that person got a phone call and an apology from WCB. Maybe something wasn't handled in a timely way. But some of the breaches were more serious. The work of those managing that fairness office, the work of the fairness portion is now being reduced to a single individual, all in the name of finding balance.

Through debate the minister referred in one particular place to the panel process for workers' compensation that was set up under the previous government. What we did was an incredibly detailed year-plus-long engagement session that included talking to people out in different communities, specifically reaching out to workers. Workers are very hard to engage in these types of consultations, yet their perspective is so important. I would note that the government's own consultation included only 20 per cent of people who identified themselves as workers. That panel process brought forward a series of important recommendations, system-changing, system-improving recommendations, yet this government only talks about it when they talk about one particular one, which was a change around compensation amounts. They're fully prepared to ignore everything else that the panel did and was working on.

I am concerned about the impact Bill 47 will have on working Albertans. There were a number of issues raised through debate that did not get adequately answered, in my opinion, during debate. We've spent a significant amount of time talking about presumptive coverage for psychological injuries. We've talked about, through debate, that there is a determination process that exists now, even with that presumptive coverage.

The big, big question that I have that I still do not fully understand is how the government estimated \$230 million being saved. I can tell you right now that, through presumptive PTSD coverage, workers accessing that coverage still needed to meet that definition of having a workplace trauma or workplace injury. Are we specifically saying that \$230 million will be saved over three years by not supporting a worker who has been through workplace trauma? It's certainly not going to be saved by people being denied because they don't have PTSD. If they don't have PTSD, they're not going to get coverage now. So \$230 million from workers who have experienced trauma in the workplace.

Another \$240 million being saved by revising the cost-of-living adjustment calculation. I really want to ask questions about this, because in conversations I understood that cost of living would continue to be adjusted going forward, that when moving it out of the legislation, it would still happen elsewhere. Then why is there \$240 million of savings booked against this item in the government's own fact sheets?

This is a bill that is completely lopsided, that is going to hurt workers by weakening safety rights, the right to know. There are a number of different places where the right to know has been impacted, everything from the names of the joint work-site health and safety committee people no longer being publicly posted — we're not going to tell you who you can talk to about workplace health and safety issues because posting those names was too much red tape, potentially, for this government. The right to know is being challenged in a number of other ways. We tried to put forward an amendment that would ensure that people would be aware of workplace hazards prior to work starting. That was not accepted by this government.

The right to participate is significantly being harmed. The changes to joint work-site health and safety committees, a concept that was only brought into legislation in this province in 2017, through the changes implemented by the previous government, are now being significantly weakened and rolled back such that there will be fewer joint work-site health and safety committees – particularly in big construction sites or where there are multiple employers, specific exemptions were written for those areas, because we all know that nothing dangerous happens in construction – and significant changes to how the joint work-site health and safety committee operates, what support it gets, who is a member on it. They are going to become, based on the legislation that we are debating in this House, more likely employer-dominated, never-meet committees. That is not what is going to help keep Albertans safe. That is not what is going to help us reduce the number of Albertans who don't come home at the end of the day.

Finally, the right to refuse unsafe work or the right to refuse dangerous work has been bogged down with additional steps, red tape, lack of clear language that we've tried to address with brief amendments that did not get the time of debate that they deserved. That right to refuse unsafe work is the last line of defence between someone you love making it home and not. If a worker does not feel like they have the ability to refuse that work, they might do something they shouldn't. Why would someone not want to use this? Well, gosh, Bill 47 makes it clear that you might not get paid. If you refuse that and there isn't another job for you to do, you may just get sent home.

When it comes to vulnerable workers, when it comes to workers who have very little power in the workplace, refusing a job, standing up to their employer – now you add in not only more complicated steps, a confusing process, but they have to do it alone now. It used to be that when a worker tried to refuse unsafe work, either the joint work-site health and safety committee, a rep, or another worker would join into the conversation so that the one reporting was not left alone to make their case. That's been removed. All the way through we see harm.

In our occupational health and safety side of this bill the three fundamental rights are being changed as well as a number of changes around how often we're going to look into injuries, occupational diseases, the supports, the reporting that the minister will do, with much less reporting coming from the minister. The right not to be disciplined has been muddled. I'm very concerned that workers will now, having filed a WCB claim or tried to refuse unsafe work, be subject to discriminatory action as they go through. I introduced an amendment during Committee of the Whole around that right to refuse unsafe work. I'm particularly concerned that when you read through that section, it is not clear that if worker A has refused a task, worker B should not be brought in to work on that task, and if they are, they need to be told. The safety concerns need to be mitigated, and that compensation during refusal is incredibly important.

For a number of reasons – joint occupational health and safety committees, the right to refuse, the other rights that exist, worker training and competency, employer responsibility; there have been a lot of changes around who is responsible for what and not always in a very positive way – these changes will have an impact on working people. I would like to repeat, not to be too boring for the members on the government side, that we are in the middle of a pandemic. This is a bill that fundamentally changes health and safety and then workers' compensation, should something go awry, and it is being passed at 2:30 a.m. in the middle of a pandemic.

2:30

On the workers' compensation side we've already talked about how much money the government is going to save because they're putting in a cap, and they're taking away the cost-of-living adjustments. I think I'm free to say that they're taking away cost-of-living adjustments because they've booked millions of dollars of savings against that. That's money not going to workers. To be very, very clear, that's not magic savings. That's money that will not go into the bank account of an injured worker who needs it.

The obligation to reinstate workers has been removed. When that process doesn't work, now, instead of having a channel for those complaints to be heard through the workers' compensation system, someone will have to go to the Human Rights Commission because having two systems: that's red tape and duplication. Never mind the fact that a worker will now have to wait two years and incur the expenses of a lawyer to possibly have redress, something that 94 per cent of employers do appropriately.

Removing health benefits, health benefits that help support a worker in attempting to recover and help keep the family afloat when they cannot work.

These are the types of things that this government is putting forward in Bill 47 during a pandemic, and for that and for so many more reasons that I have not had time to outline in detail – again, I'm glad that the amendments were able to be tabled. I will have to think about how I might be able to put more information about each of those amendments out where the public can find it because we did not have the chance to talk about each of them even briefly. But all of these will impact Albertans, and those Albertans will be coming to your constituency offices when the system does not work for them, and it will be incumbent upon you to explain to those workers why their benefits are not available or why they were fired after they filed a claim.

The Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. the Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I commend the passion that the hon. member has for this, but I want to state that we have the passion, too. On this side of the House we have the passion for improved health and safety.

Mr. Speaker, I have to rise because a statement was made by the opposition leader that this bill, quote, fundamentally attacks critical measures to keep workers safe in their workplaces. I want to test the veracity of that statement. I'll test the veracity of that statement using the same criteria that was raised by the hon. member over here. She's quite right. Fundamental protections in the workplace are the right to know, the right to participate, and the right to refuse. Let's look at Bill 47 for a moment here. We won't be able to go into a huge amount of detail, but let's talk a little bit about some of these items.

The right to know. In section 3(4):

Every employer shall keep readily available information related to work site hazards, controls, work practices and procedures and provide that information to

- (a) the joint health and safety committee . . .
- (b) the workers, and
- (c) the prime contractor, if there is one.

There is a right to know, and there's a requirement for the employer to provide that. And that's here in the act. That's just one example.

Let's move on to the right to participate. Section 13, joint health and safety committees.

For the purposes of ensuring cooperation between the employer and workers in respect to health and safety, an employer shall, after consultation with any union that is a certified bargaining

agent or has acquired bargaining rights . . . establish a joint health and safety committee.

Mr. Speaker, this was not here prior to 2015. We have maintained it because we recognize the importance of the ability of workers to participate. What we're doing here is reducing the level of restriction. That was mentioned earlier by the Leader of the Official Opposition, that our changes to these committees are going to make it employer-side, that there wasn't even a provision in here to ensure that the committees are equal. Well, again that's simply incorrect. Subsection (5): "The number of persons on a joint health and safety committee who represent the employer shall not exceed in total the number of worker representatives on the committee."

Mr. Speaker, we have taken out the prescriptive elements, including posting. But we're going to put that in the regulation. I've already made the commitment in this Chamber that we are going to do the regulations, which actually is the code, and we're going to consult the code to make sure the key elements are there. What we're doing here is listening to what the health and safety experts told us, to reduce the prescriptive elements of this, to make these effective, to actually improve health and safety measures.

Let's talk last about the right to refuse. Section 17, the right to refuse dangerous work, is still here, and there are 10 subsections that outline the ability to be able to exercise this. When the Leader of the Official Opposition says that we're fundamentally attacking, this is not a fundamental attack, Mr. Speaker. This is about improving health and safety outcomes because we care about the health and safety of Alberta workers. Employers care about the health and safety of their workers, and they also know that every worker that works for them – they want them to go home safe, just as they want to go home safe at the end of the day.

I'll touch on one more element very briefly, and this is about workers' compensation. The hon. member across the way said that the casework in the MLA offices will go through the roof because we're eliminating the Fair Practices office. Mr. Speaker, yes, we're eliminating the office. We're eliminating the administration. We're eliminating multiple managers for a single process. What we're doing here is that we're taking the key elements, the supports for workers, the supports for employers, the advisers, and we're moving them to the Appeals Commission for Alberta Workers' Compensation, another independent body, but we're doing this to make it better.

We're doing it because the organizational structure is such that there will be one person – this is the chair of the appeals committee – who will be responsible for the entire process. We know, Mr. Speaker, that justice needs to be served where there is a dispute, and it needs to be done quickly so that people can get better and they can get back to work.

Mr. Speaker, that is better for all Albertans, and the changes that we're making, the reductions in the red tape and the reductions in cost, will help keep Albertans working and get Albertans back to work and improve health and safety outcomes. That is what this is about, and that is what this government is about.

Thank you.

The Speaker: There are a few seconds left in 29(2)(a) if anyone chooses to use it.

Seeing none, it appears the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore would like to add to the debate.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity with the final 22 minutes we have with regard to speaking to this bill. I rise, of course, in opposition to Bill 47, a piece of legislation that, despite what the Minister of Labour and Immigration says, puts Alberta workers at a disadvantage, plain and simple. You

know, Minister, you were talking earlier about all the legislation. I would have thought that over the course of the 30th Legislature, my harping and constant badgering about not only what the language says but what it doesn't say – you're talking about these health and safety committees and that, oh, they're still going to be there, yet contained on page 61, part 3, dangerous work and disciplinary action:

(5) An employer who receives a report under subsection (4) shall, as soon as possible, inform the joint health and safety committee . . .

Here it is; wait for it.

. . . if there is one . . .

You've now just opened the door for there not to be one. That's what the legislation doesn't say.

. . . or the health and safety representative, if there is one.

We've made changes so that a large corporation – and I'll go back to my old employer, Lucerne. They had an ice cream plant, a milk plant, a cheese plant, a juice plant, and I can tell you that all of those operations are different. There is no way that somebody could come from the cheese plant and tell me how to be safe in the work site at the ice cream plant.

This duty to inform people of work-site hazards, what that means is that an employer can go: there's a hazard; I've done my part. That's a lot different than saying: there's a hazard, and here's how to avoid it. The language is watered down.

2:40

In your consultation, you know, the one where you received 95 submissions – 18 per cent were from workers and 69 were representing employers. As I've said before, if you would have reached out to one of your largest private-sector stakeholders, the largest private-sector union in the province, who would've happily provided you with feedback – they even sent in a submission, and I can tell you that none of that submission is in here whatsoever. They definitely would not have suggested watering down the right to refuse unsafe work in any way, shape, or form. I know you haven't checked with them since then because I asked.

Here we have a piece of legislation that very clearly, based on the language, provides open doors for things to go sideways. I think about when I used to have to deal with an employer around a warehouse production system. This whole system was designed so that anybody between the ages of 16 and 65 could do the job. All you had to do was keep up, pick the orders the way it was supposed to go, and do it in the time allotted, and you wouldn't be disciplined. The problem was that from time to time during that shift you would have two different employees. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't claim to be a young man anymore. I'm starting to get to the point where probably the things that I used to do at 30 are coming a little bit more difficult. When I was 30, it was clear that I was able to work a lot harder than I am now.

You would have situations where a younger employee could go faster over the course of an eight-hour shift. They'd maybe be able to pick this one order a little bit faster, this one order just a little bit faster, and they would have maybe 10 minutes at the end of their shift. Well, the employer doesn't want somebody sitting around for 10 minutes doing absolutely nothing even though they've already completed everything that they needed to do for that employer in that eight-hour shift. They would say: "No. You know what? We need to keep you busy." So then they would take another order from over here, and they'd look at it, and they'd go: "Well, this is a seven-minute order. Go do that."

Here's the problem with that, Mr. Speaker. That seven-minute order was usually a lighter order, like a paper order or something like that, something that didn't require a lot of effort, a lot of strain,

things like that. The warehouse system is designed so that you would pick some heavy orders and then maybe a couple of light orders. Pick a few heavy orders; pick a couple of light orders. But when they pull that out of the system and take that away from somebody, all of a sudden they now have two, three, four, five can orders in one session. The next thing you know, we have back injuries. Surprise, surprise.

Because there was a lack of shop stewards over in these warehouses, from time to time I would have employees come to me at the ice cream plant to say: we've just had an employee get injured; back. Sure enough, of course, the employer quickly did an investigation, didn't bother to include another employee, and they immediately said, "Oh, well, the employee was lifting wrong" right up until I pressed him and found out that, oh, wait; they happened to pull out that light order, the one that would give the employee a rest.

Now you have an injured employee, and the language sets it up so that there might not be an employee representative there, should there be an injury. I'm sure the employer, once I pointed it out, said: "Oh, well, that was just a mistake on our part. We didn't realize that." Well, how many more times do I have to go through that before maybe they realize that pulling out this order wasn't such a good idea?

That is the thing that we're talking about. I'm never, ever worried about the many employers that are doing it right. I'm always worried about the one that doesn't, because at what point do we say that one worker that gets hurt is too many? For me, it's one worker. One worker gets hurt: that's too many. We've certainly heard the minister talk about a system that's sustainable and efficient. Well, I've always said, "You want a sustainable system? Work safer." It can be done. I've seen it. I've lived it.

I remember sitting in on conversations with management, "Our WCB premiums are out of control. This is ridiculous. Well, maybe we should start taking safety seriously." When they finally made that decision, all of a sudden they've got all kinds of consecutive days accident free. Surprise, surprise; the WCB premiums went down, which means there were fewer claims, which then means a sustainable system. When I hear employers who say, "Well, my WCB premiums are too high," – take your safety seriously. I guarantee you the WCB premiums will follow every single time.

But to create legislation where we put people at a disadvantage – now, I've always said that I will give credit where credit is due. The section about the heroes fund: great idea. I'm actually completely for it. Now, it's too bad that, if they don't get killed, that they only get injured, now they're going to start going through all kinds of rigamarole. But on the concept as a whole, I'm in favour of that. Absolutely.

I'd be actually remiss if I didn't take this moment, Mr. Speaker, and thank all of our front-line workers, not just our doctors and nurses, doing an incredibly stressful and worrisome job. I'm also thinking about the people who clean the rooms so as not to put all the work that those doctors and nurses did at risk. I'm thinking about the kitchen staff that are trying to prepare food in a safe manner so as not to make those people sick. I'm thinking about the cashiers at a grocery store, the stock clerks stocking the shelves. I'm thinking about the retail workers, all those folks that are right there on the front line who should be maybe getting some top-up pay because of the pandemic that we find ourselves in. Why this government is leaving that money on the table is unbelievable. I guess it shouldn't surprise me because this is the government that came up with half of a motion condemning a union for blocking workers from getting some money, but the last time I looked, I don't

know of one single union anywhere on the planet, Mr. Speaker, that controls payroll. I would dare you to find it. Hearing a statement like that, quite honestly, is completely ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 47 is a bad piece of legislation with the exception of the heroes fund. Again, I will give you credit for that. We tried to – and some people will remember this phrase – make a bad piece of legislation less bad, and I want to thank the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods for trying to do that, but no matter how you want to spin it, you have weak language that is allowing interesting interpretations, potentially, to be made.

I could almost accept the argument that right now, here and now, you and I probably know what's going on. I'm not worried about us, Mr. Speaker. I'm worried about when we're not around, possibly, to explain this, and somebody just looking at this and saying, "If there is a health and safety committee – well, I guess that means I don't need one. I don't have to worry about that. Well, it only says I have to point out the hazard. I don't necessarily have to go into explaining it."

2:50

This is the type of weak language that puts Albertans at risk, potentially will get Albertans killed. I can say that a forklift is dangerous; I need to show them why. That was my responsibility when I looked after that task. So, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support Bill 47 in its current form.

Quite honestly, you know, we heard the Government House Leader talk about how we don't seem to want to do our job over here. This piece of legislation is going to put my constituents at risk. This piece of legislation will put your constituents at risk: the hard-working Albertans, those front-line workers in the grocery stores, in the warehouses, in the retail stores that are just trying hard to make ends meet. If we put them in a situation where they're going to have to choose either health and safety or lose their job, we tend to see people make those decisions that aren't in their best interest, and the legislation provided for in terms of the language opens up those avenues that just simply will not serve Albertans.

My hope is that members of this Assembly will stop this bill in its tracks, take it back to the drawing board. I am happy to provide any kind of contacts whatsoever in order to make this bill better and even balanced in your opinion.

The Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise at this late hour on an important issue, and it's one that I've made clear in this House as something that has been a benchmark in my family's life when I've revealed the history of my father's workplace injuries and WCB claims that were allowed and resulted in him being involved with a rehabilitation program for two years at WCB while recovering from broken legs and a fused heel, resulting from an injury at work, a fall from a scaffolding. I can tell members of this House that back then the WCB coverage certainly was not a benefit that allowed you to live in luxury.

We certainly don't want to be going backwards in our workplace safety and WCB coverage, but this is what this piece of legislation does, Mr. Speaker. Rather than moving forward in providing a safety net for workers and employers to ensure that workers who suffer a workplace injury as a result of their time at work – they should be seeing benefits that are reflective of the needs of today, the families of today, the workers of today, and reflective of the type of new technologies that allow workers to re-enter the workforce after a period of rehabilitation but shouldn't be retrograde in their treatment of these workers.

Some of the measures in this Bill 47 are not cutting red tape, Mr. Speaker; they're judging and hurting the workers they are supposedly intended to serve. Some of the things that they do – removing the requirement for an employer to co-operate with the joint health and safety committee: how is that improving the plight of working people in this province who suffer an injury at the workplace? There's no balance involved in that.

The struggle always has been, historically, with WCB, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that injured workers actually have the ability to be compensated for their losses through the WCB but in a system which insists that employers respect indeed the reality of what's happened to this worker and respect the fact that there's a power imbalance between the workplace and the worker. Changes that do nothing to help that balance be a positive and constructive relationship between workers and the employer, that are contained in Bill 47, take us backwards to an era where, you know, my father was injured, in the '60s. That's not the type of legislation that I heard anybody in this province asking for when we had our last election, yet somehow this government sees fit to determine that working people and their rights to compensation after being injured on the job are simply a matter of red tape.

Well, I can tell you for sure, Mr. Speaker – and I think every member of this House can – as the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods alluded to, that the caseload that we all endured from constituents coming into our offices with WCB complaints went down dramatically because of the legislation that the previous government, the NDP government introduced that indeed treated people like human beings not red tape.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there others wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could inquire as to how much time is left before we do run out?

The Speaker: A minute.

Mr. Schow: A minute now? Okay.

Well, I'll basically just get up here and respond to something the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods had said about tabling her amendments because she didn't get a chance to bring them in to the Chamber. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's like submitting your term assignment late and asking for full marks. If the members opposite wanted to table those amendments, they could've done it in Committee of the Whole instead of wasting so much time in second reading. I think that might have been a wiser decision and maybe would've got a little more traction with their base on that.

The reality is that this bill – I will be voting in favour of this bill for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the heroes fund. Living in Cardston-Siksika, or, as I always say, God's country, we have a lot of volunteer firefighter divisions. They are covered under this. These are men and women who have other jobs, and in their time when they're not working there, they are fighting fires, putting their lives on the line. I am proud this government is putting money towards something as meaningful as protecting the livelihoods of these brave men and women who may not come home at the end of a shift. I'm grateful for that and voting for this bill.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I hesitate to interrupt, but pursuant to Government Motion 58 I am required to put all questions to the Assembly for the disposal of third reading.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 2:59 a.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Kenney	Nixon, Jeremy
Allard	LaGrange	Rutherford
Copping	Luan	Savage
Dreeshen	Madu	Schow
Ellis	McIver	Schulz
Glubish	Nally	Schweitzer
Goodridge	Neudorf	Toews
Hunter	Nicolaides	Turton
Issik	Nixon, Jason	Wilson

Against the motion:

Carson	Gray	Sabir
Dach	Irwin	Sweet
Feehan	Nielsen	

Totals: For – 27 Against – 8

[Motion carried; Bill 47 read a third time]

The Speaker: Hon. members, prior to recognizing the hon. Government House Leader – not that I would ever presuppose a decision of the Assembly, but I am often familiar with what happens at this time – I would just like to say a very special thank you to our table officers, LASS, *Hansard*, pages, and all who have had a hand in the Second Session of the 30th Legislature, which commenced on February 25.

Today marks the 78th sitting day of the session, including a rare sitting day in August. No other province or territory has sat as often. The next-closest will be Quebec, which has not yet sat 60 days this session. The Assembly sat for over 560 hours. This breaks the record from 1994 of 434 hours under then Premier Klein and Speaker Schumacher. In addition, we have had a record-breaking 20 sittings past midnight.

On April 27, 2020, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts conducted its first hybrid committee, using Skype for Business video conferencing, and thus began the more active adaptation of technologies in our parliamentary work.

It's important to note that a new Lieutenant Governor was installed on August 26. She is the first Muslim Lieutenant Governor in Canadian history.

As of today there have been 62 bills introduced in the Legislative Assembly, and as was mentioned earlier this evening, in 2020 *Hansard* transcribed approximately 4.7 million words that have been spoken in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

On behalf of your Speaker let me thank each and every one of you for the hard work you do for your constituents, and on behalf of all members we thank our staff teams, both in each of your respective caucuses as well as all Members of the Legislative Assembly teams, from the very bottom of my heart. May you have a very Merry Christmas. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless Alberta.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Government Motion 50 it is my duty to inform the Assembly that the fall 2020 sitting of the 30th Legislature is now concluded.

The Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to Government Motion 50, agreed to on December 2, 2020, the House stands adjourned until February 2021.

[The Assembly adjourned at 3:07 a.m. on Wednesday pursuant to Government Motion 50]

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

Activity to Wednesday, December 9, 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 Sitzings.

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.*), 791-98 (*May 27, 2020 morn., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 859-91 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed*)
Third Reading — 861-69 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 17, 2020; SA 2020 cC-32.7]

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*)
Committee of the Whole — 1238-44 (*Jun. 9, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 1364-70 (*Jun. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 17, 2020; SA 2020 c9]

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*)
Committee of the Whole — 1257-66 (*Jun. 10, 2020 aft.*), 1311-16 (*Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 1442 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft.*), 1452-55 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c14]

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*)

Committee of the Whole — 1266-72 (*Jun. 10, 2020 aft.*), 1370-75 (*Jun. 15, 2020 eve.*), 1406-11 (*Jun. 16, 2020 aft.*), 1413 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve.*), 1479-81 (*Jun. 17, 2020 eve.*), 1539-40 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1636-37 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., adjourned*), 1678-79 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c16]

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 with amendments*)

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

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force 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 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 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 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 on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force 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.*), 1228-38 (*Jun. 9, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1375-78 (*Jun. 15, 2020 eve.*), 1470-79 (*Jun. 17, 2020 eve.*), 1541-51 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve.*), 1575-88 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft.*), 1620-25 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft.*), 1639-47 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1657-59 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force September 1, 2020; SA 2020 c11]

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.*), 1179-81 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve.*), 1209-22 (*Jun. 9, 2020 aft.*), 1285-96 (*Jun. 10, 2020 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1428-29 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve.*), 1455-59 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft.*), 1551-55 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve.*), 1588-90 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft.*), 1647-50 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1676-78 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c18]

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

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

Second Reading — 1203-09 (*Jun. 9, 2020 aft.*), 1272-74 (*Jun. 10, 2020 aft.*), 1316-23 (*Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1396-1406 (*Jun. 16, 2020 aft.*), 1413 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve.*), 1461-70 (*Jun. 17, 2020 eve.*), 1605-08 (*Jun. 23, 2020 eve.*), 1630-36 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft.*), 1650-54 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1675-76 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; certain sections come into force on June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c15]

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*)

Committee of the Whole — 1413-24 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1655 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c12]

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*)

Committee of the Whole — 1424-28 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1495-97 (*Jun. 18, 2020 aft.*), 1555-56 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c17]

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

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

Second Reading — 1125-27 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft.*), 1169-79 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1185-90 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1279-85 (*Jun. 10, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c10]

Bill 21* — Provincial Administrative Penalties Act (Schweitzer)

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

Second Reading — 1181-85 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve.*), 1296-97 (*Jun. 10, 2020 eve.*), 1355-57 (*Jun. 15, 2020 aft.*), 1442-52 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft.*), 1819-22 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1983-99 (*Jul. 14, 2020 aft.*), 2071-74 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2264-68 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2020 cP-30.8]

Bill 22 — Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (Hunter)

First Reading — 1301-02 (*Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1591-95 (*Jun. 23, 2020 eve.*), 1655-57 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1798-1804 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 1879 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 1939-57 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve.*), 1965-66 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2050-51 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft.*), 2053-59 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c25]

Bill 23* — Commercial Tenancies Protection Act (Fir)

First Reading — 1392 (*Jun. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1529-35 (*Jun. 22, 2020 aft.*), 1601-05 (*Jun. 23, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1879-80 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2181-83 (*Jul. 20, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020, with certain sections taking effect March 17, 2020; SA 2020 cC-19.5]

Bill 24 — COVID-19 Pandemic Response Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1494 (*Jun. 18, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1537-39 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve.*), 1569-75 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1625-30 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1679-81 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020, with certain sections taking effect on earlier dates; SA 2020 c13]

Bill 25 — Protecting Alberta Industry From Theft Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1494 (*Jun. 18, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1719-35 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1804-05 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1904-05 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft.*), 2031-32 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c24]

Bill 26 — Constitutional Referendum Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1568 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1735-41 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve.*), 1764-72 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1845-56 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1964-65 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2081-86 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c20]

Bill 27 — Alberta Senate Election Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1568 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1741-47 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve.*), 1772-79 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1822-27 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn.*), 1899-1904 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1999-2001 (*Jul. 14, 2020 aft.*), 2074-76 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2076-81 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c19]

Bill 28 — Vital Statistics (Protecting Albertans from Convicted Sex Offenders) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 1619 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1704-17 (*Jul. 6, 2020 aft.*), 1779-82 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1856-60 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1880-82 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1896-99 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c26]

Bill 29 — Local Authorities Election Amendment Act, 2020 (Madu)

First Reading — 1619-20 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1784-97 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 1962-63 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2163-81 (*Jul. 20, 2020 eve., passed*)
Third Reading — 2239-64 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force September 1, 2020; SA 2020 c22]

Bill 30* — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1695 (*Jul. 6, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1783-84 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 2032-37 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve.*), 2086-2103 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve.*), 2189-97 (*Jul. 20, 2020 eve.*), 2210-27 (*Jul. 21, 2020 aft.*), 2289-96 (*Jul. 22, 2020 aft.*), 2313-28 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2360-61 (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Committee of the Whole — 2432-475 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2512-20 (*Jul. 28, 2020 aft.*), 2523-31 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 2539-61 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve.*), 2562-69 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 29, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force July 29, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c27]

Bill 31 — Environmental Protection Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 1760 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1878 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 2023-31 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2233-39 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve., passed*)
Third Reading — 2309-12 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c21]

Bill 32 — Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020 (Copping)

First Reading — 1760 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1861-63 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 2003-23 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve.*), 2051-53 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft.*), 2059-69 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft.*), 2147-62 (*Jul. 20, 2020 aft.*), 2268-73 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve.*), 2296-307 (*Jul. 22, 2020 aft.*), 2328-40 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2361-63 (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Committee of the Whole — 2404-32 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2475-85 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2502-12 (*Jul. 28, 2020 aft.*), 2531-39 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed*)
Third Reading — 2569-78 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve.*), 2579-86 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 29, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c28]

Bill 33* — Alberta Investment Attraction Act (Fir)

First Reading — 1760-61 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1807-19 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn.*), 1927-37 (*Jul. 13, 2020 aft.*), 2117-27 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2227-31 (*Jul. 21, 2020 aft.*), 2233 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve.*), 2340-44 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2312-13 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2363-65 (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 2401-04 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2485-88 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 29, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 cA-26.4]

Bill 34 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 1839 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1966-69 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve.*), 2116-17 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2117 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 2312 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c23]

Bill 35 — Tax Statutes (Creating Jobs and Driving Innovation) Amendment Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 2616 (*Oct. 20, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 2666-81 (*Oct. 21, 2020 aft.*), 2741-55 (*Oct. 26, 2020 eve.*), 2803-15 (*Oct. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2841-47 (*Oct. 28, 2020 aft.*), 2860-69 (*Oct. 28, 2020 eve.*), 2940-43 (*Nov. 2, 2020 eve.*), 2986-94 (*Nov. 3, 2020 eve.*), 3072-83 (*Nov. 5, 2020 aft.*), 3126-36 (*Nov. 16, 2020 eve.*), 3208-12 (*Nov. 17, 2020 eve.*), 3265-72 (*Nov. 18, 2020 eve.*), 3361-65 (*Nov. 23, 2020 eve., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 3834 (*Dec. 7, 2020 eve.*), 3886-92 (*Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Third Reading — 3900 (*Dec. 8, 2020 eve.*), 3903-09 (*Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 9, 2020, with certain sections having effect on various dates; SA 2020 c40]

Bill 36 — Geothermal Resource Development Act (Savage)

First Reading — 2616 (*Oct. 20, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2696-2706 (*Oct. 22, 2020 aft.*), 2755-60 (*Oct. 26, 2020 eve.*), 2925-29 (*Nov. 2, 2020 eve.*), 2974-78 (*Nov. 3, 2020 aft.*), 3121-24 (*Nov. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3224-32 (*Nov. 18, 2020 aft.*), 3292-94 (*Nov. 19, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 3336-42 (*Nov. 23, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 cG-5.5]

Bill 37* — Builders' Lien (Prompt Payment) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 2665 (*Oct. 21, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2774-84 (*Oct. 27, 2020 aft.*), 2828-38 (*Oct. 28, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3024-29 (*Nov. 4, 2020 aft.*), 3031-48 (*Nov. 4, 2020 eve.*), (*Nov. 24, 2020*), 3398-3401 (*Nov. 24, 2020 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 3529-30 (*Nov. 25, 2020 eve.*), 3544-45 (*Nov. 26, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c30]

Bill 38 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Madu)

First Reading — 2665-66 (*Oct. 21, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2795-2800 (*Oct. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2838-41 (*Oct. 28, 2020 aft.*), 2884-93 (*Oct. 29, 2020 aft.*), 2960-65 (*Nov. 3, 2020 aft.*), 3124-26 (*Nov. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3232-36 (*Nov. 18, 2020 aft.*), 3419-24 (*Nov. 24, 2020 eve.*), 3503-13 (*Nov. 25, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 3611-14 (*Nov. 30, 2020 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 9, 2020, with exceptions, and with section 6 taking effect January 1, 2021; SA 2020 c37]

Bill 39* — Child Care Licensing (Early Learning and Child Care) Amendment Act, 2020 (Schulz)

First Reading — 2827 (*Oct. 28, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2883-84 (*Oct. 29, 2020 aft.*), 2929-40 (*Nov. 2, 2020 eve.*), 2979-86 (*Nov. 3, 2020 eve.*), 3206-08 (*Nov. 17, 2020 eve.*), 3272-76 (*Nov. 18, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3357-61 (*Nov. 23, 2020 eve.*), 3401-09 (*Nov. 24, 2020 aft.*), 3411-19 (*Nov. 24, 2020 eve.*), 3513-25 (*Nov. 25, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 3685 (*Dec. 1, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force February 1, 2021; SA 2020 c31]

Bill 40 — Forests (Growing Alberta's Forest Sector) Amendment Act, 2020 (Dreeshen)

First Reading — 2696 (*Oct. 22, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2784-93 (*Oct. 27, 2020 aft.*), 2800-03 (*Oct. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2849-59 (*Oct. 28, 2020 eve.*), 2965-74 (*Nov. 3, 2020 aft.*), 3136-38 (*Nov. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3424-27 (*Nov. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 3606-11 (*Nov. 30, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force May 1, 2021, with exceptions; SA 2020 c34]

Bill 41 — Insurance (Enhancing Driver Affordability and Care) Amendment Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 2882 (*Oct. 29, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2915-24 (*Nov. 2, 2020 eve.*), 3011-23 (*Nov. 4, 2020 aft.*), 3051-58 (*Nov. 4, 2020 eve.*), 3164-73 (*Nov. 17, 2020 aft.*), 3255-65 (*Nov. 18, 2020 eve.*), 3276 (*Nov. 18, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3679-85 (*Dec. 1, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 3700-07 (*Dec. 2, 2020 morn.*), 3753-58 (*Dec. 2, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 9, 2020, except part of section 3, which has effect January 1, 2022; SA 2020 c36]

Bill 42 — North Saskatchewan River Basin Water Authorization Act (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 2907 (*Nov. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 3009-11 (*Nov. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3048-51 (*Nov. 4, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 3072 (*Nov. 5, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 9, 2020; SA 2020 cN-3.6]

Bill 43 — Financing Alberta's Strategic Transportation Act (McIver)

First Reading — 2956 (Nov. 3, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3150-64 (Nov. 17, 2020 aft.), 3276-80 (Nov. 18, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 3594-3605 (Nov. 30, 2020 eve.), 3687-3700 (Dec. 2, 2020 morn.), 3721-33 (Dec. 2, 2020 aft.), 3751-53 (Dec. 2, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 3784-88 (Dec. 3, 2020 aft., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 9, 2020; SA 2020 cF-13.5]

Bill 44 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 2956 (Nov. 3, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3115-21 (Nov. 16, 2020 eve.), 3354-57 (Nov. 23, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 3591-93 (Nov. 30, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 3685 (Dec. 1, 2020 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 9, 2020; SA 2020 c33]

Bill 45 — Local Authorities Election Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2) (Allard)

First Reading — 3006 (Nov. 4, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3175-79 (Nov. 17, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 3525-29 (Nov. 25, 2020 eve.), 3654-65 (Dec. 1, 2020 aft., passed)

Third Reading — 3685 (Dec. 1, 2020 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force January 1, 2021; SA 2020 c38]

Bill 46 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2) (Shandro)

First Reading — 3071 (Nov. 5, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3176-92 (Nov. 17, 2020 eve.), 3342-54 (Nov. 23, 2020 eve.), 3459-65 (Nov. 25, 2020 morn.), 3614-22 (Nov. 30, 2020 eve.), 3675-76 (Dec. 1, 2020 aft.), 3788-93 (Dec. 3, 2020 aft., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 3823-34 (Dec. 7, 2020 eve.), 3853-60 (Dec. 8, 2020 aft., passed)

Third Reading — 3869 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve.), 3872-79 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 9, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c35]

Bill 47 — Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020 (\$) (Copping)

First Reading — 3070-71 (Nov. 5, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3192-206 (Nov. 17, 2020 eve.), 3236-45 (Nov. 18, 2020 aft.), 3367-73 (Nov. 24, 2020 morn.), 3427-41 (Nov. 24, 2020 eve.), 3445-59 (Nov. 25, 2020 morn.), 3622-28 (Nov. 30, 2020 eve.), 3630-42 (Dec. 1, 2020 morn.), 3743-51 (Dec. 2, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 3763-70 (Dec. 3, 2020 morn.), 3893-3900 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Third Reading — 3901-02 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve.), 3910-16 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2020 c32]

Bill 48* — Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (No. 2) (Hunter)

First Reading — 3096 (Nov. 16, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3247-55 (Nov. 18, 2020 eve.), 3387-98 (Nov. 24, 2020 aft.), 3441-43 (Nov. 24, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 3665-75 (Dec. 1, 2020 aft.), 3733-40 (Dec. 2, 2020 aft.), 3759-62 (Dec. 2, 2020 eve.), 3834-36 (Dec. 7, 2020 eve.), 3861-68 (Dec. 8, 2020 aft., passed on division)

Third Reading — 3869-70 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve.), 3879-86 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on June 2, 2021, with exceptions; SA 2020 c39]

Bill 50 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2020 (\$) (Toews)

First Reading — 3502 (Nov. 25, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3545-52 (Nov. 26, 2020 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 3587-91 (Nov. 30, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 3677-79 (Dec. 1, 2020 eve.), 3685 (Dec. 1, 2020 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 9, 2020; SA 2020 c29]

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*)

Committee of the Whole — 1156-61 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft.*), 1337-47 (*Jun. 15, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1514-22 (*Jun. 22, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 31, 2020; SA 2020 cS-19.8]

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*), 1149-56 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly;*), 1156 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft., not proceeded with on division*)

Bill 203 — Pension Protection Act (Gray)

First Reading — 1148 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 1839 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly; not proceeded with*)

Bill 204 — Voluntary Blood Donations Repeal Act (Yao)

First Reading — 1839 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 2288 (*Jul. 22, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Second Reading — 2379-93 (*Jul. 27, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 2720-33 (*Oct. 26, 2020 aft.*), 2908-09 (*Nov. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 3096-3103 (*Nov. 16, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 9, 2020; SA 2020 c41]

Bill 205 — Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation and Prevention Month Act (Singh)

First Reading — 2718 (*Oct. 26, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 3070 (*Nov. 5, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Second Reading — 3103-08 (*Nov. 16, 2020 aft.*), 3307-14 (*Nov. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3813-14 (*Dec. 7, 2020 aft., adjourned; amendments introduced*)

Bill 206 — Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Glasgo)

First Reading — 2827 (*Oct. 28, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 3223-24 (*Nov. 18, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Second Reading — 3314-21 (*Nov. 23, 2020 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 207 — Reservists' Recognition Day Act (Rutherford)

First Reading — 3224 (*Nov. 18, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 3719 (*Dec. 2, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Bill 208 — Alberta Investment Management Corporation Amendment Act, 2020 (Phillips)

First Reading — 3782 (*Dec. 3, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*)

Bill 209 — Cost of Public Services Transparency Act (Stephan)

First Reading — 3806-07 (*Dec. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 211 — Municipal Government (Firearms) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glasgo)

First Reading — 3849 (*Dec. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 212 — Official Sport of Alberta Act (Yaseen)

First Reading — 3849 (*Dec. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

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

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 3292 (*Nov. 19, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Second Reading — 3629-30 (*Dec. 1, 2020 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3740 (*Dec. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 3740-41 (*Dec. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*)

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