



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, December 15, 2022

Day 11

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 30th Legislature

Fourth Session

Cooper, Hon. Nathan M., Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UC), Speaker
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UC), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UC), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Allard, Hon. Tracy L., ECA, Grande Prairie (UC)
Amery, Hon. Mickey K., ECA, KC, Calgary-Cross (UC)
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Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UC)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (Ind)
Bilous, Hon. Deron, ECA, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, ECA, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Copping, Hon. Jason C., ECA, Calgary-Varsity (UC)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (Ind)
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)
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Feehan, Hon. Richard, ECA, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)
Fir, Hon. Tanya, ECA, Calgary-Peigan (UC)
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., ECA, Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UC)
Glubish, Hon. Nate, ECA, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UC)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UC)
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(UC)
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LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, ECA, Red Deer-North (UC)
Loewen, Hon. Todd, ECA, Central Peace-Notley (UC)
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UC)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UC)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Luan, Hon. Jason, ECA, Calgary-Foothills (UC)
Madu, Hon. Kaycee, ECA, KC, Edmonton-South West (UC),
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Nally, Hon. Dale, ECA, Morinville-St. Albert (UC)
Neudorf, Hon. Nathan T., ECA, Lethbridge-East (UC),
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Nicolaides, Hon. Demetrios, ECA, Calgary-Bow (UC)
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Rehn, Pat, Lesser Slave Lake (UC)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UC)
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Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UC)
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UC)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP)
Toews, Hon. Travis, ECA, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UC)
Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UC)
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Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UC)
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Wilson, Hon. Rick D., ECA, Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UC)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC)
Yaseen, Hon. Muhammad, ECA, Calgary-North (UC)
Vacant, Calgary-Elbow
Vacant, Calgary-Lougheed

Party standings:

United Conservative: 60

New Democrat: 23

Independent: 2

Vacant: 2

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Jason Copping	Minister of Health
Devin Dreesen	Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors
Mike Ellis	Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services
Nate Glubish	Minister of Technology and Innovation
Pete Guthrie	Minister of Energy
Nate Horner	Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
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Jason Luan	Minister of Culture
Nicholas Milliken	Minister of Mental Health and Addiction
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Sonya Savage	Minister of Environment and Protected Areas
Rajan Sawhney	Minister of Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism
Joseph Schow	Minister without Portfolio
Rebecca Schulz	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Tyler Shandro	Minister of Justice
Travis Toews	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Rick Wilson	Minister of Indigenous Relations

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Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk	Parliamentary Secretary for Ukrainian Refugee Settlement
Tanya Fir	Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women
Shane Getson	Parliamentary Secretary for Economic Corridors
David Hanson	Parliamentary Secretary for Procurement Transformation
Martin Long	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business
Miranda Rosin	Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism
R.J. Sigurdson	Parliamentary Secretary for EMS Reform
Devinder Toor	Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism
Glenn van Dijken	Parliamentary Secretary for Agrifood Development
Tany Yao	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health
Muhammad Yaseen	Parliamentary Secretary for Community Outreach

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Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Orr
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Allard

Eggen
Gotfried
Gray
Hunter
Issik
Phillips
Pon

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. van Dijken
Deputy Chair: Ms Goehring

Allard
Armstrong-Homeniuk
Barnes
Bilous
Carson
Feehan
McIver
Rowswell
Stephan
Walker

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Lovely
Deputy Chair: Ms Sigurdson

Armstrong-Homeniuk
Carson
Dang
Fir
Gotfried
Long
Sabir
Smith, Mark
Yao
Yaseen

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Smith
Deputy Chair: Mr. van Dijken

Ceci
Dach
Hunter
Loyola
Orr
Panda
Rehn
Shepherd
Toor

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Cooper
Deputy Chair: Mr. Williams

Deol
Fir
Goehring
Gray
McIver
Pon
Rowswell
Sabir
van Dijken

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Mr. Williams
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Irwin
Lovely
Nielsen
Nixon, Jason
Panda
Rehn
Sigurdson, L.
Singh
Sweet

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Mr. Reid
Deputy Chair: Mr. Gotfried

Aheer
Allard
Armstrong-Homeniuk
Deol
Ganley
Loyola
Nixon, Jason
Rehn
Renaud
Yao

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Ms Phillips
Deputy Chair: Mr. Turton

Hunter
Lovely
Pancholi
Panda
Renaud
Schmidt
Singh
Stephan
Toor
Yaseen

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Mr. Hanson
Deputy Chair: Mr. Feehan

Aheer
Dach
Ganley
Getson
Issik
Nielsen
Orr
Sigurdson, R.J.
Singh
Turton

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 15, 2022

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: The Deputy Chair of Committees is entirely out of control this afternoon.

Prayers

The Speaker: Let us pray. Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our King and to his government, to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to all in positions of responsibility the guidance of Your spirit. May they never lead the province wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideas but, laying aside all private interest and prejudice, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all.

Hon. members, we will be now led in the singing of *God Save the King* by Ms Brooklyn Elhard.

Hon. Members:

God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King!
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the King!

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: Hon. members, this morning I had the privilege of meeting with a very special guest who's joining us now in the Speaker's gallery. Please welcome the consul general of the Portuguese Republic, Mr. Costa, and he is accompanied by the honorary consul of Portugal in Edmonton, Mr. Fernandes. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you Chief Leonard Standingontheroad, Councillor Eric Shirt, and Chief Billy Morin from Treaty 6 nations. I am honoured by all the incredible work they do surrounding mental health and addiction supports, health centres, and the continuous work improving the lives of Indigenous peoples in Alberta. I am pleased to have continuous engagement with our First Nations partners, and I look forward to a bright and strong future relationship between us. I am honoured by their presence and very pleased that they are actually in the Speaker's gallery today. May you rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek also has a visitor.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you to the members in the Chamber a visitor who is no stranger to this Assembly. Ken Allred is a seasoned and experienced Alberta land surveyor and the former MLA for St. Albert, having served our great province from 2008 to 2012. He currently resides in the beautiful Crowsnest Pass. Ken was an incredible resource to this Assembly and to me personally, a mentor to me given his research and topical discourse around adverse possession leading up to the recent passage and imminent royal assent of Bill 3. His research encompassed every adverse possession file since the first Alberta case in the early

1900s. Despite being retired, Ken remains active in the Crowsnest Pass, serving on various municipal and other volunteer boards as well as continuing a small practice in arbitrating land and boundary issues inside and outside the court system. May I ask former MLA Allred to please rise in the Speaker's gallery and to receive the warm appreciation and welcome from this Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Technology and Innovation.

Mr. Glubish: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly three members of my family visiting the Legislature today. Seated in the Speaker's gallery are my father, Brian Glubish; my aunt Bev Lozinik; and my uncle Fred Lozinik. Family is so important to me and, I'm sure, to everyone in this Assembly, and it's so special to have them here today. I wouldn't be here without all the mentorship and counsel from my dad, and I want to thank him for all he's done for me. I invite them to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I too have some guests visiting from the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. They are Councillor Faye McGhee of Kneehill county, county councillor; her husband, Todd; and their son Mike. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon has a school to introduce.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly the Edmonton home-school ARPA club. Accompanying them today is the leader of the club, Andrea Veldkamp, and many of the parents are with them as well. Could the Edmonton home-school ARPA club please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod and Deputy Chair of Committees.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to rise in the House today and introduce to you and through you friends from Livingstone school in Lundbreck. I'd also like to highlight that among this group are Kathy Rast, Paige Rast, and Sophie Lynch-Staunton, granddaughter and great-grandchildren of Alberta's 11th Lieutenant Governor, Frank Lynch-Staunton. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you Alberta Malcolm, Sandra Sutter, Candice Calliou, and Raelene Young from the Métis Women's Economic Security Council. I was pleased to meet with these ladies this morning and support their work to improve the lives of Métis women in Alberta. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. the Deputy Premier has an introduction.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my constituents whom I had the honour of awarding Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II platinum jubilee medals: first, former Member of Parliament Peter Goldring, Jeremy Hamelin, Dr. Jennifer Njenga, Chinaemerem Ogbonna, Imam Bassam Fares, Janice Krissa-Moore, Sheri Doyle, and Jorgia Moore. May I please ask you to all rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce Maria Vicente, Shannon Berry, and Joe Hak. They hail all the way from Edmonton-Castle Downs, but I have adopted these folks in God's country, Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland. They're amazing volunteers that help out all over the place. Please, members, if we can give these folks a warm round of applause. Please rise to accept that.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Camrose has an introduction.

Ms Lovely: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you members of the rodeo community. Please welcome Muriel Hill from the Cloverlodge Stampede in Viking, Dave and Trudy Berrecloth from the Tofield Ag Society, Brooke Busenius and her grandparents May and Don Korobko. Brooke is an international rodeo competitor, and I'm so glad that they are here today. Please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Chamber.

Members' Statements

Job Creation and Economic Development

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, a real plan to create good-paying jobs, drive investment, and spur competitiveness: that's exactly what our Official Opposition rolled out yesterday, and I encourage everyone to read it at albertasfuture.ca. No, it doesn't include a job-killing, undemocratic sovereignty act. Instead, it does include actual consultation with Indigenous communities about expanding opportunities for First Nations partnerships on critical economic projects. It includes a new tax credit, the Alberta's Future tax credit, which will support innovation in new spaces, lead to \$10 million in new investments, and create an estimated 20,000 jobs.

It also includes a move to supercharge the petrochemical incentive program started under our government. Additional support for this program will lead to another \$10 billion in new investment and create another 27,000 good-paying jobs. It also includes a performance fast pass, a NEXUS-type support for businesses with good track records to get their projects off the ground faster. These are game-changing proposals from Alberta's NDP, Mr. Speaker. What does it mean for Albertans? It means good-paying jobs, more diversification, more investment opportunities, more opportunities for everyone.

We're also going to support our future leaders with a new campus in downtown Calgary and by restoring funding cut by this government at the worst possible time. We're going to support workers by restoring their rights. We're going to protect the retirement security of those who have worked their entire lives and who will rely on the CPP, and we're going to support families with affordable child care. We're going to connect communities with an actual plan for rural broadband. We're going to build an economic future for all.

There's an exciting conversation happening at albertasfuture.ca that everyone is invited to. Coming together to solve major challenges and ensure economic prosperity for all: that's how we build a better future. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

1:40

NDP Government Record

Mr. Sigurdson: Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are spending a lot of time these days claiming they know what's best for Alberta, but let's take a look back, shall we? Under the NDP average weekly earnings grew 1.7 per cent over four years. Under this government average weekly earnings have increased 11 per cent. The NDP raised taxes,

fees, and fines 97 times, amounting to \$3.4 billion in tax hikes, including the carbon tax, the largest tax hike in history.

Let's look at venture capital, Mr. Speaker. Under the NDP: 2016, \$34 million; '18, \$58 million. In 2017 Calgary wasn't even in the top 10 country-wide. Under this government for the third year in a row Alberta is on track to shatter venture capital records. Under the NDP there were hits to investment across the board. Overall, investment dropped 38.1 per cent, with a 46.5 per cent decline in construction, 40.2 per cent in utilities, 18.6 per cent in transportation and warehousing, and a 14.1 per cent decline in wholesale and retail trade. The NDP even promised a budget surplus of \$586 million, but in 2019 they created a \$7.9 billion deficit. NDP government spending was out of control, with a path that would have cost every Alberta taxpayer \$2,400 more in taxes every year. Their only success was making Alberta a high-cost, high-regulation market that drove \$45 billion of investment out of our province.

Today our government is leading the country, with a forecasted \$57 billion of investment this year alone. Alberta beat the national average in real GDP growth this year, at just under 5 per cent, higher than any year the NDP was in government. Mr. Speaker, these numbers speak for themselves. Albertans can't afford another four years of the NDP. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. I've watched the federal Parliament. I've seen lots of standing ovations. I feel like we're all heading on a bad path with standing ovations.

Official Opposition and 2022 Fall Sitting

Ms Rosin:

Well, 'twas the day before Christmas, and all through the House

MLAs were stirring for session was almost out.

Our families had hung our Christmas stockings with care
In hopes that eventually we'd get back there.

Albertans were watching from their nice, warm
homesteads,

Feeling hope for jobs, affordability, finally getting
ahead.

Conservatives gave rebates, supports, and cheap gas,
Lowered tax, help for parents, and all in one act.

When out of the Chamber there arose such a clatter,
I looked across the aisle to see what was the matter.

The NDP cried, "Job killers, dictators, destroying
'Berta,"

Forgetting their leader – well, he lives in Ottawa.

They opposed all we did without reading the bills,
Showing a pettiness that should probably send their
support for the hills.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
A new 338 poll; they must now think: oh, dear.

On Jagmeet, on Trudeau, on Liberal appointee.

Those were their top sources, now can't you see?

To the top of the party, to the ends of the Earth,
Albertans know that they'll never ever put Alberta first.

They scoffed and called our sovereignty act
undemocratic,

But if you didn't read the bill, then how can you be mad
at it?

If the NDP had their way, it's clear they'd do nothing.
They say they have solutions, but we know they're just
bluffing.

All session long our government acted in good faith.
We listened, proposed amendments, and participated in
debate.

Unfortunately, for them, the same can't be said,

Which leaves me here just scratching my head.
 Because they claim we're the problem, that Alberta
 won't fare.
 But deep down they know that their record is quite bare.
 So if you listen closely, then you'll hear the truth.
 Today Alberta is better, and we have the proof.
 We have grown the economy and diversified, too,
 Giving hope to new grads that their dreams can come
 true.
 We fought for our province and defended its right
 To develop its resources and package beef more polite.
 So in next year's election people don't want false fear.
 They want a vision to bring hope to the year.
 So to all who are watching this afternoon bright,
 Merry Christmas to all, and keep up the good fight.

[interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Misericordia Community Hospital

Mr. Dach: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be the MLA representing the Misericordia hospital, which opened in 1900 and has been in its current location since 1969. I'm proud to be able to stand here and advocate for this hospital, the people who access it, and the front-line health care workers, who work hard to protect Albertans' health.

During the pandemic we saw the lengths that health care workers would go to protect the lives of their patients. They worked themselves to exhaustion and risked burnout to ensure that those who needed their help were supported, and they did this while at the same time dealing with a government that was focused on fighting with front-line workers.

We owe our hospital front lines more than we can possibly pay back. The Misericordia hospital urgently needs two new CT scanners, one to replace an aging CT scanner which can be out of service for long periods of time, impacting health care across the region, and another one primarily for emergency room use in a soon to be open emergency room funded by the previous NDP government. As I'm sure all members of this House know, CT scanners are fundamental to emergency treatment and diagnosis. They are as essential to hospitals as stethoscopes. This is a simple investment that will help with diagnostics in their emergency room and for the rest of the hospital. The return on investment is almost incalculable for the hospital, for the community, and for the entire region served by the Misericordia.

I urge this government to look at the needs of our hospitals and ensure that they are supported, because when we invest in health care, we're investing in Alberta, Mr. Speaker. An Alberta NDP government will always stand with our front-line health care workers and the patients they serve.

Small Business, Job Creation, and Affordability

Ms Pon: Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the backbone of Alberta. Particularly in my riding, Calgary-Beddington, there are so many amazing small businesses that I'm proud to support, small businesses like Brixton Pub, owned by Becky, in the neighbourhood of MacEwan, who started her business during the height of COVID-19 and worked through the many challenges that the pandemic presented. This place had many challenges, but Becky never gave up on her business. She made it through thanks to the support of community and the support of this UCP government, like our small-business grant.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, Alberta has it all despite the NDP attempts to stifle our economy while they were in power. The UCP has invested

in growing it, and this government's work has paid off enormously. We have gained over 100,000 jobs in the last year; we now have among the lowest unemployment rates in the country, which is tremendously different from when the NDP was the government. Edmonton and Calgary have two of the top three unemployment rates in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we know that a strong economy makes a strong Alberta, and when we have a strong Alberta, we all share in the prosperity, especially those that need it most. This includes offering the most generous social programs of any province, programs that have only gotten stronger. This is including the indexing of AISH, income supports, the seniors' benefit, and the Alberta child and family benefit. This includes the \$2 billion in affordability packages that will benefit all Albertans, including small-business owners.

I'm so proud to call Alberta my home and to be Albertan. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Livingstone-MacLeod and the Deputy Chair of Committees.

Agricultural Environmental Stewardship

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes when I look at the news, I'm stunned and I cannot believe the headlines that I read. It's not always just on the CBC. One such report states that the Dutch government is planning to purchase over 3,000 farms only to shut them down soon after. They are claiming that this is an effort to comply with European Union environmental mandates to slash nitrogen emissions. The Netherlands is not the only place where attacks are taking place on farming. Here in our own country we are seeing similar intentions. The federal government wants to increase the carbon tax, which would cost Canadian farmers upwards of \$100,000 annually. These plans will jeopardize the sustainability and the viability of the Canadian family farm.

Some farmers have voiced opposition to the new rules, and how could they not, Mr. Speaker? Farming is the livelihood of many people and the backbone of this province, and these rules have put these livelihoods at stake. Our ag producers have a long history of environmental stewardship. In fact, I'd even say it's in their DNA. I know this because I'm proud to say that I'm the fifth generation raised on our family farm.

I watched my dad and grandfather year after year work the land with respect, knowing that if they took care of the land, the land would take care of them. This was so important to them that following the Depression, my grandpa Reid and my great-grandpa Reynolds ran part of their operation as an experimental farm, looking for ways to develop farming techniques and seed that would better the environment. That work played a large role in developing innovative farming hardware, just like the Noble blade.

Because of the roots and the heritage that I have in the farming sector, I must stand up for our ag producers. I truly believe that farmers and ranchers are stewards of the land, yet all over the world they're being devalued and attacked. The federal Liberals pick on farmers financially over and over. The rules the Trudeau government has put into place defy common sense and practice. Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with food insecurity across the globe, so why are we attacking the very people that put food on our tables?

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Edmonton-Glenora has question 1.

Official Opposition and Government Policies

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, before the House rises, let's look at who was really focused on Albertans this session. Our party brought forward legislation to protect and improve health care, we introduced a framework for jobs growth and investment attraction, we released a plan to freeze insurance premiums and lower costs for families, but what did the UCP do? They rammed through a job-killing sovereignty act dividing Canadians and setting Indigenous relations back a generation. Does the Premier understand why no one trusts her government to act on what really matters to Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I've observed about the NDP plan is it seems to be a continuation of all of the policies of the UCP. So if they're just going to continue the policies of the UCP, they may as well just vote us in again. One of the other things I would also note is that they are trying to rewrite history. Many people in the province, and certainly everyone on this side, are not going to forget the NDP job-killing record. When you look at what we have done: increasing the amount of venture capital, increasing the amount of capital investment, we've got oil sands companies increasing again. Alberta's seen a net increase of over 100,000 jobs since last year.

Ms Hoffman: The most pressing concern of this session was the health of Alberta's children, who are fighting RSV, COVID, and influenza. We saw overwhelmed emergency rooms at our pediatric hospitals. Waits of 20 hours. In Calgary there are so many sick children waiting, they had to put a trailer outside to keep them in. The Health minister said that help was coming soon, but it never arrived. The government voted against addressing the child health care crisis three separate times. So why does the Premier care more about paper straws than she does about sick children in Alberta?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was very concerned about the 20-hour waits, which is why we put Dr. John Cowell in place, and as I've been monitoring the wait times, they've never exceeded that level since he came in. So the system's working. But I know that the members opposite are already trying to change the channel because they are forgetting, and Albertans won't, that the NDP hiked taxes by \$3.4 billion in their four years of government. They raised taxes and fines 97 times. That includes the carbon tax, the largest tax hike in Alberta history. That is the record of the job-killing NDP, and people are not going to forget that.

Ms Hoffman: Another story this session is all of the UCP members who lost their moral compasses. They spoke against the sovereignty act, but when it came time to stand up for Albertans, they sold out for power and a promotion. They backed the Premier issuing clarifications for things like her defence of Vladimir Putin or claiming that the unvaccinated were the most discriminated against or her attacks on cancer patients or her refusal to support vaccines, her insulting comments about Indigenous people. Is there anyone left over there who's got a spine, and if so, will they stand up and say the Premier was wrong?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do recall that when the NDP were in power and we saw a decline in our economy, the former NDP Energy minister said this: certainly, there are always ways to talk about mobility of jobs between provinces, so maybe they can go work in B.C. until it gets better and then come back home. That

was their job-creating strategy, to chase people out of this province, and we saw six consecutive quarters of people leaving this province. That's turned around. We now have net in-migration that is the highest that we have ever seen.

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Edmonton-Glenora for the second set of questions.

Health Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Vaccination Policies

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the former president and CEO of AHS, Dr. Verna Yiu, gave a presentation at the University of Alberta. It was on health care and Alberta's workforce. She warned that demand for nurses and other health care workers in Canada is going up at a time when all-time vacancies are the highest they've ever been, yet the UCP government continues to attack and blame front-line workers instead of working with them to attract more people to the profession and keep those who are working in it today, so to the Premier. You've spent a lot of time firing people, but that doesn't fix health care. When will you actually start hiring?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, you have to remember that we had to rescind a policy that had been put in place by AHS that was chasing workers out of the profession and out of the province. We now welcome anyone, regardless of the medical choice that they make, to work in our system in Alberta Health Services. That's reaching out a hand to other provinces where they still have those restrictions in place. That's what we're going to be doing. We're also working, through our Minister of Skilled Trades and Professions, to ensure that we are doing recruitment internationally. We are also making sure that we reduce the . . .

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

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, the chaos caused by the UCP in our health care system is driving workers away. Dr. Yiu's presentation showed that the health care worker vacancy rate in Alberta has gone up 50 per cent under the UCP. The voluntary termination rate – that's people quitting in our province in health care – has gone up 50 per cent. The number of workers quitting in their first year under this government has doubled. More health care workers are working overtime, and they're getting sick, so why won't the Premier start listening to the front lines, listen to the workers, take action before things get even worse?

Ms Smith: I don't know why the member opposite keeps on standing up for administration and management, because what we are hearing is that it's the front line that continues to be ignored by layers . . .

Mr. Feehan: Why do you hate health professionals?

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford will know that unparliamentary language on or off the record still remains unparliamentary. [interjections]

The hon. the Premier has the call.

Ms Smith: We are the party that sticks up for the little guy. They are the party that sticks up for the managers. That is why we are working with our front-line workers to identify their issues to make sure that we are addressing them on the ground to push decision-making down so that we've got more money for the front line. We're going to continue that process that we started, and it only started because we took the bold decision to put Dr. John Cowell in place.

Ms Hoffman: According to documents released today by CTV News, ER wait times at Edmonton hospitals are the longest they've been since 2015. AHS data shows that four hospitals either matched their longest monthly wait times or surpassed them in September. That is driven by the triple whammy of RSV, COVID, and influenza, of which Alberta has the highest rates of spread in Canada. Why won't the Premier show some leadership, stand up with the chief medical officer of health publicly, tell Albertans that vaccines work, and answer questions about the growing health care crisis in Alberta?

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, we believe that it is important for people to talk to their family doctor about the medical choices that are best for them. Obviously, the influenza vaccine is important for those who are most vulnerable and can help reduce the risk. That is the message that has been put out there by Dr. Joffe. He has put it out in press releases. He has put it out on Twitter. He has written letters to parents, advising them of their options. The other thing that they can do, of course, is stay home if they are sick – I commend parents for doing exactly that – and to make sure that they're taking measures to protect themselves. That's just common sense. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall is the only one with the call.

Automobile Insurance Premiums

Mr. Sabir: In 2019 the UCP did a favour for their buddies in the insurance industry. They removed the rate cap on car insurance; right away premiums soared. For Albertans in my riding this meant thousands of dollars in extra costs on top of the worst cost of living in 40 years. Meanwhile insurance companies are making record profits. The Premier says that she knows we need a solution. Will she admit that the problem was caused by her Finance minister picking his friends in the insurance industry over Albertans?

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that insurance rates have been going up for a long time. They went up all the way through the NDP's time in office, 5 per cent per year, for a total of 20 per cent. We now know that we're in a position where Alberta has some of the highest insurance rates in the country. That's why I've asked my Finance minister and my Affordability and Utilities minister to meet with the insurance industry so that we can talk about ways that we can address this in the long run. Part of the problem with the approach taken by the members opposite is that it resulted in people having to pay their insurance premiums up front. People were deinsured. People had to bundle their insurance, and it became unaffordable. We need better solutions.

Mr. Sabir: According to a recent report by Ernst & Young Albertans are forced to buy the most expensive car insurance in Canada. An Alberta driver could pay more than double what their twin brother pays, having an identical car, in British Columbia. These premiums have soared since the UCP Finance minister removed the rate cap. That's fact. Will the Premier accept responsibility for Albertans paying the most expensive car insurance in the country after her government gave the green light to massive increases?

2:00

Ms Smith: Most of the increase that took place, took place in the 2015 to 2019 period, under the former government, so will they apologize to Albertans for the fact that it increased under them? In fact, when we released the cap, we ended up seeing a lower average

increase year over year. Now, what we are hearing is that there are a certain number of our insured . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier has the call.

Ms Smith: What we are hearing is that there is a certain percentage of the insured that are seeing double and triple the increases, and we need to understand why that is. We are hearing stories of people who have a clean driving record and they're seeing an increase. We need to understand why that is. To act as if it's a hundred per cent across the board is not true.

Mr. Sabir: On Tuesday, like today, the Premier said that she's concerned by the cost of car insurance and she hopes to find a solution sometime. My challenge to the UCP is: why wait? My private member's bill will be introduced today, and it will freeze insurance rates for one year. We can pass this bill in a day. Last night I invited the UCP to join us in getting this done before we leave and giving all Alberta drivers some holiday cheer. To the Premier: will she join us in freezing car insurance rates today so that we can find solutions? Yes or no?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, we believe in consulting with industry and identifying areas where we can work together to solve the problem. I think it's pretty well understood that we've got some issues that are . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier has the call.

Ms Smith: It is well understood, with the Ernst & Young report, that we have seen an escalation in rates that began in 2015 and has continued. The bulk of that increase happened under the NDP time in office, and that's why we've got to go and we've got to address this. We've got to identify the issues, and then we've got to work over the next number of months to find short-term, mid-term, and long-term solutions. What they put forward simply didn't work.

The Speaker: Hon. members, my apologies. A point of order was called at 1:57, that I failed to note, by the hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

Seniors' Issues

Ms Sigurdson: Since 2019 we've turned away about 300 seniors a year because we didn't have a bed when they needed a bed: those were the words of Larry Mathieson, the CEO of Calgary's Kerby Centre, which runs the lone elder abuse shelter in the city. This news is horrifying. Ensuring that no one is turned away when fleeing from abuse is critical, and I worry about the health and safety of those 300 seniors who were turned away. Will the minister commit to fixing this problem immediately?

The Speaker: The Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question and, of course, for her advocacy. Of course we want to make sure we're working with our not-for-profit providers, our shelter providers, to make sure that especially our seniors are not turned away. I'm more than happy to continue to work with these folks that provide these excellent services in our community to make sure that we have excellence in support and services for seniors in our community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms Sigurdson: Seniors built this province, and we owe them respect, dignity, and support to live their best lives. Seniors need a voice, especially when dealing with a government that has no compassion, like the UCP. We have proposed the creation of an independent seniors advocate, someone to stand up for seniors and bring their concerns to government. This government threw seniors off their benefit plans. They cut their income support programs and attacked our health system. Given the legacy of cruel UCP policy decisions impacting seniors, will the minister agree it's time to bring back the seniors advocate?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member for her question and her advocacy. This government is taking action to help address affordability challenges for seniors in our community. I, like her, have been out hitting doors, and I've heard from seniors first-hand about the challenges around affordability. That's why we reindexed seniors' benefits. That's why we have come with a hundred dollars a month starting in January for seniors in this province to help address affordability issues. Of course, there's also the money that's been put towards food banks to make sure that there's food available for all Albertans.

In regard to the seniors advocate we did consolidate the seniors advocate. There is a seniors advocate under Health. A lot of the issues . . .

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

Ms Sigurdson: The pain, suffering, and stress Alberta seniors experience under this government continues to deepen. The UCP is planning to pull seniors off the Canada pension plan. They're throwing the retirement security of hundreds of thousands into complete chaos. Seniors shouldn't have to worry about the Premier and Finance minister blowing their retirements on a police force no one wants or a revenue agency that no one wants. Will the Premier please stop scaring seniors and stop threatening their retirement by pulling out of CPP right here and right now?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am disappointed by that hon. member continuing to scare seniors. This government is taking real action to help seniors during this very difficult time. Of course, seniors' pension is not at risk. We . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: The hon. the minister.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, seniors' pensions are not at risk, and we will continue to make sure that our seniors are cared for, that we have supports in our community. We, obviously, are so thankful for seniors for building our province and giving us the legacy that we have here today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland has a question.

Federal Firearms Act Prosecution Protocol

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 1, 2020, the federal government arbitrarily banned more than 1,500 types of firearms. After the amnesty expires in October 2023, law-abiding Albertans could face jail time under the Criminal Code for simply possessing

property that they legally purchased. To the Minister of Justice: how will taking back constitutional jurisdiction for handling charges under the federal Firearms Act help protect Alberta's law-abiding firearms owners?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Look, we know that Public Safety Canada doesn't have the capacity, they don't have the wherewithal, they don't have the resources to confiscate hundreds of thousands of firearms across Canada, but that doesn't mean we're willing to take any risks. This is a federal government which is making a habit of making life more difficult for folks. The federal government – if they don't extend the amnesty, any person who owns a firearm listed in the 2020 ban will be criminalized by the federal government in October of '23. That's less than a year from now, and that's why we're taking action now.

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

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the minister for the response. Given that Alberta is taking back constitutional jurisdiction for handling the charges under the Firearms Act and given that Alberta's Crown prosecutors will now determine whether to pursue charges or not and further given that this new protocol provides prosecutors with guidance in respect to public interest when determining the charges, to the same minister: how will the newly issued protocol to Alberta's Crown prosecutors help protect Alberta's law-abiding firearms owners?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, while respecting the operational independence on individual cases, the new protocol provides prosecutors with guidance on figuring out when something is or is not in the public interest and whether or not to pursue charges. The protocol states that it will not be in the public interest to proceed with a charge of possession of a banned firearm where the following factors exist: first, that the accused lawfully obtained the firearm before May 1, 2020; second, that the firearm was reclassified as prohibited on May 1, 2020; and, third, that the accused has not been charged with any other offence in relation to the possession or use of that firearm.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the minister. Thank you for your work on this file. Given that the federal government handles cases involving the federal Firearms Act and given that the provinces have the constitutional authority to handle federal criminal law charges, including the charges related to the federal Firearms Act, to the Minister of Justice: how will these steps you've taken today help protect Albertans who own firearms that could be banned under the proposed amendments in Bill C-21?

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Over the past month or so we've seen the federal government continue to push further than we could've ever imagined with the proposed amendments to Bill C-21. These amendments arbitrarily ban hundreds of new models of legally owned shotguns and rifles. This is now legislation which is proposed to target hunters, farmers, sport shooters, who collectively own hundreds of thousands of firearms that could soon be prohibited. If these amendments are successful, C-21 will be the most sweeping and arbitrary ban in Canadian history. The ban

will not only be unenforceable but will criminalize hundreds of thousands of Canadians.

Cost-of-living Indexing of Benefits Programs

Ms Renaud: In 2018 our government tied the value of benefits for AISH recipients and low-income seniors to inflation finally. In 2019 one of the first things the UCP government did was to attack the vulnerable and disabled Albertans in our province by cutting the vital benefits. The UCP justified the cruel decision by saying that they couldn't afford the increased costs and running deficits, yet they paid for their ridiculous war room and gave away handouts to wealthy corporations. That was three years ago, and still the UCP has failed to apologize for the harm that they've done. In fact, they'd rather run around patting themselves on the back. Will the minister stand up today and apologize for making life unbearable for vulnerable and disabled Albertans?

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the history lesson. I remember three and a half years ago the previous government left us in a fiscal mess, deficit after deficit after deficit, on the path to over \$100 billion of debt. That's \$5 billion a year at the current tax rate in just financing cost, money that could have gone to the people that need it in our community. This government took real action on getting our financial house in order so that we could be at a place in time now, today, so that we can help our most vulnerable.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms Renaud: Given that the UCP government thinks so little of vulnerable people that they'd like to make life even more difficult for them by cutting vital benefits and given the public pressure finally forced the UCP to reverse their devastating decision and reindex benefits and given that the UCP is doing this on a go-forward basis only and ignoring the fact that they'll be responsible for people impacted in society with three years' worth of cuts, will the minister just admit that they've only done the bare minimum and it won't actually undo the harm that they've caused over the last three years? Just apologize and do better.

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, I've stated this before in this House, but it bears repeating. We inherited a fiscal train wreck from the members opposite, and we brought our fiscal house in order for the sustainability of programs going forward. No longer . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: No longer will we borrow from our grandchildren. No longer will we jeopardize programing for the most vulnerable in the future, Mr. Speaker. We brought responsible government to Alberta. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Ms Renaud: Given that we're all living through the worst affordability crisis in 40 years and given that for many of us it means just, you know, cutting costs at the grocery store, putting vacations on hold, but for the most vulnerable and disabled it can be the difference between having a home and being forced onto the street; it can be a matter of life or death. I still hear from people every day who can't make ends meet. This inflationary crisis is crushing them, and what this government is proposing to do is not

enough. You need to make them whole. You need to undo the damage you have created.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I share that member's deep concern for our most vulnerable in our community, and that's why this government is taking action, has taken action, will continue to take real action to make sure that we address the affordability challenges that our most vulnerable are facing in our community.

But, Mr. Speaker, again, we have to revisit the track record from three and a half years ago . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. Member for St. Albert had her opportunity to ask the question. The minister . . .

An Hon. Member: Shame.

The Speaker: Order. I don't need help from the folks on this side doing the job either.

The minister has the opportunity to answer the question, just as you've had to ask it.

The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, let's revisit the track record from three and a half years ago and the financial disaster that we found ourselves in when we took over government. This government got our financial house back in order, not only protecting these programs today but also into the future to make sure that we can support vulnerable people long . . .

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

Diabetes Supports

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over six months ago the UCP government created fear and anxiety by cruelly attempting to take coverage for insulin pumps away from 4,000 Albertans who rely on the insulin pump therapy program. Now, thankfully, Albertans organized their rallies against this, and the UCP backed down. The Minister of Health rightly apologized and in July promised there would be meaningful, ongoing conversations on future policy with the diabetes working group, but as of today the membership of the group is still not known and, from what I've seen, hasn't even met. So will the Minister of Health please explain why he's yet to follow through on his commitment to the type 1 diabetes community?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. We understand that diabetes is a significant issue. We were very pleased to be able to announce the two co-chairs of the diabetes working group, and they are working. We are identifying the other individuals on that working group to continue to be able to identify how we can address this chronic disease, better support Albertans, you know, who have it, and also prevent other Albertans from getting diabetes. This is a significant issue. We have set up the diabetes working group, and I'm looking forward to making more announcements on this in the future.

Mr. Shepherd: Given, Mr. Speaker, that a group with no members is not set up and given that after the UCP promised not to cancel the program, they also committed that new pumps with updated

technology would be added to the program as early as possible this year and given that that was exciting news for Albertans who would benefit from that technology, to hear it would happen this year, but given that there is not much time left in 2022 and I'm hearing from many Albertans that when they ask this government, their questions are going unanswered about when they'll have access to those new pumps, will the Minister of Health please tell type 1 diabetics when he will actually do what he promised and make more insulin pumps available under this program this year?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, the hon. member is quite correct. We made a commitment that we would make new pumps available, and I'm very pleased that work is being done right now between Alberta Health and manufacturers to actually make those available. I'm looking forward to being able to make an announcement on that in the very near future.

Mr. Shepherd: Given that the UCP's initial plans to cancel the insulin pump therapy program created anxiety in the type 1 diabetic community because it looked to cancel full public coverage and force them to potentially pay more out of pocket and given that when a type 1 diabetic asked the Premier about coverage for new pumps on her radio show, she talked about her plan for health savings accounts, which she previously suggested were intended to help Albertans get used to paying out of pocket for care, will the Minister of Health confirm here and now that any changes to the IPTP, including access to new pumps, will never require Albertans to pay out of pocket for life-saving technology?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we talked about the potential changes to the insulin pump program, we indicated, you know, at that point in time when we actually made the change that we were going to maintain the program as it stands. We will be maintaining the program as it stands. Again, we're working through negotiations with other insulin pump manufacturers. We'll be able to provide the new pumps to those under the program, and I look forward to making that announcement in the near future.

Pharmacists' Walk-in Clinics and Health Care Access

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to attend the opening of the Shoppers Drug Mart pharmacist walk-in clinic in Fort Saskatchewan. This location is one of a few that recently opened. The pharmacist walk-in clinic is a new and innovative concept serving to offer basic health care services to patients with common ailments and injuries by expanding the roles of prescribing pharmacists. Can the Minister of Health please inform this House how this innovative idea actually works?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the excellent question. Albertans need better access to primary care, and this pilot project uses the skills of pharmacy teams to improve access safely and appropriately with the same regulatory oversight as all other health care providers. These clinics will enable Albertans to get help quickly and easily for minor health problems and the management of chronic conditions. Pharmacists work within their defined scope of practice. They're key assets in

delivering quality primary care and can help address many health concerns that may otherwise go untreated.

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Mr. Speaker, given that wait times are a major issue within the health care system in Alberta and the rest of Canada and that patients are often left waiting for far too long for simple yet critical treatment and diagnosis and given that prescribing pharmacists are front-line health care staff, which many Albertans count on for a variety of services, can the same minister please explain how this new concept of pharmacists' walk-in clinics will help reduce wait times for Albertans seeking health care?

Mr. Copping: Thanks once again to the hon. member for the question. Mr. Speaker, pharmacists in Alberta have the broadest scope of practice in Canada. By leveraging their extensive training, this pilot offers Albertans another health care option, which can ease pressures on other parts of our health care system. Through better management of chronic diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure, pharmacists can help to take pressure off family doctors and emergency rooms. With the knowledge gained from the pilot project, we can improve health care delivery, and Alberta can continue to be a leader in pharmacy practice across the country.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that pharmacists' walk-in clinics are simply one step closer to shortening wait times and that many of my constituents have contacted me over the years with concerns and suggestions regarding the state of our health care system and given that our government is committed to improving the health care system for all Albertans, can the minister please share with this House the government strategy to reduce wait times and improve accessibility of health care for all Albertans? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

2:20

Mr. Copping: Thanks once again to the member for the excellent question. Mr. Speaker, we know our health care system is under strain, and we're taking action to address it. Last month the Premier and I appointed Dr. John Cowell as the official administrator for AHS in order to provide efficient, effective, and decisive leadership that we need right now. Dr. Cowell's mandate is specifically targeted to reducing wait times for surgeries, emergency rooms, and ambulances. We are confident he'll be able to make the necessary changes, and Albertans will have better access to the care that they need when they need it.

Homelessness in Edmonton

Member Irwin: Another task force from the UCP. Unhoused folks dying on our streets can't wait for a task force. The evidence is clear. We know what's needed – housing, investments in harm reduction, preventative health care – not a task force consisting of mostly White, privileged politicians who've never experienced homelessness or known what it's like to struggle with addiction. To the Premier. Now is your chance to set a new direction. Stop with the committees, the panels, the task forces and instead roll up your sleeves, make the investments we all know are needed, and support our communities today.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction.

Mr. Milliken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Addiction, homelessness, and public safety issues are impacting every community in Alberta.

That is why we are taking extreme action with regard to this fantastic task force. I kind of actually already feel like I answered some of these questions yesterday, so maybe I'll just give a couple of quotes here. I'd like to quote the Edmonton police chief, Dale McFee, who said: this is the first time that I've seen the right ministers take the right approach, in my opinion, and actually drive change. He called what we are doing on this issue real leadership.

Thank you very much for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Member Irwin: The tragic murder of two men in Chinatown this year highlighted the need for greater support for community safety. Multiple ministers from this government met with leaders from the Chinese community and promised to support the healthy streets operation centre, which the city has funded for two years as part of the safety plan demanded by the Justice minister, yet that same minister hasn't even responded to the city's request for provincial support. Will the minister commit today to follow through on his government's promise to help fund this key ask from the Chinese community?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. This now falls to the new Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services. He's very happy to continue to work with the city of Edmonton, as he has been since he's entered into the role and as I did before, making sure that Edmonton has the resources that it needs to be able to respond to the safety concerns that all Edmontonians have had in their city, the concerns that they've had in the lack of response from the city of Edmonton and their council and the proposals previously about reducing funding for the Edmonton Police Service. We're very happy to have received the community safety plan from Edmonton and to work with the city.

Member Irwin: Given that residents, business owners, and leaders in the communities that I represent want to see compassionate support for those who use drugs, including investments in harm reduction, transitional supports, and pathways to recovery, and one of the biggest asks that we're all hearing is the need for investment in transitional housing and shelter options to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing, to the minister, any of the ministers: why do you refuse to invest in supportive housing? It saves money. It saves lives. Do the right thing.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Mr. Speaker, this government is taking action. We have been taking action. We've been investing in affordable housing for the last three and a half years.

Member Irwin: Supportive.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: It's supportive housing and all types of housing: seniors' housing, transitional housing.

We will continue to invest in affordable housing. Actually, I just did a big announcement the other day. Again, they obviously missed the announcement; \$55 million was just announced the other day here in Edmonton. We are building housing. We are taking real action to address these very, very real challenges on the street. Mr. Speaker, it's more than just a budget line item for us; we're actually building these houses.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning is next.

Energy Company Municipal Tax Payment

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's rural municipalities are under increased financial pressure as they prepare to go yet another

year without collecting unpaid taxes from the energy sector. According to the RMA these unpaid taxes have grown from \$173 million in 2020 to now more than \$253 million in 2022. Losing those revenues means that more municipalities are forced to cut services and eliminate positions. In November the Municipal Affairs minister promised the RMA that this issue was her top priority, yet they're still waiting. When will they get their unpaid taxes?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I was happy to have an announcement yesterday where both the presidents of RMA and AM were in attendance, a great announcement on our economic development in rural Alberta plan. This question came up from the press gallery. Paul McLauchlin, the president of RMA, stood with this government with full confidence that we are getting to the root of this problem. There have been changes that have been discussed by both Energy, Municipal Affairs, and Environment. We're going to do it and not just on municipal taxes but for landowners, too.

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

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that last year's Bill 77 clearly failed to get the payments flowing to municipalities and given that the reeve of Vulcan county has said that he expects the number to increase, saying that oil and gas companies with active wells actually use this law as a loophole to get out of paying their back taxes, and given that Vulcan county has already had to lay off staff because of the UCP failure, will the minister admit that they don't have a plan or a strategy and that it was actually a failure under Bill 77 and they should be paying rural communities?

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

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm from a part of the world where there's tons of legacy oil activity, where the orphan well issue is a big thing. I work closely with my municipalities, and that bill did help. Did it fix the problem? No. We have a few bad actors that are giving the industry a bad name, frankly, and we're going to continue to work with municipalities. We talk about municipalities – I have 26 municipalities in my riding. We talk about everything. We're not planning bike lanes on the weekend. We're talking about real problems, and we'll continue to do that.

Ms Sweet: Well, given that yesterday the Leader of the Official Opposition rolled out a new performance fast pass as part of our plan for job creation in Alberta and given that this pass acts like Nexus but for economic project approvals, allowing companies with good track records to get shovels in the ground quicker, and given that this fast pass could act as an incentive for companies with outstanding taxes owed to hurting municipalities to pay them off, will the minister stand today and offer support for our performance fast pass? It's a good idea, Minister. Let's just get on board with it.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, it sounds very much like something we've already done and municipalities are using. I know that even in my department of agriculture we work with municipalities in a concierge service style, bringing in business, working through problems, whether it be rail or water. I will promise that member and all the opposition that if they do ever find themselves in possession of a good idea, we'll look at it.

Calgary Economic Development

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, recently I was on a private visit to my family in India, the first time in three years. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. The hon. Member for Calgary-Edgemont is the only one with the call.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, recently I was on a private visit to my family in India, the first time in three years. During that time I also met with CEOs of major companies in various sectors. I was pleased to find that many of these business leaders were excited about investing in Canada and especially in Calgary's booming economy. Can the minister of jobs and economy please explain why there is such an excitement about the opportunities in Calgary?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the hard-working Member for Calgary-Edgemont. I will tell you that Calgary's economy is booming. People can't wait to set up shop in Alberta and especially Calgary. Here's the proof. Calgary right now is one of the most livable cities in the world. It's a rating, and it is. In fact, 75 per cent worth of the venture capital deals have happened right in Calgary. That's almost a half a billion dollars this year, and that's a record. That's going to be a record here. A thousand jobs by Mphasis, a global tech firm opening a new office in Calgary; \$24 million invested by Sidetrade, another major global tech company; there are so many success stories in Calgary. Calgary welcomes the world.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, given that I have also spoken to entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley who are interested in expanding to Calgary, creating more jobs for Calgarians and Albertans, and given that these companies require a labour force with job-specific skills, can the minister of jobs please share with this Assembly what programs Alberta has to train Calgarians to fill these skilled jobs?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, we all remember the four years under the NDP where tens of thousands of businesses left Alberta and fled to other jurisdictions. It's not like that now. Record numbers of people are coming to live here in Alberta. We're investing in helping them get new skills to succeed: \$600 million through the Alberta at work program so that Albertans can find well-paid jobs, \$171 million being invested to create over 10,000 new postsecondary seats in high-demand programs. We have a huge demand in almost every single industry, all sorts of jobs. Alberta's calling. If you want a job, if you want an opportunity, come to Alberta.

2:30

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, given that there is tremendous excitement regarding the economic opportunities in Calgary and Alberta and given that this government has been talking about the renewed Alberta advantage, can the same minister please inform this Assembly what the renewed Alberta advantage will mean for my constituents in Calgary?

Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all my colleagues and constituents: Merry Christmas.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, it will be a merry Christmas if they come out to Alberta. That's because they'll save \$14.8 billion compared to other jurisdictions in Canada just on taxes. We have low taxes, but there's so much more. We have low taxes, no sales tax, a business-friendly government, and the renewed Alberta advantage is so much more. It's livable, affordable, vibrant cities like Calgary and Edmonton. It's a booming tech sector. It's world-class universities. It's over 100,000 job opportunities right now here in Alberta. If you want a job, if you want an opportunity, this is the place. Come on out to Alberta. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Student Enrolment and School Construction

Mr. Carson: Mr. Speaker, schools in my community are using libraries, staff rooms, and hallways as makeshift classrooms: 60 students packed into one room divided by pylons; students in classrooms so large they don't even know each other's names by the end of the year. Both Bishop David Motiuk and David Thomas King are way over their capacity. BDM has 1,400 students when it was built for 940. DTK is in a similar situation. Kids in my neighbourhood are being forced to take 40-minute bus rides twice a day. Minister, this is your legacy. Are you proud?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question. You know, we're addressing school classroom enrolment growth by providing additional funding. The members opposite continue to raise fear, but what we're actually doing is increasing the number of schools we have. We have actually built more schools in three years than they built in four. We are addressing those issues. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Mr. Carson: Given that the Rosenthal K to 6 school is a year 1 priority for the Edmonton public school board and Hawks Ridge K to 6 is a year 2 priority and given that these schools would have alleviated the massive pressures our community is seeing and in many cases would have removed the need for students as young as four years old to be bused out of their communities and given that the minister repeatedly uses the talking point that Edmonton public didn't have a priority list, which is simply not true – if the minister even attempted to provide adequate funding, these schools could have been built already. Minister, west Edmonton families need and deserve new schools. Why does the minister continue to play political games with the future of our students?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, that is just not true. The members opposite know that we have a gated process that all school divisions go through. It is very detailed. It goes on the priorities of the school divisions, but I cannot help it . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: The Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: I can't help it, Mr. Speaker, if the school divisions themselves don't prioritize schools in growing areas. I can tell the members opposite that I have spoken with Edmonton public school division, and they're happy now that they understand the process more fully. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Mr. Carson: Given, Mr. Speaker, that under the NDP government we saw 60 schools a year built compared to the dismal record of this UCP government, 60 schools over four years – I saw the building of David Thomas King, Bishop David Motiuk, Michael Phair, just to name a few in my community – but given that this minister can't even be bothered to properly fund the schools that are already built, let alone fund the desperately needed schools across my community and across the province, forcing these projects back a minimum four to six years, to the minister. Thousands of families who have listened to your rhetoric for nearly four years are tired, but I promise that an NDP government will get the job done. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Member LaGrange: You know what, Mr. Speaker? The members opposite are not telling the truth. This is not factual. They only built 60 schools over four years. We built over 66 over three, and we're building more. You know what . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. I might just warn members that me standing and then sitting down isn't another opportunity to shout down another member of the Assembly.

The hon. the minister.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know what? The NDP has failed on so many fronts: they failed on delivering curriculum, they failed on addressing class size, they failed francophones by cutting the Francophone Secretariat, and they failed choice in education. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Government Policies and Red Tape Reduction

Mr. Nielsen: I've decided to help my friend the Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction fulfill the terms of the Premier's mandate letter. The Premier recently imposed the job-killing sovereignty act on Albertans, opposed by the Calgary Chamber of commerce, municipalities, Indigenous communities, and so many more, which means the act will be bound in litigation and force this government to use regulation to compel compliance with their decrees. Can the minister of red tape explain how using extra regulations to carry out the Premier's demand is not red tape, and will he do his job and remove this red tape, that's harmful to Alberta's economy?

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate a question from the opposition. Unfortunately, in this case they're using it to disguise the fact that in 2011 the Leader of the Opposition said, and I quote: sometimes public interest is better served by limiting the profitability of that business. Unquote. Then the Leader of the Opposition has the audacity in 2015 to support that by raising taxes on everything that moved, including corporations, and proceeded to chase \$100 billion worth of investment out of this province. Shame on them. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nielsen: Given that the next step of this Premier's agenda is a massive expansion of bureaucracy, spending, regulation, and red tape that comes with hijacking the pension plans of Albertans against their wills and given that the Premier plans to use pensions of Albertans to purchase herself a police force that Albertans also oppose, which will result in another massive expansion of bureaucracy, costs, and red tape, and given in addition to being overwhelmingly opposed by Albertans, an Alberta pension plan and Alberta police force will impose countless layers of red tape on Albertans, will the minister do his job and shut these down?

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, you have to forgive the hon. member because they've only got two tools in their tool box; one is taxes, and the other is regulation. We saw that in 2015, when companies like Shell and ConocoPhillips fled the province because of the socialist ideologies. I'm proud to report that our plan is working. We cut taxes, reduced red tape, and jobs and investment are coming back to the province, just like we said it would. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nielsen: Given that the trifecta of bad ideas generated by this Premier is the idea of an Alberta revenue agency that will cost millions, massively expand the bureaucracy, with the only benefit being that Albertans will now get to fill out two tax forms, but given that asking Albertans to fill out their taxes twice is the very definition of harmful red tape, surely the minister of red tape can stand in this place and confirm that it will not go ahead on his watch. Or can he alert this House when his position was renamed from minister of service Alberta to the minister of carrying water for the Premier's bad ideas? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have two case studies here in this House. The members opposite, when they were in government, raised taxes on everything that moved. They added regulatory burden and red tape, sent tens of thousands of jobs packing, and perpetual deficits. We have deregulated, we've cut taxes . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, we have trimmed regulations. We've reduced taxes, created a competitive business environment. We're leading the nation in economic growth, creating tens of thousands of jobs, and we have a balanced budget. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Infrastructure Project Prioritization and Management

Mr. Rehn: Mr. Speaker, provincial road construction projects are crucial to allow our economy to grow and to help Albertans drive to work and to get home safely. My riding in northern Alberta is home to hard-working families, difficult terrain, and trillions of dollars worth of resource wealth. Can the Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors comment on his commitment to build highway 686 and other economic corridors?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors.

2:40

Mr. Dreesen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a great question from the Member for Lesser Slave Lake. We are working with industry and created a ministerial steering committee to expand economic corridors, especially in northern Alberta. We'll be developing an economic corridor along 686 between Fort McMurray and the northeastern part of the province. Obviously, that's an important region, Alberta having the third-largest oil reserves in the world and the fifth-largest natural gas reserves in the world. Help growing economic corridors within this province not only helps grow our economy, but it also helps protect families and communities when natural disasters strike.

Mr. Rehn: Thank you to the minister. Mr. Speaker, given that provincial construction projects support jobs, improve our quality of life, and build assets that last generations, can the same minister comment on how he plans to prioritize needed projects across our province, especially since the NDP neglected so much of Alberta during their disastrous four years in government?

Mr. Dreesen: Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP were disastrous for Alberta, and a sequel for another four years would be even worse

than the original. In the first year of the NDP Alberta lost nearly 17,000 jobs. But the NDP could actually help Albertans. There's talk that the NDP is starting to buck against their Liberal coalition deal in Ottawa, so I do have a Christmas wish for the NDP: break your 2025 agreement with the Trudeau Liberals, help Albertans, call a federal election. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Rehn: Mr. Speaker, given that failed NDP restrictive contract arrangements in B.C. have seen a work stoppage at the Cowichan district hospital in Duncan, B.C. and given that it was after an Indigenous contracting company said it was denied a permit to continue work due to an NDP rule over union membership and given that my riding in Lesser Slave Lake has the highest Indigenous population out of any constituency in Alberta, can the same minister assure Albertans that NDP-style, pro big union boss policies won't delay projects here in Alberta?

Mr. Dreeshen: Mr. Speaker, the NDP cares more about their big union bosses than Alberta families and Alberta workers, and we all know the NDP would bring in socialist procurement for provincial construction projects, creating labour unrest, increasing delays and cost overruns. The NDP, as the member mentioned, has already used it to kick out Indigenous workers from the Cowichan regional hospital project in B.C., but we will always stand up against NDP labour wars. To paraphrase a TV show, *Yellowstone*: we are the opposite of socialist procurement; we are the wall that it bashes up against, and we will not break.

The Speaker: All members will be sad to know that that concludes the time allotted for Oral Question Period. In 30 seconds or less we will continue to the remainder of the daily Routine. Merry Christmas and safe travels if you're heading home this afternoon.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall has a statement to make.

Victim Services

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our criminal justice system there are those who are often left voiceless: the victims of crime, the very people who have experienced unspeakable harm and trauma, the ones who need our support the most. Victims' services agencies have stepped in, advocating for and supporting the needs of victims of crime, yet this government is planning to remove the voices of victims of crime. It is another folly in this government's approach to the justice system.

The UCP government also already funnelled money out of the victims of crime fund and failed to keep funding for legal aid in step with inflation. Just last night the government quashed an amendment to the Police Act which would have enshrined a trauma-informed perspective in policing principles in our province, helping to protect the dignity and well-being of victims. Now they're going to centralize victims' support services without consulting municipalities or victims' support service organizations.

We have already seen the devastating failure of centralized EMS dispatch. Now they want to introduce a new model of victim services which fails to take into consideration local interests or established relationships.

My colleagues and I have heard from victim services across the province opposing these changes. To them we say: we hear you. An

NDP government believes in the fundamental importance of victim services. We will support the existing service providers and expand their competencies. To the victims of crime: we stand with you.

Presenting Petitions

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

Mr. Rowsell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm presenting to you a vital petition coming from my constituency, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright. Ty Thiessen, a high school student in Lloydminster, started and managed to get 192 signatures from other students in my constituency. Within this petition is a remedy being sought to amend the sixth schedule of the Constitution Act, 1982, and fight the federal carbon tax.

Introduction of Bills

Bill 205

Official Sport of Alberta Act

Ms Lovely: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to rise today to request leave to introduce Bill 205, Official Sport of Alberta Act.

Our team has been laying the necessary groundwork to recognize rodeo in its rightful place as the official sport for Alberta. I believe including chuckwagon races is essential for rodeo, and chuckwagon races are quality family entertainment. These activities are wholesome, family oriented, and an important pillar of our cultural foundation in rural Alberta. I believe all Alberta families should have the opportunity to attend Alberta rodeos and create these special memories that will last forever. Yee-haw.

[Motion carried; Bill 205 read a first time]

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

Bill 206

Insurance (Private Passenger Vehicle Premium) Amendment Act, 2022

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request leave to introduce a bill being Insurance (Private Passenger Vehicle Premium) Amendment Act, 2022.

If passed, this act will freeze auto insurance premiums for one year upon proclamation. During this time Albertans will be protected. It will give the government time to develop changes to make premiums more sustainable, more affordable for Albertans. Given the changing views of the Premier, at the appropriate time we will seek unanimous consent to pass this legislation today and freeze auto insurance premiums for one year from today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 206 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. the minister of jobs, the economy, and innovation has a tabling.

Mr. Jean: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to the Northern Alberta Development Council Act I am pleased to table five copies of the council's 2021-2022 annual report. This annual report highlights the outstanding work the council undertook during the 2021-2022 fiscal year. This council champions the cause of Alberta's northern communities and our economy, and this work helps foster the economic

and social development opportunities in northern Alberta. Thank you for their work.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora has a tabling.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In question period today I referred to AHS workforce numbers around, specifically, the number of people quitting or retiring early and the number that are doing it in the first year. I noted that it has doubled under the UCP's leadership.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Mr. Long: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the requisite number of copies of a petition along with letters of support in regard to the Whitecourt health care centre. I'd like to thank everyone involved in getting this put together, in particular Don and Lynne Connell and Elaine Gunderson for their efforts.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods and Opposition House Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague the MLA for Edmonton-Whitemud I'm tabling five copies of a letter from a mom whose son has severe combined immunodeficiency writing because of the Alberta government's passing of Bill 32, which has limited union support to social causes and organizations, and delaying donations to charities is having a negative impact on her family.

2:50

The Speaker: Hon. members, this brings us to points of order. At 1:57 the hon. Member for Taber-Warner called a point of order, and I see the hon. the Government House Leader will rise on his behalf.

Point of Order Imputing Motives Addressing the Chair

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order on behalf of the Member for Taber-Warner under 23(h), (i), and (j), where (h) reads, "makes allegations against [the] Member"; (i), "imputes false or unavowed motives to another"; (j), "uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder." At the time noted when the point of order was called, it was clearly heard from the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford the following: why do you hate health care workers?

Mr. Speaker, making such an allegation at the Premier while she was answering a question in question period, doing what her job is here, responding to the concerns of the members opposite: that kind of language is unnecessary, it's unparliamentary, and, frankly, it's totally disrespectful. You cannot make those kinds of allegations against another member in this Chamber. I would ask that that member himself apologize for using such language. It's not the first time that this member has used such language in this Chamber. He habitually likes to walk the line of what is and what is not parliamentary. These outbursts are, frankly, disrespectful to this Chamber and should not be accepted.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the Government House Leader was arguing this point of order, he also used the words that the member habitually walks and makes those kinds of comments. I think it's a matter of debate. The reason it's a matter of debate is that we do know the Premier's own record for saying that AHS health care workers have manufactured some of these crises. Based on those

comments, I think it's clearly a matter of debate that we don't see that health care workers are liked much by that government side or the Premier. It's in that context. It's a matter of debate; it's not a point of order.

The Speaker: I am prepared to rule unless there are any other meaningful submissions.

I'd like to make two points this afternoon. First and foremost, during that particular exchange the hon. the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford was called to order, and the Speaker noted that unparliamentary language, either on or off the record, was still unparliamentary. I'd also like to point to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, while he's doing some Christmas reading this weekend, that he might take out rules of order and decorum, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, page 610, chapter 13:

Members are less apt to engage in heated exchanges and personal attacks when their comments are directed to the Chair rather than to another Member. If a Member directs remarks toward another Member and not the Speaker, the Member will be called to order and may be asked to rephrase the remarks.

On this occasion he's going to be asked to apologize, and I'm sure you'll be happy to do it on his behalf.

Mr. Sabir: I will retract and apologize. Thank you.

The Speaker: I consider this matter dealt with and concluded. We are at Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

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

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request unanimous consent to waive Standing Order 8(2) and Standing Order 9(1) in order to revert to private members' business so that the Assembly may debate third reading of Bill 202, Alberta Personal Income Tax (Charitable and Other Gifts) Amendment Act, 2022, moved by the hon. Member for Peace River and mensch, my good friend behind me here.

[Unanimous consent granted]

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

Bill 202 Alberta Personal Income Tax (Charitable and Other Gifts) Amendment Act, 2022

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Peace River.

Mr. Williams: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Chamber for unanimous consent. I rise to move third reading of Bill 202, the Alberta Personal Income Tax (Charitable and Other Gifts) Amendment Act, 2022.

[Mr. Reid in the chair]

It's an important piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. It is probably one of the most impactful pieces of private member's legislation that I have seen. I'm very, very proud to be working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I'm very proud to be working with a number of different charities. I visited food banks; the Salvation Army; the Kids Cancer Care Foundation; the Alberta Cancer Foundation; Fear Is Not Love, an emergency centre amongst other services in Calgary

for vulnerable women; the Alberta Children's hospital; the Stollery hospital; the Canadian National Institute for the Blind; the Canadian Islamic Centre and a number of different mosques; a number of different church and religious organizations; the Calgary Health Foundation; the Calgary volunteer organization; the Edmonton volunteer organization; upon hundreds of others that I have yet to speak to that I know are interested.

The support for this bill is broad, widespread, and deep within the charitable sector. It's deep outside of the charitable sector with anyone who donates, which is disproportionately a high number of Albertans compared to other provinces, and we're incredibly proud of our charitable history and heritage in Alberta. I'm very proud that this piece of legislation will get passed, God willing, by the end of this very short debate with unanimous consent, again, as it's been through the first readings and the Committee of the Whole. So, with that, and underscoring the importance of supporting the charitable sector, giving a break to average families in their donations towards those charities, I ask every member to support this and to move forward in Alberta's great tradition of charitable giving and philanthropy.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Any other members wishing to speak to third reading of Bill 202, the Alberta Personal Income Tax (Charitable and Other Gifts) Amendment Act, 2022? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to say a few final words on Bill 202, and I thank the hon. Member for Peace River for following this bill through. As a token of co-operation we, of course, are moving it into this last day, with the Official Opposition giving you a hand.

Again, I just wanted to say a few comments that I had put forward on this bill previously, just to remind all members in the government in particular and then whoever happens to be the government afterwards – right? – to make sure that this is not used as an excuse to in any way cut the government of Alberta's responsibilities to charities and nonprofits in the form of grants and other supports that they require to function. As you are registered as a charity, this is a stream of income, but it's not the only stream of income, by any means, for any number of the hundreds – there are really thousands – of nonprofits and charities here in the province.

By passing this, it'll be a way by which they can enhance one element of their fundraising stream, which is charitable donations, but it should in no way somehow allow or think that the government has licence to cut any other grants or benefits that nonprofits and charities need to survive and provide essential service to Albertans. So that was my first caveat. You know, I think the government promised to do that, so that's good.

The second issue that I had brought forward before was to ensure that with this bill, if passed – I've got a good feeling about it – there is an education, public awareness element that accompanies this bill so that people know that the terms of charity and income tax returns have been enhanced, right? I know that when we follow the patterns of donations, donations have dropped off, and we need to get those people back, because once you are in the habit of donating to a particular charity, chances are you will continue to do so, sometimes for the rest of your life. So by just pointing out to people just how much better it is, the return for income tax, based on this bill if it passes and if we get that information into people's hands, then I think we'll really help the charitable sector a lot. An education program that will accompany Bill 202: that would be my

strong suggestion. Yeah. You know what? I've got a feeling maybe the government will do that, too.

The third thing is to again encourage other jurisdictions, especially the federal government, to look to increasing or changing the tax return for a charitable donation and increasing like we are doing here in the province of Alberta. I think we're setting a good example for other jurisdictions, and certainly it would benefit Albertans and Canadians in general if the federal government looked at reforming charitable donations and enhancing the return that a donor could enjoy if they donate to a charity. Those are my three things that I would like to see, and I'm certainly happy to support this bill.

3:00

And don't forget – let's all remember what we just did here, which was to give unanimous consent for a bill to move forward. We're going to do that again in just a few minutes. You know, in the spirit of giving and in the spirit of looking at our unsustainable car insurance rates, maybe we could try that again here in just a few more minutes.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Others wishing to speak to third reading of Bill 202?

Seeing none, I'm prepared to call the question.

The hon. member for – oh.

Mr. Williams: To close debate. Waived.

The Acting Speaker: Close debate waived. Sorry about that, hon. member.

[Motion carried; Bill 202 read a third time]

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader has risen.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since there is a very collaborative environment going on in this House – we're in the spirit of collaboration; good bills, good ideas are getting passed – I would also like to seek unanimous consent of the Legislature to waive Standing Order 8(2) and Standing Order 9(1) to proceed to private members' business in order to consider Bill 206, Insurance (Private Passenger Vehicle Premium) Amendment Act, 2022, at second reading. I hope that government members and all Members of this Legislative Assembly will consider this unanimous consent.

[Unanimous consent denied]

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

Bill 2

Inflation Relief Statutes Amendment Act, 2022

[Adjourned debate December 14: Mr. Amery]

The Acting Speaker: Any members wishing to speak to third reading for Bill 2, the Inflation Relief Statutes Amendment Act, 2022? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning has risen.

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise to Bill 2. You know, I'm going to try to keep my comments short just because I recognize we have some things, that there may be other people that would like to speak to this. But one of the concerns that I do primarily have with Bill 2 is the piece within the legislation that speaks to RROs and this direction that is happening by the government to cap the rate at 13.5 cents but only for a short period

of time between January and March, until March 31, and then what we will see is that the rate will then go back to the market rate of whatever that may be, whether it be less than the 13.5 or over the 13.5, but the consumer that is actually going to be receiving that service from the retailer will have to pay that adjustment back.

For example, for those that find RROs a little complicated, if it's capped at 13.5 cents for a consumer on an RRO and it goes up to, let's say, even 15 cents – that's a 2 cent difference on your kilowatts – then you're looking at all of that having to be accumulated over a period of time. Now, I appreciate what the government is doing is trying to bring down the costs for Albertans over the winter peak, when typically the rates may be high – however, we've seen higher rates in the summer when we hit severe heat waves – but the issue that I have is that I don't know if consumers are going to be aware of this cap and then this need to have to pay it back.

What we typically see on a bill – let's think about, like, if you have a cable bill and you only pay a percentage of your cable. You will always see on your bill your outstanding balance. So if your bill was \$100 for cable, you only pay \$50, your bill tells you that you owe \$50 on your next upcoming bill. I don't see anything in this piece of legislation that is ensuring that the consumer is aware that they're going to have to pay the difference back.

What concerns me about the fact that that's not in the legislation and that there isn't a requirement under this cap to notify the consumer is, one, the government has a responsibility for consumer protection, and they should be making sure that any consumer that is accessing an RRO through a retailer is aware that this is the agreement, and, two, we know that primarily the Albertans that are accessing the RRO agreements or contracts tend to be living either in low income or have bad credit and aren't able to access a fixed rate, so they have a higher probability of not necessarily understanding that there may be an adjustment on their bills. I really struggle with this piece on Bill 2 because I want to make sure that Albertans that are accessing it, who are going to be impacted by the cap and then the need to have to pay it back, know what that looks like.

I would've really appreciated the minister being able to speak to the fact that there is going to be a requirement or a mechanism in talking to these retailers, that they're willing to create some form of mechanism that ensures Albertans are aware what they're actually accumulating to have to pay back, right? You know, maybe it's \$10 a month, so over those three months they're going to have to pay \$30 back come April 1, and this is how it will be.

The question also around the payback would be – let's say that's \$10 a month for the month of January, February, and March. Do they then have to pay that \$30 back on their April bill, or is it going to be over a period of time? Will the payments – all of a sudden is it going to be a huge payment in April? How will it look to ensure that those Albertans that are going to be on this payment program, I would say, are not actually going to be in more financial crisis come April than they would be if they were having to have to pay a higher rate over the next three months?

There is some accountability that I would like to hear from the minister about to ensure that Albertans do have the notification, that they are educated on how the system will work, that they know they're going to have to pay this percentage back and that it's accumulated over a period of time and their bills reflect that accumulation. If they don't, then one day there's a surprise bill in the mail that says that you owe this amount of money.

It's no different than people with cellphones when all of a sudden they go over their data, and then they get this huge bill at the end of the month where they're like: oh, my goodness, I now have a \$100 phone bill when my bill should only be \$50, because I did this huge overage on my data. Well, this is the same thing. All of a sudden

my utility bill I thought was only 13.5 cents is all of a sudden now worth 16.5 cents, but now I have to pay it in April.

So what is the notification? How are Albertans going to know what they owe? How is it going to be reported? Is it going to be communicated? The retailer will be communicating to the government to tell them what it looks like. They will know what their costs are because, of course, there's the loan program that these retailers can access if they need to be able to carry the balance. Albertans should have that same transparency when it comes to this piece of legislation. They should be aware of how much they're going to end up carrying over on their bills.

3:10

Again, I would encourage one of the ministers to stand up and to explain how Albertans are going to know and be aware and how that's going to be reported to them so that they're able to make sure they can budget effectively to pay those bills.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie has risen.

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to rise and address Bill 2. Of course, many of the members on this side of the House have gotten up and actually described some of the flaws with this particular bill, but, you know, let's go back down memory lane. I remember being in this House last March, last February, I believe it was, and at that point all Albertans, including ourselves, were finding that we were all paying much higher on the utilities. Some people's utilities – I remember people contacting my office and them saying that when they were used to paying \$200 a month, now they were having to pay \$700.

At that time, Mr. Speaker, I got up in this House and I asked the current Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction, who was the minister of natural gas at the time: what are you going to do about this? His answer was: absolutely nothing. Absolutely nothing. That's what he said. We're not going to do anything, right?

Mr. Nally: Tell them what you really asked.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. member has the floor.

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, the record is there. The *Hansard* is there. The question was asked, and the minister at the time said: we're not going to do anything about this.

Mr. Nally: You wanted to experiment with price controls.

Member Loyola: You know why? Because the members on the other side of the House refuse . . . [interjections]

The Acting Speaker: Just a general reminder, hon. members, that all comments and questions should come through the chair. Thank you.

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It seems we have a very lively, lively session going on here today. Lots of people want to get their voice in and their opinion in, right? I welcome the minister of service Alberta to get up and actually speak to this bill, you know, instead of just chiming from the sideline over there. Maybe he should get up and actually speak to it.

At that time the minister said that he was going to do absolutely nothing. We have it on the *Hansard*, right? We have it on *Hansard*.

Now, months, months later come, and they recognize that something has to be done because it's just not acceptable that Albertans have to pay the amounts, the utility bills that are being demanded of them. So then now we have this deeply flawed bill in front of us that's been put together by this government in their attempts to address the affordability crisis as it relates to utilities here in the province of Alberta, and I can honestly say that it's a miss.

First, they've introduced this utility payday loan scheme. It's a scheme. It's a scheme. They've created an enormous incentive for people to leave the regulated rate option after the cap ends in March . . . [interjection] Is this an intervention? I'll gladly accept it.

Mr. Nally: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for accepting my intervention. I would like to clarify the record only because he was talking schemes. You know what? One of the greatest schemes that has been perpetrated on the Alberta public was when the NDP spent \$7.5 billion on transmission fees. Now, allow me to put that in perspective. In 2020 we spent \$100 million on transmission, and in 2021 we spent zero dollars on transmission. Compare that to the 7 and a half billion dollars they spent on four years. You want to know why electricity prices are high? Just look at the NDP. The best thing that we can do to keep electricity prices low is to keep them away from the electricity grid and make sure that they never get into government again. That's the best thing we can do for cheap electricity prices.

Member Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, full of hot air. You know, I understand that the minister of natural gas is going to be full of hot air, not addressing the actual piece of legislation that we have in front of us, going back into the history of decisions that were made by previous Progressive Conservative governments that actually got us in that mess in the first place. The minister doesn't talk about how it was Conservative policy that led us down the road of having to make those bad decisions, yet the minister can't address the actual bill that we have in front of us when I give him the opportunity to actually give an intervention. There we go. That shows the track record of this UCP government and its ministers, where they have a very skewed view of our history. [interjection] Please, go ahead.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you to my colleague for giving me the opportunity to correct the record. I was surprised how ill informed the minister is. Transmission was a hot issue in 2009, and at that time the leader of the NDP, Hon. Brian Mason, told them that if they will invest like that, at the request of their friends and insiders, coming generations of Albertans will pay for these costs. The last transmission line they approved was around 2012-13. Then Prime Minister Harper closed down 12 out of 18 coal-fired plants without giving them any money whatsoever. All those bad decisions of Conservatives in Alberta and in the federal government are making electricity costs unaffordable, and here we have a government that refuses to act at all.

Thank you.

Member Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall for his intervention. Of course, I agree with him that these are Conservative policies that have led us to the point where, at the end of the day, they end up making Albertans pay more.

You know, Mr. Speaker, these Conservatives believe in this outdated perspective that competition is going to lead to lower prices, but Albertans can't see it. Albertans can't see it. They get in here and they're like, "Okay; less regulation, less government," and what ends up happening? Albertans have to pay more, at the end of the day, because there's a flaw in the way that they approach it. They get up and they talk about how, yeah, they're in the best interests

of Albertans, yet Albertans have to pay 30 per cent more, 40 per cent more.

The decisions of this particular government now bring us to this payday loan scheme that we have in front of us, and this scheme will result in what University of Calgary economist Blake Shaffer called a "death spiral." A death spiral, Mr. Speaker. That's not me saying it. Again I'll share with you all that it's University of Calgary economist Blake Shaffer who called this payday loan scheme a "death spiral." It would leave a group of Albertans holding the bag on a group of potentially toxic loans.

The members on the other side of the House desperately – desperately – need to take this bill back. Take it back, please. I'm begging you on behalf of Albertans to take this payday loan scheme back to the cabinet and make them revisit it and make sure that they come back with something that's actually going to help Albertans, because this thing is a death spiral. My goodness. My goodness.

3:20

To be clear, not all Albertans can get off the regulated rate option. You need to have a certain personal credit quality, like a good credit score, to get on that option. [interjection] You know, Mr. Speaker, I would accept the intervention on behalf of the Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction, but after his last intervention, which added absolutely nothing to the debate, I'm not going to accept another intervention on his behalf.

Those holding these toxic loans will pay more, more, and more at the end of the month, and of course people will flee, and they are most likely to leave Albertans in a less beneficial place than they were before. [interjections] You know, the members on the other side of the House are gladly welcome to get up and speak to this particular bill if they would like to instead of heckling me from the other side over there while I contribute to the debate, Mr. Speaker. They're welcome to get up and speak to it if they like, but I would appreciate having my opportunity to actually speak to it.

Second, this government's signature affordability measure, the \$100-a-month payments, actually leaves out 2 million Albertans. It's deeply unfair that someone working full-time on minimum wage gets nothing. You know, a lot of the talk on that side of the House – they're talking about affordability. Okay. And we've already seen in question period, Mr. Speaker, that when addressing the whole issue of affordability, they have impacted the most vulnerable people in our . . .

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: A point of order has been called. The hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order Interrupting a Member

Mr. Sabir: I rise under Standing Order 23. I'm just trying to get the right section that says that the member speaking in the House who has the floor, given by you, has the right to speak uninterrupted. What I'm seeing here is so much interruption coming from that side, so I ask you to intervene and make sure that the member can speak what he wants to share and contribute to this debate. If any member on the other side wants to speak, they have every right to do so. They can speak at their turn.

The Acting Speaker: I see the Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Standing Order 23(h), (i), or (j) refers to a particular member. The hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader has not stated with any particularity any member to

which this point of order should apply, and therefore it is not a point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. members.

We are so close to getting some good work done here this afternoon, and I do enjoy the lively debate. I would encourage all members that if they have something to add to debate, to please take the time to stand, add to the debate so we can all hear and enjoy the wisdom that you choose to share. I do not find this a point of order at this time, but I do caution all members that we do want to encourage lively, hearty debate and respect in this House.

The floor is back to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Debate Continued

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it. As I was saying, it's deeply unfair that someone who is working full-time on minimum wage gets absolutely nothing by the passing of this particular bill. A student who is paying higher tuition fees, high student loan costs, again, gets absolutely nothing from this here government, right? They like to get up, especially during question period, and, you know, scream from the top of their lungs how they're the best thing since sliced bread, but of course nothing could be further from the truth. [interjections] Nothing could be – definitely not white bread.

Here we have two examples, Mr. Speaker – someone working full-time and students who are paying higher tuition fees and higher student loan costs – yet they're not going to see any benefit from this particular bill. We all know tons of Albertans who were deeply disappointed, and they deserve an answer for why they were left out. A lot of Albertans are going to be asking themselves why they were left out.

Number 3. For years this government weaponized inflation to attack the most vulnerable, like people on AISH. You know, first of all, they changed the actual payment date – they changed the payment date – which actually led to people not being able to make it to the end of the month. We're talking about the most vulnerable people. A bad decision, Mr. Speaker, a bad decision that they have yet to apologize for. They have yet to apologize for this very bad decision that had drastic effects on the lives of many people here in the province of Alberta.

You know, the Member for St. Albert has gotten up multiple times and demonstrated with e-mails and letters that she's received personally. I've also received them. Many members – I suspect that members on the other side of the House also were receiving e-mails and letters from constituents that were actually complaining about the fact that they changed the date. Then they refused to index the AISH payments to inflation for three years. Three years.

Now what we have is – you know, the fact that they decided to do that, Mr. Speaker, was absolutely cruel. It didn't need to be done. It didn't need to be done. It was the most vulnerable people here in the province of Alberta. You know, to me, it's heartbreaking – it's heartbreaking – to see the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board get up in this House day after day and defend that poor decision made by him and the rest of the cabinet. You know what? I understand that it's important to be fiscally responsible – I get it; it's important – but you don't do it on the backs of the most vulnerable people here in the province of Alberta. That is absolutely shameful.

Here we are. Now we have this new legislation which tries to rectify so many of the past mistakes made by this government. But even with every measure included in this legislation and what this government tells us will come with the regulations, an AISH recipient would be \$3,000 better off if we had operated under the

policies of the previous NDP government. For a person living on AISH, \$3,000 is an absolutely enormous amount of money.

Mr. Speaker, there's still time. There's still time for this government, this cabinet to go back to the drawing table and address all of the issues that we have highlighted as being problematic under this particular bill and to get it right. That's all we're asking.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I know that, from your perspective, you get to see it each and every day. [interjection] Member, I'm going to finish in, like, a couple of minutes, so you're welcome to have the floor after me if you like.

Mr. Speaker, you see it from a different perspective being the deputy chair. Of course, you see the partisanship and how it is actually deteriorating our democracy here in this House. Last night we put four amendments forward – four amendments forward – not one of them accepted by this government. One was so desperately needed, that had to do with intersectionality, antiracism, and trauma-informed practice, which made so much sense. You know, last night I had dinner with a few constituents, told them all about it, and they just couldn't believe that the UCP would all vote against an amendment that would actually contribute . . .

3:30

Mr. McIver: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: A point of order has been called.

Point of Order Items Previously Decided

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No one wants to relive last night more than I do, to be clear. Nonetheless, this place operates under a set of rules called Standing Orders, and one of those standing orders is 23(f), which says:

A Member [shall] be called to order by the Speaker, if in the Speaker's opinion, that Member debates any previous vote of the Assembly . . .

which he was just doing,

. . . unless it is that Member's intention to move that it be rescinded.

Now, if the member is planning on moving to take back the decision of last night, then I'm all ears. Otherwise, I respectfully request you to direct him to today's business rather than the previous vote of the Assembly.

The Acting Speaker: The Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the member was referring to last night's amendments in the context of how co-operation has so much decreased in this Legislature. I think the intention of the context of the member's comments is not that he falls in the purview of the rule that the member cited. I don't think it's a point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, I'm willing to give the hon. member a little bit of latitude because I think I can see where he's going with this. But I do want to encourage the members to stay on debate on the matter at hand, which is Bill 2.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Debate Continued

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The point that I was getting at – and thank you for the latitude – is the fact that here we are, as the Opposition, providing an opportunity for this government to address the limits, the flaws that this particular bill has. But blind partisanship doesn't let them get past the fact that they just do not want

to address the flaws – they're your flaws, they're your flaws – to actually get them right.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I see the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul has risen.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to be very brief, but I'd just like to respond to the member, seeing as he didn't let me stand up and do an intervention. He spoke about apologies and the difficulties that AISH recipients have, so I'd just like to, through you – the hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader and Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, when he was a minister back in 2019, sent out a tweet that upset AISH people considerably, resulting in one of them coming and throwing a rock through the window of my office. To this day, that member has never apologized to my staff or to that AISH recipient, that now has a criminal record for the first time in his life. So I'd like to give that member the opportunity to stand up and apologize.

The Acting Speaker: Again, hon. members, I just want to extend a little bit of caution or invitation to maybe remain focused on the business at hand today. We are on Bill 2, Inflation Relief Statutes Amendment Act, 2022, so at this point I'd like to ask if any members would like to speak to the bill.

Mr. Sabir: I rise to speak to Bill 2, Inflation Relief Statutes Amendment Act, 2022. Certainly, I will address the comments that were raised by the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul. This act is designed to help address the cost-of-living crisis facing Alberta. That's the intention of this act. In order to address a problem, we need to know what went wrong, where it went wrong. Let me start with a few things that added to the cost-of-living crisis in the province and that should be fixed.

The first thing that this government did was give \$4.7 billion to wealthy corporations on the back of disabled Albertans, on the back of seniors, on the back of those unemployed and getting benefits from this government. They deindexed AISH. That's why people with disabilities, that's why the unemployed, that's why seniors are facing such a crisis. In 2018, when we were still in government, we said that this government – the then opposition, the UCP, if they become government, will cut AISH: that's what I said. That's exactly what this government did. As soon as they became government, they cut AISH, so I have nothing to apologize for. That's their record. They should apologize for cutting AISH benefits at a time when inflation was at its 40-year high. They should be ashamed of that, every single one of them who supported cutting AISH benefits, deindexing AISH benefits. They should be ashamed of that, and they should be apologizing for it.

The second thing: what's adding to the cost of living? I think there are many things I can point to, but when I talk to my constituents in Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, I will relate what they tell me is adding to their cost of living: insurance. When we were in government, we had a 5 per cent premium increase cap on insurance. This government, as soon as they came into government, this UCP, what did they do? They handed the pen to the insurance industry, removed the cap, and now we are seeing 30, 40, 50 and in some cases 100 per cent increase in Alberta's insurance premiums. That's what is causing a cost-of-living crisis in this province.

When we were in government, we had a rate cap on utilities, 6.8 cents per kilowatt hour. As soon as they became government, they removed that rate, and that's causing this cost-of-living crisis in our province.

We had a tuition freeze on postsecondary education. As soon as they became government, they removed that freeze and made postsecondary education one of the most expensive across this country, a 30 per cent to 40 per cent, in some cases 100 per cent

increase. They cut \$700 million from the postsecondary education budget, resulting in skyrocketing fees in our institutions. That's causing the cost-of-living crisis in our province. That's the direct result of this government's policies.

Then they talk about inflation, and then they blame the federal government, that during the pandemic the federal government was handing out money and that money handed out by the federal government is the primary cause of inflation. You are doing exactly that. Then find solutions that work for Albertans. Put the rate cap back on insurance; make it affordable for Albertans. Put a cap back on utilities; make utilities affordable for Albertans. Investigate why grocery prices are going 100, in some cases 200 per cent higher than what inflation is at. Investigate those corporations. That will make life more affordable.

Just six months before an election, handing Albertans \$100 up until the election will not address the cost-of-living crisis. A hundred dollars for those on fixed income may still go a long way, but that's not the permanent solution. The permanent solution will be: cap the insurance rate, cap the utility rate, lower tuition fees, investigate grocery prices. That will help us lower and address the cost-of-living crisis.

This bill may help some, but it's leaving out 2 million Albertans. We need systemic changes to address this crisis that is caused by this UCP government. In six months there is an election coming up, and Albertans will have a say. They will have a lot more to say about this government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3:40

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Others wishing to speak to third reading?

Seeing none, would the minister like to close debate?

[Motion carried; Bill 2 read a third time]

Bill 6 Police Amendment Act, 2022

[Adjourned debate December 14: Mr. Neudorf]

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, looking for those who would like to speak to third reading of Bill 6, the Police Amendment Act, 2022, I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall has risen.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to third reading of Bill 6, Police Amendment Act, 2022. I will be speaking against this bill, and I will give my reasons to do so. Basically, there are four primary reasons that we will be speaking against this bill.

Since the murder of George Floyd, the conversation around policing has changed. The murder of George Floyd was not the last one. Since then we have seen more incidents, such as one in Calgary. A person named Latjor from the South Sudanese community, who had a history of mental health, was also shot dead by Calgary police. Indigenous communities across this province, Black communities, person-of-colour communities have raised serious, serious concerns about bias in policing across this province, across this country. When we look at our institutions, we still see Indigenous communities overrepresented in our justice system. We see Black, person-of-colour communities overrepresented in our justice system.

The number one ask that you will hear from these communities is that we should be looking at policing from a lens of intersectionality, from a perspective of trauma-informed practice, and from an antiracism lens. What we did: we tried to make this bill a bit better. We tried to enshrine those principles in policing because that's what communities need from policing, because that's what Indigenous people are demanding from this government and every government,

that our policing should be done from a lens of intersectionality, from a perspective of antiracism and trauma-informed practice. We have a history of colonization here, so our policing response needs to be well informed. I think this government refused to enshrine such principles in this legislation, so that's a concern.

The second thing. This bill makes sweeping changes: how police commissions will have now members from the government, how there will be new policing committees. A couple of concerns with that approach. The government did not consult with municipalities on these changes. They did not consult existing commission members on these changes. They think they know best.

They said that they will put 1 member for every 3 members on police commissions, and then they thought that that might not be enough, so the minister should have the ability to appoint up to 49 per cent. That's called stacking the deck, and it's in particular from a government whose Justice minister was caught interfering in the administration of justice. We can't let this government politicize policing in this province. We do not know how those members will be picked. There is just this much, that the minister will appoint them. Will there be any public process? Will all Albertans be invited to be able to participate on those commissions? Will it be about what they know or who they know? This government's record is such on these appointments that they cannot be trusted. There are few to no details about these appointments. That's why we think that this bill needs more work.

The third thing is that this bill will have a significant impact on how policing is done in our province, and Indigenous communities are concerned about it. The day prior to yesterday I was also at the meeting with Treaty 6 chiefs. You didn't hear from them – they didn't issue any press release – after we left because we were there to listen to them. We were respectful. One of the concerns raised by one chief was around policing, around how this Bill 6 changes the policing in this province and for our communities.

They shared that they were not consulted on this piece of legislation. No wonder that after the Premier went to see Treaty 6, they released a statement, which I'm sure all members of the government must have seen, that they did not consult. They did not consult on their job-killing sovereignty act. They don't even know what consultation means. They don't respect treaties. Those meetings, according to them, don't constitute consultation. Consultation is a constitutional obligation. It has its own requirements. It's not a check box. There are huge concerns that the government, as usual, failed to consult Indigenous communities on this bill.

Other concerns raised around this bill are that they are creating an advisory body which will have 15 members again appointed by the minister. They said that they will have one Indigenous person, one Métis person on that advisory board. Mr. Speaker, there are 48 distinct First Nations in this province. There are eight different Métis settlements in this province. Then we have a huge population of Indigenous people living in urban centres, Métis people living in our cities. There is no process whatsoever how they will pick that one person. Again, they did not consult with First Nations. Is that enough representation of First Nation people who have concerns about policing in this province, who have shared those concerns, who have a vested interest in making policing better in this province? It's not only that they were not consulted; I think that representation is not enough on that advisory board.

3:50

Then another concern is that they are creating a commission that will act as a civilian oversight body. On this side of the House we a hundred per cent support the intention behind that move. There should be civilian oversight of our police. That will improve Albertans' trust and confidence in their law enforcement. That will

help us improve in general our law enforcement in this province. We a hundred per cent support civilian oversight, but again the problem is that there is next to nothing in this act that tells you what it will look like.

After reading this legislation more than a few times, there are three things about that. There will be a CEO and registrar that will be appointed by the minister, and then what their duties will be, what their power will be, what their function will be: every single thing is left to the regulations. What we should vote on: we don't have the details. There was absolutely no engagement from the government side to help address these concerns, help address these questions. All we know from this is that there will be a body that will have a CEO and registrar appointed by the minister, and then everything is left to regulations. There is no timeline. When will we have that? There are no costing details. How much will it cost?

Again, there were some obvious flaws in that, too. That's why we tried to make some changes to those provisions as well, that once there's a complaint about an officer from the time he or she was an officer, the commission should have jurisdiction over that complaint. That will help us deal with cases like the one in Calgary of Councillor Sean Chu. And not only before, when we were asking the then Minister of Municipal Affairs to act, they refused; they even refused to make that change so that people like Sean Chu can be held accountable in front of this civilian oversight body. They refused that. That's a huge flaw in this piece of legislation.

With so many glaring shortcomings, despite being well intentioned in terms of civilian oversight, I don't think that as members of the Legislature we have enough detail to pass this legislation. This piece of legislation fails to consult municipalities, Indigenous communities, those who have a vested interest in the implementation of this piece of legislation. With so many flaws I don't think that we are able to support this legislation, but I do want to say that we absolutely support civilian oversight. Should we become the next government, we will do better. We will bring forward a body, a process that will help us breed trust and confidence in our law enforcement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Others wishing to speak to third reading of Bill 6, the Police Amendment Act, 2022?

Would the hon. minister and Deputy Premier like to close debate?

Mr. Neudorf: Waived.

[Motion carried; Bill 6 read a third time]

Royal Assent

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor will now attend upon the Assembly.

[The Premier and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

[The Mace was draped]

[The Sergeant-at-Arms knocked on the main doors of the Chamber three times. The Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms opened the doors, and the Sergeant-at-Arms entered]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: All rise, please. Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor awaits.

The Acting Speaker: Sergeant-at-Arms, admit Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Salma Lakhani, AOE, BSc, and the Premier entered the Chamber. Her Honour took her place upon the throne]

Her Honour: Please be seated.

The Acting Speaker: May it please Her Honour, the Legislative Assembly has at its present sitting passed certain bills to which and in the name of the Legislative Assembly I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

4:00

The Acting Clerk: Your Honour, the following are the titles of the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed.

- 1 Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act
- 2 Inflation Relief Statutes Amendment Act, 2022
- 3 Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2022
- 4 Alberta Health Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2022
- 5 Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 (No. 2)
- 6 Police Amendment Act, 2022
- 7 Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 (No. 2)
- 202 Alberta Personal Income Tax (Charitable and Other Gifts) Amendment Act, 2022

[The Lieutenant Governor indicated her assent]

The Acting Clerk: In His Majesty's name Her Honour the Honourable Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

Her Honour: Hello to everyone in the Assembly here today. I want to just keep my remarks brief and thank you once again for all that you do. Please, when you return to your constituencies, thank all the community leaders and the volunteers who keep moving our province forward with all that they do. I hope that each one of you is going to enjoy some well-deserved time, warm time, peaceful time, with your family and loved ones. Please convey to them as well my best wishes for the holiday season.

One last thought that I'd like to leave you with is that I hope each one of you finds time to relax, recharge, and reflect. With that, I'd like to wish all of you happy holidays, Merry Christmas, all the best for 2023. Thank you again on behalf of all Albertans for what you do here. Thank you. I hope to see you all at the New Year's Day levee. We haven't had a levee for two years, right? I hope some of you can make it to that.

Thank you.

The Sergeant-at-Arms: All rise, please.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Lieutenant Governor and the Premier left the Chamber]

[The Mace was uncovered]

The Acting Speaker: Please be seated.

The Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Assembly would indulge me for a moment, I'd like to take a minute and thank all the members for their participation this fall session at the Legislature. I believe we had a lot of good work done on behalf of Albertans, and Albertans are well represented in this Chamber, on both sides of the aisle.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year, a Merry Christmas. I'd like to advise the Assembly that pursuant to Government Motion 4 the business of the 2022 fall sitting is now concluded.

The Acting Speaker: Prior to voting on the motion, I also want to take a moment to say thank you to the members of this Assembly for your hard work and the opportunity to serve you in this capacity as Deputy Chair of Committees. On behalf of the Speaker and on behalf of all the members I wish to extend our thanks to the table officers and their staff, the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Sergeant-at-Arms staff, the LASS, the pages, and *Hansard* for all the hard work that they do behind the scenes to help keep this place functioning. I also wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and safe travels.

You know, I'm going to have to relearn all this in two months when we come back.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:05 p.m. pursuant to Government Motion 4]

Bill Status Report for the 30th Legislature - 4th Session (2022)

Activity to Thursday, December 15, 2022

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* — Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act (Danielle Smith)

First Reading — 4-5 (Nov. 29, 2022 aft., passed on division)

Second Reading — 22-31 (Nov. 30, 2022 aft.), 43-52 (Nov. 30, 2022 eve.), 65-73 (Dec. 1, 2022 aft.), 105-36 (Dec. 5, 2022 eve.), 172-77 (Dec. 6, 2022 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 177-96 (Dec. 6, 2022 eve.), 231-38 (Dec. 7, 2022 eve.), 238-45 (Dec. 7, 2022 eve., passed with amendments on division)

Third Reading — 245-50 (Dec. 7, 2022 eve.), 251-57 (Dec. 7, 2022 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — 452 (Dec. 15, 2022 aft.)

Bill 2 — Inflation Relief Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 (\$) (Jones)

First Reading — 208 (Dec. 7, 2022 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 270-75 (Dec. 8, 2022 aft.), 342-49 (Dec. 13, 2022 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 361-72 (Dec. 13, 2022 eve.), 421-25 (Dec. 14, 2022 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 430-31 (Dec. 14, 2022 eve.), 446-50 (Dec. 15, 2022 aft., passed)

Royal Assent — 452 (Dec. 15, 2022 aft.)

Bill 3 — Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 (Shandro)

First Reading — 86 (Dec. 5, 2022 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 148-55 (Dec. 6, 2022 aft.), 224-30 (Dec. 7, 2022 aft.), 276 (Dec. 8, 2022 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 325-29 (Dec. 12, 2022 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 375-78 (Dec. 13, 2022 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — 452 (Dec. 15, 2022 aft.)

Bill 4 — Alberta Health Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2022 (Copping)

First Reading — 86 (Dec. 5, 2022 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 155-70 (Dec. 6, 2022 aft.), 220-24 (Dec. 7, 2022 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 321-25 (Dec. 12, 2022 eve.), 372-75 (Dec. 13, 2022 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 392 (Dec. 14, 2022 aft.), 426-29 (Dec. 14, 2022 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — 452 (Dec. 15, 2022 aft.)

Bill 5 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 (No. 2) (Shandro)

First Reading — 147 (Dec. 6, 2022 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 211-20 (Dec. 7, 2022 aft.), 314-21 (Dec. 12, 2022 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 392-99 (Dec. 14, 2022 aft., passed)

Third Reading — 429-30 (Dec. 14, 2022 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — 452 (Dec. 15, 2022 aft.)

Bill 6 — Police Amendment Act, 2022 (Ellis)

First Reading — 270 (*Dec. 8, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 309-14 (*Dec. 12, 2022 eve.*), 349-54 (*Dec. 13, 2022 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 399-408 (*Dec. 14, 2022 aft.*), 409-21 (*Dec. 14, 2022 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 431 (*Dec. 14, 2022 eve.*), 450-51 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — 452 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft.*)

Bill 7 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 (No.2) (Schow)

First Reading — 329 (*Dec. 12, 2022 eve., passed*)

Second Reading — 378-79 (*Dec. 13, 2022 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 398-99 (*Dec. 14, 2022 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 425-26 (*Dec. 14, 2022 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — 452 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft.*)

Bill 201 — Public Health Care Delivery Standards Act (Notley)

First Reading — 64 (*Dec. 1, 2022 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 88-91 (*Dec. 5, 2022 aft.*), 354-60 (*Dec. 13, 2022 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 202 — Alberta Personal Income Tax (Charitable and Other Gifts) Amendment Act, 2022 (Williams)

First Reading — 64 (*Dec. 1, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 91-98 (*Dec. 5, 2022 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 289-97 (*Dec. 12, 2022 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 445-46 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — 452 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft.*)

Bill 203 — Traffic Safety (Excessive Speeding Penalties) Amendment Act, 2022 (Toor)

First Reading — 270 (*Dec. 8, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 298-303 (*Dec. 12, 2022 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 204 — Missing Persons (Silver Alert) Amendment Act, 2022 (Mark Smith)

First Reading — 270 (*Dec. 8, 2022 aft., passed*)

Bill 205 — Official Sport of Alberta Act (Lovely)

First Reading — 444 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft., passed*)

Bill 206 — Insurance (Private Passenger Vehicle Premium) Amendment Act, 2022 (Sabir)

First Reading — 444 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft., passed*)

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