



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature  
First Session

# Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, October 31, 2023

Day 2

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

# Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

First Session

Cooper, Hon. Nathan M., Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UC), Speaker  
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UC), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees  
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UC), Deputy Chair of Committees

Al-Guneid, Nagwan, Calgary-Glenmore (NDP)  
Amery, Hon. Mickey K., ECA, KC, Calgary-Cross (UC),  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Arcand-Paul, Brooks, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)  
Armstrong-Homeniuk, Hon. Jackie, ECA,  
Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UC)  
Batten, Diana M.B., Calgary-Acadia (NDP)  
Boitchenko, Andrew, Drayton Valley-Devon (UC)  
Boparai, Parmeet Singh, Calgary-Falconridge (NDP)  
Bouchard, Eric, Calgary-Lougheed (UC)  
Brar, Gurinder, Calgary-North East (NDP)  
Calahoo Stonehouse, Jodi, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)  
Ceci, Hon. Joe, ECA, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)  
Chapman, Amanda, Calgary-Beddington (NDP)  
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UC)  
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)  
de Jonge, Chantelle, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)  
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)  
Dreeshen, Hon. Devin, ECA, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UC)  
Dyck, Nolan B., Grande Prairie (UC)  
Eggen, Hon. David, ECA, Edmonton-North West (NDP),  
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Ellingson, Court, Calgary-Foothills (NDP)  
Ellis, Hon. Mike, ECA, Calgary-West (UC),  
Deputy Premier  
Elmeligi, Sarah, Banff-Kananaskis (NDP)  
Eremenko, Janet, Calgary-Currie (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),  
Government Whip  
Glubish, Hon. Nate, ECA, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UC)  
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)  
Gray, Hon. Christina, ECA, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP),  
Official Opposition House Leader  
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Haji, Sharif, Edmonton-Decore (NDP)  
Hayter, Julia K.U., Calgary-Edgemont (NDP)  
Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, ECA, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP),  
Official Opposition Assistant Whip  
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Hoyle, Rhiannon, Edmonton-South (NDP)  
Hunter, Hon. Grant R., ECA, Taber-Warner (UC)  
Ip, Nathan, Edmonton-South West (NDP)  
Irwin, Janis, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP)  
Jean, Hon. Brian Michael, ECA, KC, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche  
(UC)  
Johnson, Jennifer, Lacombe-Ponoka (Ind)  
Jones, Hon. Matt, ECA, Calgary-South East (UC)  
Kasawski, Kyle, Sherwood Park (NDP)  
Kayande, Samir, Calgary-Elbow (NDP),  
Official Opposition Deputy Assistant Whip  
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)  
Lunty, Brandon G., Leduc-Beaumont (UC)  
McDougall, Myles, Calgary-Fish Creek (UC)  
McIver, Hon. Ric, ECA, Calgary-Hays (UC)  
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Nally, Hon. Dale, ECA, Morinville-St. Albert (UC)  
Neudorf, Hon. Nathan T., ECA, Lethbridge-East (UC)  
Nicolaidis, Hon. Demetrios, ECA, Calgary-Bow (UC)  
Nixon, Hon. Jason, ECA, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre  
(UC)  
Notley, Hon. Rachel, ECA, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),  
Leader of the Official Opposition  
Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)  
Petrovic, Chelsae, Livingstone-Macleod (UC)  
Phillips, Hon. Shannon, ECA, Lethbridge-West (NDP)  
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)  
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UC)  
Sabir, Hon. Irfan, ECA, Calgary-Bhullar-McCall (NDP),  
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader  
Sawhney, Hon. Rajan, ECA, Calgary-North West (UC)  
Schmidt, Hon. Marlin, ECA, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)  
Schow, Hon. Joseph R., ECA, Cardston-Siksika (UC),  
Government House Leader  
Schulz, Hon. Rebecca, ECA, Calgary-Shaw (UC)  
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)  
Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, ECA, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)  
Sigurdson, Hon. R.J., ECA, Highwood (UC)  
Sinclair, Scott, Lesser Slave Lake (UC)  
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UC)  
Smith, Hon. Danielle, ECA, Brooks-Medicine Hat (UC),  
Premier  
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UC)  
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP),  
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader  
Tejada, Lizette, Calgary-Klein (NDP)  
Turton, Hon. Searle, ECA, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UC)  
Wiebe, Ron, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UC)  
Williams, Hon. Dan D.A., ECA, Peace River (UC),  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., ECA, Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UC)  
Wright, Justin, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UC)  
Wright, Peggy K., Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)  
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC),  
Deputy Government Whip  
Yaseen, Hon. Muhammad, ECA, Calgary-North (UC)

## Party standings:

United Conservative: 48

New Democrat: 38

Independent: 1

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Teri Cherkewich, Law Clerk		Paul Link, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
Trafton Koenig, Senior Parliamentary Counsel	Janet Schwegel, Director of Parliamentary Programs	Gareth Scott, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
Philip Massolin, Clerk Assistant and Director of House Services	Amanda LeBlanc, Deputy Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>	Lang Bawn, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms

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Danielle Smith	Premier, President of Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Relations
Mike Ellis	Deputy Premier, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services
Mickey Amery	Minister of Justice
Devin Dreeshen	Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors
Tanya Fir	Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women
Nate Glubish	Minister of Technology and Innovation
Pete Guthrie	Minister of Infrastructure
Nate Horner	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Brian Jean	Minister of Energy and Minerals
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Dale Nally	Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction
Nathan Neudorf	Minister of Affordability and Utilities
Demetrios Nicolaides	Minister of Education
Jason Nixon	Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services
Rajan Sawhney	Minister of Advanced Education
Joseph Schow	Minister of Tourism and Sport
Rebecca Schulz	Minister of Environment and Protected Areas
R.J. Sigurdson	Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Searle Turton	Minister of Children and Family Services
Dan Williams	Minister of Mental Health and Addiction
Rick Wilson	Minister of Indigenous Relations
Muhammad Yaseen	Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism

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Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk	Parliamentary Secretary for Settlement Services and Ukrainian Evacuees
Andrew Boitchenko	Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous Relations
Chantelle de Jonge	Parliamentary Secretary for Affordability and Utilities
Shane Getson	Parliamentary Secretary for Economic Corridor Development
Grant Hunter	Parliamentary Secretary for Agrifood Development
Martin Long	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health
Scott Sinclair	Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous Policing
Tany Yao	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Northern Development

## STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

### **Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund**

Chair: Mr. Yao  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Rowswell

Boitchenko  
Bouchard  
Brar  
Hunter  
Kasawski  
Kayande  
Wiebe

### **Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future**

Chair: Mr. Getson  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Loyola

Boparai  
Cyr  
de Jonge  
Elmeligi  
Hoyle  
Stephan  
Wright, J.  
Yao

### **Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

Chair: Ms Lovely  
Deputy Chair: Ms Goehring

Batten  
Boitchenko  
Long  
Lunty  
Metz  
Petrovic  
Singh  
Tejada

### **Standing Committee on Legislative Offices**

Chair: Mr. Getson  
Deputy Chair: Mr. van Dijken

Chapman  
Dyck  
Eremenko  
Hunter  
Long  
Renaud  
Shepherd  
Sinclair

### **Special Standing Committee on Members' Services**

Chair: Mr. Cooper  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Getson

Eggen  
Gray  
Long  
Phillips  
Rowswell  
Sabir  
Singh  
Yao

### **Standing Committee on Private Bills**

Chair: Ms Pitt  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Stephan

Bouchard  
Ceci  
Deol  
Dyck  
Hayter  
Petrovic  
Sigurdson, L.  
Wright, J.

### **Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing**

Chair: Mr. Yao  
Deputy Chair: Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk

Arcand-Paul  
Ceci  
Cyr  
Dach  
Gray  
Johnson  
Stephan  
Wiebe

### **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Chair: Ms Pancholi  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Rowswell

Armstrong-Homeniuk  
de Jonge  
Ganley  
Haji  
Lovely  
Lunty  
McDougall  
Schmidt

### **Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

Chair: Mr. Rowswell  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schmidt

Al-Guneid  
Armstrong-Homeniuk  
Calahoo Stonehouse  
Dyck  
Hunter  
McDougall  
Sinclair  
Sweet

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 31, 2023

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our King, 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 interests and prejudices, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all.

### Statements by the Speaker

#### In Memoriam

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, please remain standing as we recognize a number of former members and a former Clerk who have passed away since we last met. Today I would like to acknowledge them each by name, as is our custom. We will pay a more full tribute to them individually when their family members may be able to join us.

The members are: Marie J. Laing, served as the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore from 1986 to 1993; Stephen Stiles, served as the Member for Olds-Didsbury from 1982 to 1986; Ken Lemke, served as the Member for Stony Plain from 2012 to 2015; Frederick A. Stewart, served as the Member for Calgary-North Hill from 1986 to 1993; David J. Russell, served as the Member for Calgary-Victoria Park from 1967 to 1971 and for Calgary-Elbow from '71 to '89; Neville S. Roper, served as the Member for Ponoka from 1967 to 1971; Peter Knaak, served as the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud from 1979 to 1982; J.A. Denis Herard, served as the Member for Calgary-Edgemont from 1993 to 2008; Greg Stevens, served as the Member for Banff-Cochrane from 1979 to 1989; Dr. W.J. David McNeil, served as the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly from 1987 to 2016; and Mr. Moe Amery, served as the Member for Calgary-East from 1993 to 2015.

In a moment of silent prayer and reflection I ask you to remember each of the former members and Dr. McNeil as you may have known them. Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.

Please be seated.

Hon. members, please. Order. I will allow you to sit in just a moment.

#### Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake's Fifth Anniversary of Election

**The Speaker:** Now for a much more joyous occasion. On July 12, 2023, this summer marked the fifth anniversary of the first election of the hon. the Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors and the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake. [some applause]

I wish to recognize the hon. minister for his ongoing commitment to his constituents and congratulate him on reaching this milestone. I ask you to please join me at the dais for the presentation of your five-year pin.

Please proceed to your seats. It's fine. We'll proceed. The Speaker has a number of statements to make today, so we'll try to do this in as expedient a way as possible.

## Amendments to Standing Orders

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, before I call the Clerk to call the daily Routine, I see that Government Motion 6, which appears on today's Order Paper, is proposing to amend the standing orders, including amendments with respect to two items in the daily Routine, Introduction of Guests and Members' Statements. The motion seeks, among other things, to amend Standing Order 7(3) to increase the time allotted each day for members to make introductions under Introduction of Guests from four to six minutes. In addition, an amendment has been proposed to Standing Order 7(4) to reduce the number of members' statements from seven to six a sitting day.

Although Government Motion 6 is not available for consideration until later this afternoon, I understand that two unanimous consent requests will be coming forward that seek to give effect to these proposed amendments for this afternoon's Routine.

The hon. the Government House Leader.

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do rise to ask for unanimous consent to waive Standing Order 7(3) in order to allow for Introduction of Guests for a period not exceeding six minutes, each introduction to not exceed 20 seconds. I would also ask for unanimous consent to waive Standing Order 7(4) in order to allow for six members' statements to be given today in the order outlined in the House leaders' agreement shared with all members by the Speaker.

[Unanimous consent granted]

**The Speaker:** Accordingly, Introduction of Guests this afternoon will follow the process which I have outlined. I'll remind members that the introduction is to take a maximum of 20 seconds.

Is the Government House Leader prepared to request unanimous consent for the second consent request?

**Mr. Schow:** Yes.

[Unanimous consent granted]

### Introduction of Visitors

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, it is my great pleasure to introduce to all members of the Assembly the Australian high commissioner. The hon. Scott Ryan, who is seated in the Speaker's gallery, is a kindred spirit as he is the former Speaker of the Australian Senate and a good friend to Alberta. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

### Introduction of Guests

**Ms Gray:** Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly 35 students from l'école Frère Antoine Catholic school in the Edmonton-Mill Woods riding. The students are here for School at the Leg. I had the opportunity to visit with them yesterday, on the very special Speech from the Throne day, and they had many, many questions. Please join me in welcoming them here.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 41 students and their associated adults from the Edmonton Classical Academy school, located in the riding of Edmonton-Gold Bar. I ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre has an introduction.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you 17 learners from on-site placement in the English language learner program. They are a nonprofit working to help people in the community build an inclusive community through employment-related services. I welcome the learners. I wish them well in their studies and ask that we give them the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Technology and Innovation. Do you have an introduction?

**Mr. Glubish:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to introduce my constituency office management team. We have Ruth Baerg and Christine Mayovsky here today. They do great work in Strathcona-Sherwood Park, supporting me and representing my constituents, and I'm so pleased to have them here with me today.

1:40

**Member Loyola:** Mr. Speaker, I introduce Dr. Musharraf Hussain, a prominent Islamic scholar visiting us from Birmingham, England. He has translated the Quran, a book that encourages justice and peace for all of humanity. He is accompanied by Syed Hasan and Ebrahim Dhooma, founder and principal of Al-Mustafa Academy, as well as Adil Hasan, a leading member of the National Council of Canadian Muslims. Please rise and give them the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

**Mr. Nixon:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my favourite Albertan, Jeanette Nixon, also known to me as grandma. She always seems to remember my accomplishments and forget my mistakes, which I very much appreciate. She has been an amazing grandmother and awesome oma to my kids. I ask that Jeanette Nixon rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

**Mr. Lundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you my parents, Gordon and Terry Lundy; my wife, Chantelle Lundy, and my mother-in-law, Bernadette Stothert. I ask that they rise so I can acknowledge their love and support.

**The Speaker:** Are there others? The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche.

**Mr. Jean:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly Shannon Watt, president and CEO of the Canadian Propane Association, and her delegation, including Nancy Borden of Vancouver Island Propane Services, Cameron Stewart of Maxquip, Richard Charbonneau of Budget Propane, Rob Barrow of Eco-Pro Services, James Callow of Budget Propane, David Coelho of Diversico supply, Darren Eavis of Total Control Systems, Bill Gourley of Superior Propane, Adam MacDonald of Kiros Energy Marketing, Mandy McFall of Federated Co-ops, Ryan Charbonneau of Pembina Pipeline . . .

**The Speaker:** Are there others?  
Seeing none.

## Statement by the Speaker

### House Procedures

**The Speaker:** Prior to the call of Members' Statements I have a lengthy statement to make with respect to the House leaders' agreement and other important details that are prudent for the Assembly to hear.

Hon. members, prior to proceeding to Members' Statements, I would like to outline the rotation that applies to Oral Question Period and Members' Statements. The rotations were agreed to in the House leaders' agreement, that I noted earlier today and which was provided in the procedural memo that my office sent to all members last Friday. Also attached to the procedural memo were an Oral Question Period rotation chart and a projected sitting days calendar, which contain, among other things, the members' statement rotation.

With respect to Oral Question Period the House leaders' agreement is based upon 16 questions each day, that allows for a four-day rotation. The Official Opposition is entitled to ask the first five main questions as well as the seventh, eighth, 10th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th question of each day. Private members of the government caucus are entitled to the sixth, 11th, and 14th question of each day and the ninth question on days 1 to 3. The independent member of the Assembly is entitled to ask the ninth question on day 4 of the rotation. Today will be day 1. I would like to remind members that questions and responses should be no longer than 35 seconds in length and that the preambles for supplementary questions are allowed only in the first four rounds of questioning each day, as indicated in the House leaders' agreement.

With respect to Members' Statements the rotation is based upon a three-week schedule in accordance with unanimous consent granted by the Assembly earlier today. And if Government Motion 6 is agreed to by the Assembly, Standing Order 4(7) will provide that each day up to six private members may make a statement of no more than two minutes in duration. Private members of the government caucus are entitled to two statements on Tuesday and Thursday each week and on Wednesday of week 3 of the rotation. They're also entitled to three statements on each Monday of the rotation and Wednesday in weeks 1 and 2 of the rotation. Members of the Official Opposition are entitled to three statements on Monday and Wednesday and four statements on Tuesday and Thursday of each of the three-week rotation. The independent member is entitled to one statement on Wednesday of week 3 of the rotation. This is week 1.

Since we are at the first sitting of the new Legislature, I'd like to point out to members that a number of new parliamentary secretaries have been appointed. Please note that parliamentary secretaries are private members and not members of Executive Council. Accordingly, they have rights and duties of private members, not of cabinet. I would refer to my ruling of November 30, 2022, which can be found on page 10 of *Hansard* of that day, and rulings by Speaker Wanner, which can be found on page 1599 of *Hansard* of October 30, 2017, and Speaker Kowalski, April 16, 2008, which can be found on page 13 of *Hansard* for that day. All of these rulings indicate that it is inappropriate for a parliamentary secretary to direct questions to the minister with whom the parliamentary secretary is affiliated. Accordingly, I would ask that parliamentary secretaries refrain from posing questions to their ministers.

Finally, as we embark on this session, please remember that, in accordance with Standing Order 13(7), members must be in their assigned seats for speaking and voting.

## Members' Statements

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow has the first statement to make.

### Provincial Pension Plan Proposal

**Member Kayande:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Premier was at the Edmonton Convention Centre, hosted by the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, to deliver a state of the province address. It was a big speech on a big stage.

But the assembled business leaders were very surprised that the Premier didn't make a single mention in her speech of her signature economic policy, and that is gambling with Albertans' pensions. The Premier is willing to spend 7 and a half million dollars of our constituents' money talking about this bad idea, but she won't mention it even once in her own state of the province address. Curious.

Yesterday I heard the Lieutenant Governor read the government's throne speech, but I didn't hear a single solitary mention of the government's ongoing multimillion-dollar pension-marketing campaign, the sham pension consultation, or the impending referendum on the future of Albertans' pensions. Not a single word. Why is that? Perhaps some of the members opposite who have been sent home to sell this bad idea are quietly asking the same question.

Following her speech to the Edmonton Chamber last week, the Premier publicly admitted that the numbers in the LifeWorks report are unreliable and that Albertans are not satisfied with them. She admitted that nobody really knows what share of the Canada pension plan we could claim as our own and, what's more, that this might take years of negotiation and argument in the courts to figure out.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows that the numbers in the ads are fake, but the government is still spending an awful lot of our constituents' money to run ads with those fake numbers. Those ads must stop right away. Then the UCP caucus needs to face facts. Regular Albertans don't want this. Small-business owners don't want this. Business leaders don't want this. It is a terrible idea, and it's time to drop it. Hands off our CPP.

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville has the call.

### Government and Opposition Policies

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is back ... [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville has the call.

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is back, and so is our government. In May nearly 1 million Albertans voted yes to our plan to continue renewing the Alberta advantage for families and businesses. They voted yes to low taxes, yes to balanced budgets, yes to fixing Alberta's health care system once and for all, and yes to keeping life affordable.

Mr. Speaker, in every corner of the province, from Fort Saskatchewan to Fort Macleod, hope and opportunity are growing, and why wouldn't they be? Alberta is leading the nation in economic growth. We've created thousands of high-paying jobs. We're attracting major international investments from companies such as Dow Chemical, Air Products, HBO, McCain Foods, and Amazon, just to name a few. Our government has been laser

focused on making life better for everyday families and businesses, and we earned the votes of everyday Albertans.

Now, let's compare the plan we presented to what the members across had to offer. Higher taxes for everyone, including a devastating 38 per cent tax hike for Alberta businesses; reckless and unaffordable 2035 net-zero electricity plans, that even their counterparts in Saskatchewan say are completely unrealistic; a cap on Alberta energy production that would devastate our economy and put countless Albertans out of work; and more of the same kowtowing that their friend and ally Justin Trudeau is doing. Once again, Alberta said no to the failed policies of those members, policies that pushed families and businesses out of our province for an unprecedented 13 consecutive quarters.

Today Alberta is on a very different path, one that is attracting a record number of people to our great province, good, hard-working people who just want a better life for themselves and their families, people like my ancestors and yours, Mr. Speaker. To these new Albertans our government says this: welcome. Alberta is back. Our best days are still ahead.

**The Speaker:** Order.

1:50

### Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** The Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition has the call.

### Provincial Pension Plan Proposal

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, during the election the Premier repeatedly refused to talk about the UCP's reckless plan for gambling away Albertans' retirement security, but once elected, this Premier immediately started spending public dollars trying to convince Albertans that her risky plan full of nonsensical calculation isn't the egregious risk everyone already knows it to be. Will the Premier now admit that she knew Albertans were so strongly opposed to leaving the CPP that she intentionally hid her CPP plans until after the election?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the election I said that we were awaiting a pension report from LifeWorks and that as soon as it was ready, we would release it to the public, we would engage in consultation, and – subject as well to the recommendations we got from the Fair Deal Panel – that we wouldn't proceed with it unless we had an open referendum. Unlike the member opposite from Calgary-Elbow, who said that he doesn't want Albertans to know the information, doesn't want them to decide, and even if they did decide to go, the member opposite and that party wouldn't abide by Albertans' wishes. We listened to Albertans on this.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact is the Premier had the LifeWorks report well before the election and she hid it because it is full of fantasy numbers and it lacks basic common sense. The CPP Investment Board, chambers of commerce, and numerous trusted economists all agree that the math doesn't add up and the risks are just too high for Albertans who are seeking retirement security. If the Premier is truly confident in her plan, why did she intentionally hide the numbers in the LifeWorks report until after Albertans had cast their ballots?

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I have to correct incorrect information said by the member opposite. I said that the report was not going to be available till May. I don't believe I was briefed on it until June, and

as soon as we received it is when we ended up releasing it. We had had an interim report in 2021, and we've said all along that we wanted to get the final report. The final report looks at the interpretation of the CPP Act, the letter of the law, and it says that Albertans are entitled to \$334 billion by 2027. We have not received any alternative calculation from the federal government, and we've been asking them for it.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems the Premier loves playing hide-and-seek. The fact is she knows the numbers in the LifeWorks report can't be trusted. In fact, last week she admitted that a court would have to be the one that confirmed the real number for Albertans. Meanwhile, though, she's spending 7 and a half million dollars of Albertans' money, advertising full of half-baked claims based on this discredited report. Why is the Premier spending Albertans' money to promote facts, which, when pressed, even she admits are not reliable and cannot be relied on by Albertans?

**Ms Smith:** Well, I hope now that the member opposite agrees with us that the carbon tax is unfair, she'll justify why she spent \$9 million convincing Albertans that they should have had a carbon tax that she now doesn't even seem to agree with. But I would say, Mr. Speaker, that we stand by our numbers. The reason why we are asking the federal government – the federal government has disputed it. They haven't come up with any alternative calculation. We believe it's up to the federal government to tell us what dispute they have with the numbers so that we'd be able to put those forward to Albertans.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Leader of the Opposition for her second set of questions.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier wants to gamble away Albertans' pensions through a referendum, but the UCP can't even handle putting together a simple survey. In fact, their survey failed to ask Albertans the question: "Want to keep the CPP, yes or no?" Meanwhile their so-called panel has so far refused to meet with Albertans in person. But even with these embarrassing attempts at public consultation, we know the government is doing their own internal polling. Given that Albertans are the ones paying for that, will the Premier release those polling numbers to all Albertans, and if not, why not?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our consultation isn't done yet. Jim Dinning, who is conducting our online consultation, has already had, I believe, 10,000 to 15,000 people participate in each of the first two. We anticipate it'll be 10,000 to 15,000 people in the remaining three. We've had 70,000 people participate in our online survey so far. We're expecting more. What we're hearing is that people want more information. One of the pieces of information is that they want the federal government to come forward. If they dispute our calculation, we'd like to hear what the federal government's calculation is.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, what people are saying they want is real facts. Now, she recently said the final decisions on the APP will be made based on, and I quote, a confluence of information, while her minister stated that he would rely on high-level feelings instead of facts. Now, this doesn't surprise me at all. With imaginary numbers, hypothetical calculations, the only real thing about this plan is the enormous risk of losing what Albertans have worked so hard for their entire lives. Will the Premier admit that her plan is risky, dangerous,

and, most importantly, is against what an overwhelming majority of Albertans want?

**Ms Smith:** What I do know is that our seniors have overpaid into CPP for many years and their contributions have been compounded over time and that Alberta is subsidizing the rest of the country, and we believe that our seniors have the right to determine if they want to have higher benefits. We believe that our Alberta workers have a right to determine if they want lower contributions, and those are the things that are going to be put forward. We are going to be listening to the remaining consultation that is being done by our panel, we're going to continue to receive survey results at [albertapensionplan.ca](http://albertapensionplan.ca), and then we'll make a decision on a referendum.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, here's where we are. One, the Premier was too scared to talk about this during the election. Two, her claimed numbers are just not reliable or credible. Three, her survey failed to ask Albertans what they really want. Four, her panel has yet to meet with Albertans in person. Five, key experts across the province say this plan is risky, expensive, and will damage both retirement security and investment certainty. Why won't the Premier just stop it? Keep your hands off of Albertans' pensions.

**The Speaker:** I encourage the Leader of the Opposition to pose her questions through the chair.

**Ms Smith:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite has been trying to terrify seniors ever since before the election. We want seniors to know that they would be able to get equal or better benefits, workers would be able to get equal or lower contributions, and that's the question that would be put to Albertans should we choose to go to a referendum. We have to continue with the consultation. We're getting some great feedback, and if we feel we have enough information and Albertans want to have a vote on it, it'll be up to them to decide. This is in keeping with the response to the Fair Deal Panel. We've been listening to Albertans all along.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Leader of the Opposition for her third set of questions.

### Health Care System

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, almost exactly a year ago a new Premier promised Albertans she would fix our health care system in 90 days. Surprise, surprise: not only has the UCP failed to clean up its own mess in health care; they've also made things much worse. According to the Alberta Medical Association the number of doctors accepting new patients in Alberta has collapsed by 80 per cent. There are whole cities in Alberta with no doctors accepting new patients. Why won't the Premier admit that we are scrambling to keep doctors in this province and the last thing they need is for her to tear away the system and create more chaos?

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, a year ago the members opposite were saying that the system was going to collapse, and what we did is took action to increase surge capacity. We have increased the number of acute-care beds; 171 since March of 2023. We've increased our number of beds in ICU; 50 as well as 370 support positions. I can tell you that I'm very proud of the work that our front-line workers are doing. They were stress-tested multiple times in the last year, not only with last year's respiratory virus season but this year's respiratory virus season, the fires, the E coli crisis, and I'm telling you that they rose to the occasion. We're very proud.



**Ms Notley:** Well, I'm glad the Premier is proud of her record because Albertans are not. The crisis in our hospitals continues to deepen. Overnight wait times at the emergency rooms are regularly hitting 12, 13, 14 hours in our major hospitals. Imagine taking your child into the emergency room in the middle of the night and being told you have to wait 14 hours to see a doctor. My heart goes out to those parents. Does that sound like a system the Premier should be proud of, that's absolutely fixed, and if it does, why?

2:00

**Ms Smith:** I can assure Albertans that we do have the capacity in our system to face this upcoming respiratory virus season, and that's what people asked us to do. We have a lot more work to do, of course. We've got to reduce surgical wait times. We've got to continue to reduce the amount of wait for EMS. We've got to also ensure that we've got lower waits in the emergency rooms. That's why significant new management changes are coming. You'll have to wait a couple more weeks to see what those look like, Mr. Speaker, but we know that we can do much better in our system, and we intend to.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the last time these guys decided to reorganize the system, and let's talk about labs. This government blew up our public labs, handed the whole system over to a private company that just couldn't do the job. It led to massive waits for appointments, huge delays for patients, dangerous mistakes, lost results, and, most importantly, delays to critically important health care. Ultimately, this UCP had to admit that they botched the whole thing and bring it back into AHS. Will the Premier apologize to Albertans for the stress that they have caused and promise not to reorganize . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, we had every reason to believe that DynaLife would be able to expand and take on the rest of the lab testing services. They were doing an able job in northern Alberta. When the expansion happened into southern Alberta, it didn't work out as planned. The waits were way too long, and by mutual agreement we decided that Alberta Precision Labs would take it over. We promise that there will be no job losses to the front line, and I'd like to thank our front-line workers for doing such a tremendous job of being able to increase the amount of lab testing, because we all know that that's the number one. You need a lab test in order to get treatment.

### Ethics Commissioner's May 2023 Report

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, soon the Ethics Commissioner's report will be considered by this House. Now, when it first surfaced, the Premier stood in front of the media and blatantly failed to take responsibility for its findings. She actually claimed that she was gratified, but the report actually found that she broke the ethic laws of the province. On top of that, the commissioner stated that the Premier's actions were a "threat to our democracy." Will the Premier take responsibility today for her gross mischaracterization of the commissioner's findings?

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, you'll recall that the very first moment I had after the election I apologized to the Chamber for my errors, but I am gratified that it was found that no one in my office tried to contact any Crown prosecutor. The CBC retracted its findings. Of course, I'm not a lawyer, so one of the recommendations that the Ethics Commissioner suggested was that our caucus go through training. We have. I have

asked for guidance from our Justice minister on how to engage with him, and he has given us that guidance, which is going to be available online, so I'm delighted that . . .

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

**Ms Notley:** The Ethics Commissioner's report is clear. The Premier made an "attempt to influence the [independent] legal system," and she also "contravened . . . the Conflicts of Interest Act in her interaction with the Minister of Justice and Attorney General in relation to the criminal charges." Based on these findings, will the Premier admit, without making any excuses for herself, that she violated the act and apologize to this Chamber and to Albertans specifically for interfering with the administration of justice in the province of Alberta? Yes or no?

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I apologized at the first opportunity, and one of the things that I would ask all of our members to read is the guidance that our Justice minister has kindly provided for us about the proper way to engage with his department. One of the things that he has said is that the onus is on the Justice minister to make sure that if there is any issue that is being raised that he feels uncomfortable with, he will let us know. I'm grateful to have that guidance because I'm not a lawyer, unlike the member opposite. I rely on my Justice minister to give me good legal advice, and I'm looking forward to him doing that.

**Ms Notley:** So this version is to throw the Justice minister under the bus, Mr. Speaker. Wow.

You know, the province deserves better than this Premier's gross mischaracterization of the findings, her unreliable calculations about pensions, her cabinet minister's feelings, all of it, when it comes to making decisions that are in the best democratic interest of Albertans. How can Albertans possibly trust her to run a referendum about their retirement security, about taxes, about, frankly, anything when we can't trust her to provide us with accurate information, draft a simple survey, or act according to our ethics laws?

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, we got 53 per cent of the vote in the election, and we have 48 members sitting on this side. That's my answer. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order.

The hon. Member for . . .

**Mr. Nixon:** Lost twice, Rachel.

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order. The use of proper names inside the Assembly on or off the record would be wildly inappropriate. I'm sure the minister close toward the end of the Chamber knows that rule quite well.

### Affordable Housing

**Member Irwin:** We are in the midst of a housing crisis. Just to afford basic rent, someone living in Calgary needs to be earning \$84,000 annually. I've heard from so many renters all across our province, and they've told me clearly that they are struggling. With average rents in Calgary now over \$2,000, no wonder it's become impossible to cover the cost of housing, skyrocketing food prices, utility bills, transportation, the list goes on. To the minister supposedly responsible for housing since this government refuses to have a housing ministry: what will he do immediately to offer relief to renters? Urgent times call for urgent measures, Minister.

**Mr. Nixon:** Well, Mr. Speaker, what we're doing immediately is cleaning up the NDP mess. When that hon. member's party was in power, the affordable housing waiting list increased by 76 per cent. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** The hon. the minister has the call.

**Mr. Nixon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the NDP were in government, the affordable housing wait-list increased by 76 per cent. I'm proud to be part of a government that is focused on investing and creating homes all across this province, currently investing \$9 billion with our partners to make 25,000 new homes. That's real work and fixing the NDP's mess.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. [interjections] Order. Without a preamble.

**Member Irwin:** Given that none of that will be immediate and none of that will help the thousands of Albertans struggling right now and at risk of being homeless and given that in Edmonton there are an estimated 3,000 unsheltered people and front-line workers will tell you that that number is likely a whole heck of a lot higher and given that tens of thousands more Albertans are at serious risk of becoming homeless, caused by UCP cuts to social housing, cuts to rental supplements, cuts to income supports, cuts to health care, virtually no tenant protection – shall I go on? This government has had four years. When will they step up and do better for struggling Albertans? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, our government has invested in homeless shelters in unprecedented ways, particularly in our two largest cities, with the support of our municipalities. Record numbers.

But if that member wants to make life more affordable for Albertans, why has she continued to stand in this House over and over and vote to keep Justin Trudeau's carbon tax, the single biggest thing making life unaffordable for Albertans? Will they finally stand up and admit they were wrong on the carbon tax and stand with us and call on Justin Trudeau to get rid of his carbon tax immediately?

**Member Irwin:** Given that we've seen this UCP government hold multiple press conferences to announce funding for more shelter spaces and given that doing so while refusing to meaningfully invest in housing is a shameful indictment of their failure to protect Albertans – and anyone who walks our streets knows that we need these spaces, absolutely, but announcements about shelters are not something that we should be celebrating – when is this government going to start protecting renters, start adequately funding affordable housing, and start treating Albertans with dignity rather than just funding more mats on a crowded floor?

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, \$9 billion right now is already approved to be invested in affordable housing across this province. It's already created thousands of new units inside Alberta, and we will continue to be able to make sure with our stronger foundations plan that by 2031 we're going to create almost 90,000 more new households inside our province. That's real action.

But, again, will the hon. member finally stand with the government and stand up against the carbon tax, which is the biggest thing that is making life unaffordable for all Canadians, including here in Alberta?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

## 2:10 Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation

**Mr. Yao:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say that it's an absolute pleasure to be here in this House and an absolute honour to ask this question.

Just yesterday this government announced that the loan capacity budget for the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation has been doubled, and not only that, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be tripling this in the upcoming fiscal year. Can the Minister of Indigenous Relations please tell this House what was the reason behind this unprecedented support for Indigenous peoples?

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

**Mr. Wilson:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Alberta is leading the country in economic reconciliation. The Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation has been a game changer for the Indigenous communities across this province, and this government is committed across the province to helping Indigenous people with economic growth. This expansion will ensure that we are ready for more transformational projects to come in the future to support Indigenous investment and create long-term economic benefits that are not seen anywhere else in the country.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

**Mr. Yao:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to the minister, thank you so much for all of your work in this endeavour. Given this monumental expansion to the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation's loan capacity and given that you will be increasing it to \$3 billion in 2024-25, can the minister please explain: what exactly is the AIOC, and how do these loan guarantees work to ensure that our Indigenous peoples have access to these much-needed funds? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order. The hon. the minister gets to answer the question.

**Mr. Wilson:** Well, thank you for the great question. Mr. Speaker, the AIOC is a loan guarantee corporation that bridges the gap for Indigenous communities by providing access to capital for mid- to large-scale projects. The Alberta government backstops these loan guarantees for projects that have passed through the AIOC's rigorous review process to ensure only projects that are projected to succeed are approved for these guarantees. The AIOC has provided immense support for Indigenous communities across the province, and I'm confident in the future success of this program.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

**Mr. Yao:** Thank you much, and thank you very much, hon. minister, for the great answer. Given that since its launch in 2019 the AIOC has backed more than \$500 million in investments benefiting nearly 30 Indigenous communities in Alberta, including in my own constituency of Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, and given that this government is truly acting on its mandate to advance economic reconciliation, can the same minister please inform this House of other initiatives in place outside of the AIOC to promote reconciliation?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the minister.

**Mr. Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's government is steadfast in its commitment towards economic reconciliation on all fronts. There are multiple initiatives and programs in place to

contribute to this important work. The Aboriginal business investment fund helps Indigenous community-owned businesses create jobs and socioeconomic outcomes through grants up to \$750,000. This program saw a 50 per cent increase in funding in Budget 2023. The Indigenous reconciliation initiative and the community support fund: these will support Indigenous-led cultural initiatives on our journey toward reconciliation.

**The Speaker:** The Official Opposition House Leader has a question.

### Provincial Pension Plan Proposal

**Ms Gray:** Mr. Speaker, the UCP has launched a survey on their agenda to pull Alberta out of the Canada pension plan and to needlessly gamble with Albertans' retirement security. It practically asks Albertans what colour, shape, and size they want their unicorn to be. The survey is just sunshine and rainbows and high-level feelings, as the minister would say, but Albertans want their pension to be based on a lot more than feelings. They want data. Can the minister please tell this House how many people have expressed opposition to leaving the CPP in their survey?

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

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. I think we've all seen the ads, heard what's going on in this province. It's a conversation and a question that we've put forward. We put it out in the public sphere to have a conversation about, and we assume that Alberta will give it fair consideration. I have not seen the survey results. I look forward to speaking to Mr. Dinning and the panel about what they've heard so far and eventually receive a what-we-heard report with recommendations.

**Ms Gray:** Given the minister, of course, cannot tell this House how many Albertans are opposed because he didn't ask that question and given that our caucus has launched our own survey that actually does ask the clear question – do you want to leave the CPP? – and given that our survey has received more than 33,000 responses and 90 per cent are opposed to this government's agenda, why is the minister afraid to ask Albertans the real question? Is it because he knows how unpopular his idea is?

**Mr. Horner:** I think the point was to make sure that Albertans could learn about the question. This is a complicated issue, obviously. We want to first make sure that they're aware and then find out what's important to them. I don't understand why the opposition is scared of having that conversation with Albertans, for something that could potentially benefit every Albertan, whether they're already retired, a senior concerned about their benefits, a working-age person, or an Alberta business. This is something that could have a great benefit for Alberta and should be given fair consideration.

**Ms Gray:** Given the admittedly fake numbers, fair consideration is not possible, given that the UCP survey doesn't even ask if they want to leave the CPP, consideration is not possible, and given that the vast majority of Albertans, economists, business leaders, even the Conservatives' own federal leader, are opposed to Alberta leaving the CPP, will this government admit the entire process is a sham and end their ridiculous plan to gamble with Albertans' retirement savings?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, the federal Conservative Party: you know, we're not linked with them like they are with the federal

NDP. [interjections] It continues to crop up, the Justin Trudeau led government. We would be in an election right now if it weren't for that. Seeing what he's doing with the regional disparity on heating oil across this country, it is time that we see some real leadership federally in this country. I think that day is coming soon.

As far as this question, we'll continue to ask it. We'll continue to get more information. I look forward to my FPT on Friday at 9 with the ministers.

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

### Ethics Commissioner's May 2023 Report

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In May the Ethics Commissioner found that the Premier had broken Alberta's ethics laws in her attempt to pressure the former Justice minister into helping Artur Pawlowski evade criminal charges for which he was later convicted. This is a serious breach of the law and was clearly an attempt by the Premier to interfere in the administration of justice. There must be consequences for breaking the law. Will the Justice minister agree that anyone who interferes in the administration of justice should face consequences? A simple question.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Justice and the keeper of the Great Seal of Alberta.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This matter has been thoroughly investigated by both the Public Service Commission and the Ethics Commissioner, and we take the recommendations of the Ethics Commissioner seriously. The Ethics Commissioner found that the Premier did not interfere with the prosecutorial independence at any point in time.

**Ms Hoffman:** She tried to break the law.

**Mr. Schow:** Point of order.

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, the recommendations that we did receive we are implementing. We are currently putting them forward, and I'm pleased to report that they are well under way.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, a point of order is noted at 2:18.

**Mr. Sabir:** Given that the commissioner found the Premier attempted to influence the independence of the legal system, which the commissioner described – and I quote – as a threat to democracy, given that the commissioner also found that the Premier imposed considerable pressure on the former Attorney General, and given that the commissioner also compared the Premier's action to the SNC-Lavalin case, which the Premier was very critical of, will the minister agree that any action that threatened democracy should be condemned and that any person who threatens democracy should be sanctioned?

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite wants – so, on one hand, he argues for prosecutorial independence, and on the other hand he wants the Justice minister to sanction. The Ethics Commissioner is an independent office tasked with this role, and she has provided us with that report. I would encourage the member opposite to respect the process or reach out to the Ethics Commissioner directly on this matter.

**Mr. Sabir:** Given that the Premier broke the law and attempted to interfere in the administration and independence of the justice system, given that she was found to have pressured the Attorney General, and

given that when somebody breaks the law, they don't get to apologize it away, will the minister join me in condemning the actions of the Premier and agree that she should face consequences for her actions since she is not above the law?

**Mr. Schow:** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, a point of order is noted at 2:20. The Minister of Justice.

2:20

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is clearly receiving his legal advice from the CBC, but even their journalists have had the integrity to withdraw their allegations. The member opposite needs to take a lesson from his legal advisers at the CBC and do exactly the same.

Thank you. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

### Support for Agriculture

**Mr. van Dijken:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about Alberta's agriculture industry. Alberta's agricultural industry holds significant growth potential and plays a vital role in our province's economy. The province offers high-quality primary products and is the third-largest exporter of agrifood products in Canada. In 2022 the agricultural sector contributed \$10.3 billion in GDP and employed 69,000 Albertans. Can the minister of agriculture please share some of the government's plans to attract more investment and support the expansion of the industry in driving economic growth and prosperity in our province?

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

**Mr. Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for that great question. Attracting more investment and expanding the agrifood industry is a top priority for this government. We introduced the new agriprocessing investment tax credit to help attract large-scale investment and value-added agricultural manufacturing. We set aggressive targets for investment growth in Alberta. I'm happy to inform this House we've achieved those goals and that we've actually done it a year early. Creating the right conditions to do business in Alberta promotes investment and increases our competitiveness globally. We're focused on that every day.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Member for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

**Mr. van Dijken:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the growth of the agriculture industry is not only a provincial priority but impacts local communities as well, can the same minister please tell the House how municipalities can collaborate with the government to create a favourable environment for agricultural investment, job creation, and innovation at the community level, ensuring that the benefits of this growth are felt across the province?

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

**Mr. Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another great question. Connecting with our municipalities is very important. That's why we've allocated \$4.6 million in new funding in Budget 2023 to continue implementing the economic development in rural Alberta plan. This plan is guiding innovation and growth in rural and Indigenous communities. In addition, we've more than doubled our

support for the nine regional economic development alliances right here in the province. This \$1.1 million commitment gives each alliance \$125,000 to develop solutions that meet their area's economic needs.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the member.

**Mr. van Dijken:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the agricultural sector offers significant potential for innovation, diversification, and economic development in Alberta, can the same minister please provide details on specific incentives or programs designed to encourage innovation and sustainable practices within the agricultural industry, ensuring its long-term growth and success for both rural and urban municipalities?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the minister.

**Mr. Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is great, to be able to highlight the \$508 million to the sustainable Canadian agricultural partnership, that includes \$5 million to the resilient agricultural landscape program to encourage producers to adopt conservation practices. Within sustainable CAP we also have \$2.2 million in grant funding to help producers adopt innovative farm technology. In 2020 our government also committed \$370 million to RDAR over 10 years to fund research and encourage innovation. We've got the best . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Acadia is next.

### E Coli Outbreak in Calgary Daycares

**Member Batten:** Mr. Speaker, the E coli outbreak in Calgary was devastating, and I know members on this side of the House have deep sympathies for the families affected. This is something that no family should have to go through, but families in Calgary did, and they should be able to trust that their government will spring into action in the face of such a crisis. That's not what we saw from this government. Only after public outrage could this government bother to drag themselves to a podium to promise a public inquiry into what happened. Will the Health minister explain to Calgarians why this took so long?

**Member LaGrange:** Mr. Speaker, there could be nothing further from the truth. In fact, AHS went into action, the government went into action immediately, as soon as the outbreak was declared. In fact, I was able to speak to parents and children that were affected by this. I know how devastating it was, and our hearts go out to them. That's why we provided additional compensation, compassionate compensation, for those parents and those children. There is an ongoing investigation, and we look forward to those results.

**Member Batten:** Given that we are still hearing from parents like Kyla, who spent 55 days off work and at home with her toddler, who still tested positive for E coli, and given that with another little one at home, both of her children are now at risk for long-term health complications, some of which they may not know until they're adults, and given that Kyla's family is still left with questions like "Why did this happen?" and "What is being done to prevent it from happening again?" will the minister explain to Kyla and all Albertan families why they waited so long to launch an inquiry into this preventable disaster?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the minister of children's services.

**Mr. Turton:** Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We remain committed to making sure that daycares remain safe places for over 150,000 children right across

the province every single day. I was very pleased that up to this point over 1,600 children and their parents have received the compassionate care payments. We're going to continue to help support these families and look forward to making sure that our daycares are safe for our children.

**Member Batten:** Given that the traumatic and prolonged medical issues these children are experiencing can lead to stress, anxiety, and PTSD and given that most of these families have either already completely used their benefits for mental health and are having a hard time finding any appointments because of the long wait times and given that the aftermath of the E coli outbreak was not something families had anticipated and that they're feeling abandoned by this government, left wondering where they can go for help, what will happen next, can the minister please explain to these families why their government has abandoned them during this traumatic time?

**Member LaGrange:** Again, nothing can be further from the truth. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to provide support to those families. I know that AHS is regularly monitoring. We are following through with the investigation, which is going to be very thorough. We also have a panel. The panel is led by former Calgary police chief Rick Hanson to review food safety in kitchens that provide food to licensed health care facilities. We're going to continue to do everything we can for these families.

#### Health Care Professionals in Rural Alberta

**Mr. Wiebe:** Mr. Speaker, across this province rural health care facilities continue to face staff shortages. Given that Alberta's government is investing \$11 million in nursing skills training and creating 1,221 additional seats for nurse bridging programs, can the Minister of Advanced Education provide the House with an update on the government's plan to tackle staff shortages in rural health care and how this will ensure that all Albertans, including my riding of Grande Prairie-Wapiti, have access to timely and quality medical care?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the minister of postsecondary education.

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for that question. This funding is already at work to address staff shortages in Alberta hospitals and ensure that Albertans have the medical care they need when they need it. Of the 1,221 seats, 671, or 55 per cent of them, will be at six rural Alberta institutions. This means those students are more likely to practise in a rural community. The internationally educated nurse program expansion initiative will create 367 new IEN nursing seats this year alone through programming through Advanced Education.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, through you, to the minister for her answer. Given the recognition of nursing shortages across Canada and increasing the number of nurses, including support for internationally educated nurses, can the Minister of Health outline how nurse practitioners will play a role in alleviating areas with doctor shortages?

2:30

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Health has risen.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Increasing access to primary health care remains a top priority for our government, and nurse practitioners

play a vital role, particularly in rural Alberta. In fact, the College of Registered Nurses of Alberta put out a release just this afternoon. They had a record-breaking 40,349 registrants, RNs and nurse practitioners, renew their permits for the '23-24 year. Alberta is becoming the destination of choice for health care professionals. Our government will continue to strengthen our primary health care system, and we won't stop until every Albertan . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis is next.

#### Eastern Slopes Protection and Coal Development Policies

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Mr. Speaker, Albertans across this province, from Lethbridge to High Level, have been abundantly clear. They do not want coal mining projects in our beautiful Rocky Mountains. They told the government this back in 2021, and they're saying it again: the eastern slopes must be protected. Yet Northback Holdings has applied for 46 new boreholes to be drilled in the previously denied Grassy Mountain area, in a space where there is to be no drilling activity. Why is it that the minister refuses to listen to Albertans and put a stop to coal mining and drilling in the eastern slopes?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Energy and Minerals.

**Mr. Jean:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. First of all, Alberta has some of the toughest, most stringent coal regulations on the entire planet. The application for these exploration drilling activities is being reviewed right now by the AER. An application does not necessarily mean it will be approved, but the people of Alberta collect rent for that. The ministerial order does restrict coal projects but does allow for exceptions, including for active coal mines and a small number of advanced projects. We're going to protect Albertans. That's what we're here for, and that's what we're going to do.

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Mr. Speaker, given that this is not an active coal mine but was previously denied and given that the NDP had fought to protect the eastern slopes from coal mining in 2021 and 2022 with the Eastern Slopes Protection Act, a bill that received widespread endorsement from environmental groups, agricultural producers, and municipal councillors, and given that both times the UCP blocked this bill from debate and given that the drilling Northback is exploring would be illegal had that legislation been passed, why is it that this government has ignored the guidance of industry leaders? Do they not value the opinion of experts?

**Mr. Jean:** Mr. Speaker, why is it the NDP don't listen to the people of Alberta? You know, when they were in power – let's talk about some of the things they did. Well, they wanted to mine the Ram River falls, one of the most beautiful places on the eastern slopes. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** The hon. the minister.

**Mr. Jean:** Just to repeat it, Mr. Speaker, they wanted to mine the Ram River falls. They invited applications there.

But let's talk about their cousins to the west of us, Mr. Speaker, the NDP out of British Columbia. Elk Valley: it's a disaster. We're not going to let that happen here. Let's talk about coal exports over the last three years. They've almost doubled through the NDP in B.C. What is the NDP in Alberta doing about their cousins? Well, they go campaign for them. We're not going to take any lessons from . . .

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

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Mr. Speaker, given that these projects can have catastrophic environmental impacts – contaminating watersheds, damaging crops, harming livestock, and hurting the robust economy of southern Alberta – and given that every government should pursue projects that support the economy and are in the best interest of Albertans, it seems fair to say that the government's stance on coal mining shows how wildly out of touch the UCP is. Given that the Alberta NDP will never back down from protecting our mountains and our economy, will the minister explain why this government refuses to admit they are wrong? Why can't the government just ban these projects once and for all?

**Mr. Jean:** I'm confused, Mr. Speaker. Is this the NDP in B.C. they're talking about that need to ban coal projects? Right now Vancouver under the NDP is the largest export port for North America's coal. They should be ashamed of themselves. They have no standing on this. If they really wanted to help with what was going on with energy and people's pocketbooks, they would stand with us against the carbon tax that their leader in Ottawa wants to bring into Alberta even larger than it is now.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I beg the indulgence of the House and ask for your apology. I skipped the second supplemental of the hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti. I promise the Assembly it won't happen again. If you'll indulge, I'll allow him to ask his second supplemental.

The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

#### Health Care Professionals in Rural Alberta

*(continued)*

**Mr. Wiebe:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to know that I'm not the only one that has day one jitters.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and through you to the minister for her response. Given the critical role that nurses play in the delivery of health care, especially in rural areas, can the Minister of Advanced Education provide insights into how the nurses' bursary and the investment in nursing skills training will specifically enhance health care services in our local communities?

**The Speaker:** I might remind the member that all questions after four are to be done without a preamble.

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Thank you to the member for that question. Mr. Speaker, under Budget 2023 Advanced Education is providing \$7.8 million annually to help off-set the cost of nursing bridging programs for the bursary for internationally educated nurses. The bursary helps cover assessment and examination costs as well as tuition costs and living expenses. We want to encourage nurses to live and work in rural communities; this bursary is nonrepayable, provided the nurse agrees to live and work in rural Alberta for a period of time after graduation.

#### Education Funding

**Ms Pancholi:** Four years ago the UCP stopped collecting data on class sizes in Alberta schools, a convenient way to avoid answering the question of: what happens when a government underfunds education and fails to build enough schools in Alberta for four years? Well, we asked the question, Mr. Speaker, and hundreds of Alberta parents and teachers gave some shocking answers. Here are just a few examples: 35 students in a grade 6 class in Sherwood Park; 34 in a grade 5 class in Edmonton; 48 students in a grade 12 class in Fort McMurray; 33 children in a kindergarten class in

Calgary. Will the Minister of Education and his colleagues take responsibility for overcrowding Alberta classrooms?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Mr. Speaker, Alberta's government will take responsibility for restarting the economic engine of Canada and making Alberta the most attractive place in the country to be once again after so many years of the dark days under the NDP. It's been hard work, but we've gotten there, and people are once again flocking to our incredible province. We have some work to do, indeed. We have work to do to build more schools and hire more teachers. We're proceeding in that direction, and of course we'll have more to say in the coming months, but I look forward to seeing the results of our work thus far.

**Ms Pancholi:** Given that it's not just the number of students in each class that is growing but the complexity of those classes and given that the Calgary board of education has grown by 7,000 students this year and has almost 40,000 English language learners while Edmonton public schools have grown by 5,000 students and given that under the UCP Alberta now provides the lowest level of funding per student in the country, can the minister explain to Alberta parents why his government has enough money for propaganda campaigns in Toronto subway stations and to mislead about pensions but places so little value on our kids' education and future?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not true at all. The government of Alberta places extreme importance and significance on making sure that our students receive the very best. That's why in Budget 2023 we invested \$126 million in new funding to support classroom complexity. That's why we're continuing to provide funding for students with English as an additional language. That's why we're continuing to fund Ukrainian evacuees and other students to ensure they have the supports that they need to be successful. We're committed to making that happen.

**Ms Pancholi:** Given that despite enrolment growing almost five times faster than before the pandemic, CBE has only received construction funding for one school modernization project this year and they're requesting an unprecedented 68 modular classrooms to deal with overcrowding and given that Edmonton public schools were completely shut out of any new schools for two of the past four years and will be completely out of high school spaces by 2027 yet there's no new high school coming, how can the minister make school boards, families, and, most of all, students wait any longer in the overcrowded classrooms that his government is responsible for?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Education.

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The mandate letter from the Premier calls upon the government of Alberta to significantly expand the number of schools in growing communities, and let me reassure you we will be doing precisely that. In addition, over the past few years we have announced a total of 98 school projects. When they were in government, they only announced 46 school projects. We are committed to building schools.

2:40

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, that concludes the time allotted for Oral Question Period. In 30 seconds or less we will continue to the remainder of members' statements.

## Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore has a statement to make.

### Crisis in Gaza

**Mr. Haji:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 7 the attacks by Hamas resulted in the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust. Over 1,400 Israelis were murdered, including more than 30 children. Hamas currently holds over 220 Israeli civilians hostage in Gaza.

We feel the painful impact of these horrific attacks here in Alberta, where Jewish Albertans are mourning the killings of their loved ones, and they are fearfully awaiting news of the safe return of the hostages. The Alberta NDP mourns with you.

We see the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. More than 2 million people are in immediate danger, subject to intense bombing, a critical lack of access to basic necessities, and the trauma of a climbing death toll. More than 8,000 Gazan civilians have been killed. Of those, 3,000 are children. The Palestinians, Arab, the Muslim Albertans: the Alberta NDP grieves the losses of the civilians with you and calls for immediate ceasefire and the substantial increase of humanitarian aid to provide Gazans with the food, water, fuel, and medical attention they need right now. We also call for an immediate release of all hostages. We believe that children must be spared from conflict. As someone who was exposed to conflicts in my childhood, I believe no child should ever be subjected to the violence of war.

We have also heard from the community members about the disturbing rise in hatred, whether it is anti-Semitism, anti-Palestinian, or Islamophobic hate. We strongly condemn hatred in all its forms. This is a painful and fearful time for many Albertans. This is a time for us to come together, to mourn together, and support each other as best we can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Mr. Speaker, given yesterday's announcement that this government is committing to nearly tripling the loan capacity of the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, I want to take this opportunity to highlight some of the incredible work Alberta's government has been doing surrounding economic reconciliation.

Transformational change is happening all over the province with the incredible work carried out by the Ministry of Indigenous Relations. Indigenous participation in Alberta's economy is a top priority of this government. Since its launch in 2019 AIOC has backed more than \$500 million in investments, benefiting nearly 30 Indigenous communities in Alberta. The AIOC is addressing long-standing barriers to major Indigenous investments by reducing the cost of borrowing and increasing the amounts that can be borrowed.

In early 2022 our government expanded the AIOC mandate to include major agriculture, telecommunications, and transportation projects and related infrastructure. With yesterday's announcement, our government is positioning the AIOC for future success, and we want to give it the ability to support an even larger investment if the deal should happen to arise. We're signalling to industry that Alberta is the place for prosperity, and we want to ensure that Indigenous communities have a seat at the table. Economic reconciliation is an important way to support healthy, safe, and sustainable Indigenous communities. Our government is ready to

take big strides forward to the path of reconciliation because when Indigenous people succeed, we all succeed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

### Government Policies

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After four years of this UCP government, Albertans are paying more – a lot more – and getting a whole lot less to meet the basic necessities of life. In Edmonton-North West renters are experiencing the largest rent increases in living memory. With the stock of affordable housing actually decreasing, this UCP government is only making a bad situation worse.

Since the UCP removed regulations, Edmonton-North West drivers have seen their vehicle insurance rates increase by 30 per cent or even more, even without any claims and even as people were actually driving less. Every month Albertans experience the dread of opening their power bills ever since the UCP removed consumer protections. In this last year alone electricity costs have quadrupled. Truly shocking.

Instead of wasting millions of dollars on wildly misleading advertising to pursue their own pet projects, like the horrible Alberta pension plan, this government must acknowledge their mistakes and get down to the actual business of making life more affordable for Albertans. In Edmonton-North West and right across this province this UCP government's mismanagement of Alberta's health care has made people's lives more uncertain, less secure, and a whole lot less affordable. There has been an 80 per cent decrease in doctors accepting new patients; seniors saddled with unaffordable costs for prescriptions, physical therapy, and continuing care; Albertans having to travel long distances to try to find the health care they need for themselves and their loved ones. It all adds up to paying more – a whole lot more – and getting less in return.

When this UCP government chooses to not look after the health of Albertans now, they are playing a dangerous game with people's lives. For every misdiagnosis or dangerously long wait time for a critical medical procedure there is a greater chance that Albertans will lose out on this game. For now and for always we must invest in the people that matter most . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning and the Official Opposition Deputy House Leader.

### Ethics Commissioner's May 2023 Report

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier of our province broke the law. That's not me talking but, rather, Alberta's Ethics Commissioner. She found that the Premier's interaction with the Minister of Justice and Attorney General in relation to the criminal charges laid against Artur Pawlowski contravened the Conflicts of Interest Act.

These are the facts. The Premier attempted to interfere in the administration of justice, and she attempted to pressure the former Justice minister all to support a man who prosecutors said made an overt call for violence against police officers at an illegal blockade at a place where the people were later charged with plotting to kill RCMP officers. This wasn't an accident. It was deliberate, and it was intentional. The Ethics Commissioner warned that attempts to interfere with the administration of justice are "a threat to democracy" and "the first step towards the type of judicial system found in non-democratic or pseudo-democratic [countries]."

What the Premier attempted to do was serious and concerning, and there need to be ramifications. We will see what the Ethics

Commissioner suggests soon, but the Albertans I talk to want to know that the justice system will be independent and free from political interference, and they want consequences when someone tries to meddle.

My colleagues across the floor claim to support the justice system. They claim to support law enforcement. In this case, there should be a unanimous voice from this place to sanction the Premier with appropriate and serious penalties and condemn her undemocratic actions.

Mr. Speaker, standing in support of an independent justice system is not a partisan call; it's one of the most important jobs we have in this place, and as we just heard, it is the Justice minister's job. On this side of the House we stand for democracy, the rule of law, and, along with it, an independent justice system. Now the UCP needs to do the same.

### Notices of Motions

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Government House Leader, followed by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give oral notice of Bill 6, Public Health Amendment Act, 2023, sponsored by the Minister of Justice.

2:50

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice that at the appropriate time under Standing Order 42 I intend to move the following motion.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly recognize carbon dioxide emissions contribute to a changing climate that has caused wildfires, flooding, evacuations, and extreme weather events in Canada and around the world while at the same time inflation has caused steep increases to household costs for all Canadians from coast to coast to coast, and therefore the Assembly believes that the federal government's recent changes to climate policy, announced October 26, should be applied to all Canadians regardless of geography or home heating method, including natural gas.

### Introduction of Bills

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

#### Bill 3

#### Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Amendment Act, 2023

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to give leave to introduce Bill 3, the Opioid Damages and Health Care Cost Recovery Amendment Act, 2023. If passed, Bill 3 would make important amendments to the original act passed by this House in 2019 unanimously. The legislation aims to hold those responsible for the devastating opioid addiction crisis that we face be held accountable and the great cost that our health care system and society has borne through that.

With that, I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and look forward to debating the bill.

[Motion carried; Bill 3 read a first time]

### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Edmonton-McClung.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table five requisite copies of the lyrics of the song called *Feelings*, easy listening, heartbreaking music for the Finance minister to listen to as he contemplates the confluence of information from many sources that he now says he will consider instead of his feelings while deciding whether Albertans are in favour of going to referendum.

**The Speaker:** I beg the patience of members for tablings today as I have a number of them. First, I would like to table a copy of the House leaders' agreement, which is signed on October 26, 2023.

Second, I have six copies of the findings of the report, recommendations by the Ethics Commissioner into allegations involving the Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat, Premier of Alberta, May 17, 2023.

Third, pursuant to section 46(2) of the Conflicts of Interest Act, C-23 of the 2000 Revised Statutes of Alberta, I'm tabling six copies of the annual report of the office of the Ethics Commissioner covering the period of April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.

Finally, in accordance with section 28(1) of the Ombudsman Act I would like to table six copies of the annual report of the Alberta Ombudsman, which covers the period April 1, 2022, through March 31, 2023.

Do you have a tabling?

**Ms Gray:** A question, Mr. Speaker, if I may.

**The Speaker:** It would be awfully strange for you to ask a question during the Routine. Perhaps we can conclude the Routine, and I'll come back to you.

### Tablings to the Clerk

**The Clerk:** I wish to advise the Assembly that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of hon. Mr. Amery, Minister of Justice, pursuant to the Legal Profession Act the Law Society of Alberta 2022 annual report.

On behalf of hon. Mr. Nally, Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction, pursuant to the Horse Racing Alberta Act the Horse Racing Alberta 2022 annual report; pursuant to An Act to End Predatory Lending the An Act to End Predatory Lending 2022 report.

On behalf of hon. Mr. McIver, Minister of Municipal Affairs, pursuant to the Safety Codes Act the Safety Codes Council 2022 annual report; Alberta Elevating Devices and Amusement Rides Safety Association 2022-23 annual report with attached financial statements.

On behalf of hon. Mr. Nicolaides, Minister of Education, pursuant to the Teaching Profession Act the Alberta Teachers' Association 2022 annual report.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, we're at points of order.

Perhaps I'll entertain a question from the Official Opposition House Leader albeit awfully strange.

**Ms Gray:** I appreciate your patience and indulgence here, Mr. Speaker. I understood that a report from the Ethics Commissioner was one of our tablings. The question I have for you – there was a report in May and, given its content, under section 28 of the Conflicts of Interest Act there is a process where that report would be debated within 15 days of receipt should there be sanctions within. I am curious if you can inform the House what the next steps are for the Assembly dealing with the report that was just tabled, and should the public expect a motion to come forward for the Assembly to decide on how to handle the report as referenced in the



Conflicts of Interest Act? I appreciate very much your clarity if you have any on this matter.

**The Speaker:** Sure. I am pleased to provide some clarity. I also appreciate that the Opposition House Leader has referenced the section of the Conflicts of Interest Act, 28(3), which I know that she will have read, that says:

If in the report from the Ethics Commissioner the Ethics Commissioner has found that a Member or former Minister has breached this Act and the Ethics Commissioner has recommended a sanction . . .

I might point the hon. the Official Opposition House Leader to the Ethics Commissioner report, where she says, “I make no recommendations with respect to sanctions.” There is no reason for the report to be debated.

Points of order. At 2:18 the hon. the Government House Leader rose on a point of order.

### Point of Order

#### Allegations Against a Member

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order, 23(h), (i), and (j). It might be worth clustering these two points of order together if that’s allowed, but I do recognize that they were on two different members at two different times. I seek your guidance on that.

**The Speaker:** Agreed.

**Mr. Schow:** Sure. At 2:18 the Member for Edmonton-Glenora said, “She tried to break the law” while the hon. Minister of Justice was speaking. This was not her turn to speak but certainly said that across the aisle. On *Hansard*, and we don’t need the benefit of the Blues for this, the Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall said, “Given that the Premier broke the law.”

Mr. Speaker, this certainly contradicts 23(h), (i), and (j), and I would ask those members that if they want to use that kind of language outside the Chamber, they are certainly welcome to do that and see what consequences follow. But when it comes to breaking the law, no one would know better than members of that side of the House what it is like to break the law when Mr. Dang did exactly that. I always asked the question: who knew, and what did you know?

Mr. Speaker, this is certainly a point of order, and I would ask that, going forward, the members opposite refrain from pointing out specifically that the hon. Premier broke the law.

**The Speaker:** The Official Opposition House Leader.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased to rise on this point of order, and I appreciate the Government House Leader referencing the last time in this Chamber that we debated the language around “broke the law” because I think it is very pertinent to the arguments that I am going to make to you today, sir. During that debate and during your ruling we referenced *Beauchesne’s* paragraph 494, and those were considered as part of your ruling, which includes that statements by members respecting themselves must be accepted.

Mr. Speaker, today’s situation is entirely different because it is our independent Ethics Commissioner in a public report of findings and recommendations released on May 17, 2023, that says:

In my opinion, Premier Smith contravened s.3 of the Conflicts of Interest Act in her interaction with the Minister of Justice and Attorney General in relation to the criminal charges Mr. Pawlowski was facing.

Mr. Speaker, the Conflicts of Interest Act is a law in force in Alberta. Section 3 is a part of that law, and to contravene a section is, in fact, to break a law. The Assembly and its rules are very clear.

I note that the Government House Leader also referred to 23(h), (i), and (j), making allegations or accusations against another member of the House, and also referenced *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, page 619. But, Mr. Speaker, an allegation is a claim or assertion that someone has done something illegal or wrong, typically made without proof. We have proof. We have proof from the independent office of the Ethics Commissioner. Speaking the facts here in this Chamber should not be ruled a point of order. The government may not like these facts, but again the Ethics Commissioner is an independent officer of the Assembly. If this Assembly can no longer even hear the words of its own independent officer when she says that the Premier contravened section 3 of the Conflicts of Interest Act, an act that is breaking the law, then democracy has truly perished here.

3:00

I believe this is materially different than when this has been argued in the past. I believe that these words are justified given that they were written by an independent officer and that the Official Opposition should be able to talk about this egregious breach in our debate on this important matter, given also that the Premier repeatedly made reference to her previous apology, which was inadequate and did not actually apologize for contravening an act of this great province.

With that, I submit my arguments to you, Mr. Speaker, and I strongly urge that this should not be ruled as a point of order because it is not the same thing as what we have talked about before in this House. We are not talking about a member’s own words; we are talking about the Ethics Commissioner’s.

**The Speaker:** Are there other submissions?

Seeing none, I am prepared to rule. I do appreciate that the Official Opposition House Leader provided some commentary on what the Ethics Commissioner did or did not say. At no point in time did the Ethics Commissioner say that the Premier broke the law. What she said was that the Premier contravened section 3 of the Conflicts of Interest Act. If we’re going to be particular about the use of words and ascribe them to certain individuals, perhaps it would be advantageous, with respect to the debate in the Assembly, that we ascribe the words which they said.

Having said that, I do consider this a matter of debate and will provide a tertiary caution with respect to making allegations against other members as rarely does this lead to positive decorum inside the Assembly. But this is a matter of debate, not a point of order. I consider the matter dealt with and concluded.

### Motions under Standing Order 42

**The Speaker:** We’re moving to the Standing Order 42 that was moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition. She has the call.

#### Federal Climate Policy Changes

Ms Notley:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly recognize carbon dioxide emissions contribute to a changing climate that has caused unprecedented wildfires, flooding, evacuations, and extreme weather events in Canada and around the world, while at the same time inflation has caused steep increases to household costs for all Canadians from coast to coast to coast, and therefore the Assembly believes the federal government’s recent changes to climate policy announced October 26 should be applied to all

Canadians, regardless of geography or home heating method, including natural gas.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to Standing Order 42 to request that the ordinary business of the Legislative Assembly be adjourned in order to debate a motion in regard to a matter that is urgent and pressing, which I read out under Notices of Motions. I believe that pursuant to the order I've now provided members of this Assembly with the appropriate number of copies, and I provided advance notice to the Speaker and the government of my intention to introduce this motion under the appropriate standing order last Friday morning, including as well the topic.

Today is the first available opportunity to respond to actions taken by the federal government on Thursday of last week. I urge the members opposite to vote with us to allow this motion to be debated and ultimately supported, and here is why. This is an opportunity for Alberta and Albertans to send a unanimous message, a powerful message, a message to the federal government. These opportunities are rare. The alternative, the government motion, which we may take up later today, does not unfortunately allow for this opportunity. If we allow this moment to slip away today, we will not be providing the best voice for Albertans that we can provide, and that will come with real costs for families and businesses who are looking for home heating relief this year and for the next three years. So I urge all members to seize this moment.

As we all know, last week the federal government announced several policy changes that apply only to Canadians in the Atlantic provinces as a result of the way in which they are constructed. They paused the federal carbon tax on home heating oil, which is used predominantly in that region, and they provided some upfront grants for Atlantic Canadians to convert their homes to heat pumps. I'm sure this is welcome news for folks in that part of the country, and we are not here today to suggest that that decision should be changed. However, we just want access to the same benefits. It is, in fact, cold comfort, literally, for Canadians living anywhere else in the country, including in Alberta.

Here are two things we know for sure. Number one, the climate is changing. It is urgent that we work to address that. Our Alberta countryside burned this summer like it never has before. That's a fact. We all saw it. We all tasted it. We saw unprecedented fires in B.C., in the Northwest Territories, and indeed around the world. Tens of thousands of Canadians were forced to flee from their homes this summer, and many of them looked for refuge here in Alberta. We see ever more extreme flooding and extreme weather events, which destroy homes and businesses. Climate change is happening. These were not the result of somehow a strange increase in arson or a strange increase in cigarette butts.

Here's the second item. What I also know is that many Canadian families are struggling greatly with the cost of living. Alberta families are paying vastly more for utilities, for insurance, for housing, for tuition and so many other costs. But there's no help for Albertans who heat their home with natural gas in Thursday's announcement. There's no help for Albertans who might be interested in getting a heat pump installed in their home. There's no help for most Canadians, in fact, and that's a big problem for a supposedly national program as winter fast approaches. Some folks have pointed out that the places that will see the most benefit from these changes . . . [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Ms Notley:** . . . are the places where the Liberals' polling numbers have tanked the hardest. I don't know if those things are connected, but it is not a good look.

So my call is a simple one. If the feds want to help Canadians who are struggling to heat their homes, then help Canadians who are struggling to heat their homes, all Canadians. Picking and choosing winners and losers based on region or fuel choice or, God forbid, polling numbers is toxic to our overall national concerns.

Our motion is very simple, and it's a call for basic fairness across the country. It's an opportunity for us to do something that is unique, to send an urgent message, one that is underlined by the unanimity that would be coming from this Assembly, and I hope very much that this is something the UCP can support. Now, I know that in a few minutes the government will argue that this is the moment to drop the whole idea and that they have their own motion that will do that, but quite frankly they know full well that that motion is designed to divide. It is designed to discourage unanimity. It is designed to throw out all efforts to combat climate change as part of a response to what was an incredibly ill-advised move by the federal government. But I say to members opposite that they should not play politics on this. They have an opportunity to stand up for Albertans by providing unanimity in a motion to call for all Canadians, including Albertans, to get relief on home heating fuel. That is something we must do while continuing a conversation about how best to combat climate change.

With that in mind, I urge members to vote in favour of allowing a debate today.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, as this is our first opportunity with respect to the use of Standing Order 42, I remind all members that it is within accordance with Standing Order 42(1.2) that a member of Executive Council may respond for a period of no longer than five minutes. I see the hon. the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas is rising.

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise to respond to the opposition leader's motion here today. Unfortunately, Albertans have no confidence in the opposition, their leader, or the federal government doing the right thing when it comes to a consumer carbon tax. The opposition NDP leader was the one who forced the consumer carbon tax on Albertans, a tax, I will remind this House, that the NDP never campaigned on. They did this despite calls from everyday Albertans right across our province saying that this was driving up the cost of living in every aspect of their day-to-day lives.

Mr. Speaker, my United Conservative colleagues have been fighting the federal government on this carbon tax since the very beginning, beginning when the Leader of the Opposition brought this carbon tax in, taking her orders from Justin Trudeau and Jagmeet Singh, the Liberal-NDP coalition in Ottawa, the coalition that is upholding the consumer carbon tax across the country today. That's why I think the opposition went to great lengths in their motion not to admit that the consumer carbon tax is driving up the cost of living even though the Prime Minister cited lower energy costs as a reason to reverse this decision in Atlantic Canada. The NDP went to great lengths not to admit that the consumer carbon tax is driving up the cost of living, but it is. The carbon tax is driving up the cost of groceries, of gas, of home heating and utilities at a time where affordability is the top issue for everyday people across our province and our country.

3:10

Canadians are concerned with keeping their lights on, the heat on, paying their bills, Mr. Speaker. They recognize inflation but not the role that this carbon tax plays in making life less affordable. They also in their motion do not recognize that this punitive carbon tax does not in fact reduce emissions. As has been said in this House before, it is all pain for absolutely no environmental gain.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, this motion is not enough, and quite frankly it's too little too late. Again, while we appreciate that the motion recognizes that it is absolutely unfair and completely unacceptable for the federal government to pick and choose certain provinces and certain types of home heating to exempt from their carbon tax, it is unacceptable for the federal government to make these decisions based on votes or, quite frankly, their flailing popularity.

That simply isn't enough. We are here in this House to represent Albertans. Albertans do not support the federal carbon tax, a tax, again, that is driving up costs for seniors, for families, for small businesses right across Alberta and Canada, and again, as we are here in this House representing those Albertans, I do believe that we can do more. We have to send a clear signal and tell the feds to axe the tax.

So, Mr. Speaker, we do not support this motion, but we will be happy to discuss other opportunities to unite on this issue, I hope in the not-too-distant future.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 42 is a request to set aside the ordinary business of the day to proceed to motions other than government motions. I will ask only one question. Is there anyone opposed to providing unanimous consent to move to the Standing Order 42? If so, indicate now.

[Unanimous consent denied]

**The Speaker:** Prior to calling Orders of the Day, I understand that the opposition whip has a statement to make to the Assembly.

#### Member's Apology

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to apologize here this afternoon to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor; to you, Mr. Speaker; to all members of the Assembly; to members of the LAO security team; and to guests that were here yesterday. The disturbance that happened in this esteemed Assembly was a shock to our caucus and to everyone, I'm sure, and we were very deeply disturbed and saddened by the stress and disruption that this caused for all who were in attendance, who were watching.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the statement from the whip. I, too, was saddened and disappointed with the disruption of the throne speech yesterday.

#### Statement by the Speaker

##### Use of Electronic Devices in the Chamber Use of Social Media in the Chamber

**The Speaker:** Prior to proceeding to Orders of the Day, I would like to make some remarks about order and decorum in the Chamber. First, I would like to point out that there were many members, on both sides of this Assembly, that were using their phones during the throne speech yesterday. It is very clearly stated on page 1 of the procedural memo, which I'm sure you all took the opportunity to read on Friday – you would have been well aware that in that procedural memo

“members are reminded that electronic devices are not to be used during this ceremonial occasion.”

In addition, there were photos circulating yesterday on social media of members in this Chamber. Specifically, a photo was tweeted at 3:55, which must have been tweeted during the throne speech. I can't begin to imagine or comprehend why, after reading the procedural memo, any member of this Assembly would make such a decision to be disrespectful not to me but to the institution of this Assembly. It is noted about electronic devices in the Chamber, on pages 8 and 9, that “the use of any recording device, camera or pager . . . is not permitted . . . at any time.”

I would also like to remind all members that they should refrain from interacting on social media while participating in the Assembly proceedings. In short, you or members of your team should not be tweeting from your accounts while you are present here in the Assembly. Hon. members, let us be mindful of orders and decorum generally with respect to how we respect this storied institution and the decisions we make each day.

Ordres du jour.

#### Orders of the Day

##### Government Motions

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Government House Leader.

2. Mr. Schow moved:

Be it resolved that the following committees be established for the duration of the Legislature:

- A. Five select standing committees for the following purposes:
  - (1) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing;
  - (2) Public Accounts;
  - (3) Private Bills;
  - (4) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund;
  - (5) Legislative Offices;
- B. A Special Standing Committee on Members' Services;
- C. Three legislative policy committees for the following purposes:
  - (1) Standing Committee on Families and Communities;
  - (2) Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future;
  - (3) Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship.

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot to get through, so let's get at it.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members wishing to speak to Government Motion 2?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Government Motion 2 carried]

3. Mr. Schow moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly resolve into Committee of the Whole, when called, to consider certain bills on the Order Paper.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Anyone wishing to speak to the motion?

Seeing none, I will call the question on Government Motion 3.

[Government Motion 3 carried]

4. Mr. Schow moved:  
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly resolve into Committee of Supply, when called, to consider supply to be granted to His Majesty.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any speakers to the motion?

Seeing none, I will call the question on Government Motion 4.

[Government Motion 4 carried]

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move Government Motion 5 on the Order Paper.

**The Deputy Speaker:** You've got to read it.

**Mr. Schow:** Do you need me to read the whole thing? Okay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Government Motion 5? It's not that long.

#### Committee Membership Appointments

5. Mr. Schow moved:  
Be it resolved that the following members be appointed to the Assembly's five select standing committees, one special standing committee, and three legislative policy committees:
- (1) Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund: Mr. Yao, chair; Mr. Rowswell, deputy chair; Mr. Boitchenko; Mr. Bouchard; Member Brar; Mr. Hunter; Mr. Kasawski; Member Kayande; and Mr. Wiebe.
  - (2) Standing Committee on Legislative Offices: Mr. Getson, chair; Mr. van Dijken, deputy chair; Ms Chapman; Mr. Dyck; Member Eremenko; Mr. Hunter; Mr. Long; Ms Renaud; Mr. Shepherd; Mr. Sinclair; and vacant.
  - (3) Standing Committee on Private Bills: Ms Pitt, chair; Mr. Stephan, deputy chair; Mr. Bouchard; Member Ceci; Mr. Deol; Mr. Dyck; Ms Hayter; Mrs. Petrovic; Ms Sigurdson; Mr. Wright; and vacant.
  - (4) Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing: Mr. Yao, chair; Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk, deputy chair; Member Arcand-Paul; Member Ceci; Mr. Cyr; Mr. Dach; Ms Gray; Mrs. Johnson; Mr. Stephan; Mr. Wiebe; vacant; and vacant.
  - (5) Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Ms Pancholi, chair; Mr. Rowswell, deputy chair; Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk; Ms de Jonge; Ms Ganley; Mr. Haji; Ms Lovely; Mr. Lundy; Mr. McDougall; Mr. Schmidt; vacant; and vacant.
  - (6) Special Standing Committee on Members' Services: Mr. Cooper, chair; Mr. Getson, deputy chair; Mr. Eggen; Ms Gray; Mr. Long; Ms Phillips; Mr. Rowswell; Mr. Sabir; Mr. Singh; Mr. Yao; and vacant.
  - (7) Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future: Mr. Getson, chair; Member Loyola, deputy chair; Member Boparai; Mr. Cyr; Ms de Jonge; Dr. Elmelig; Member Hoyle; Mr. Stephan; Mr. Wright; Mr. Yao; vacant; and vacant.
  - (8) Standing Committee on Families and Communities: Ms Lovely, chair; Ms Goehring, deputy chair; Member Batten; Mr. Boitchenko; Mr. Long; Mr. Lundy; Dr.

Metz; Mrs. Petrovic; Mr. Singh; Member Tejada; vacant; and vacant.

- (9) Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship: Mr. Rowswell, chair; Mr. Schmidt, deputy chair; Ms Al-Guneid; Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk; Member Calahoo Stonehouse; Mr. Dyck; Mr. Hunter; Mr. McDougall; Mr. Sinclair; Ms Sweet; vacant; and vacant.

3:20

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you for the entertainment. *Hansard* will correct you.

Are there any speakers to the motion?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[Government Motion 5 carried]

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As someone whose name has been misread for a very long time in my life, I hope no one takes it personally, as I never have myself.

#### Amendments to Standing Orders

6. Mr. Schow moved:
- A. Be it resolved that the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, effective November 30, 2022, be amended as follows:
    - (a) in Standing Order 7
      - (i) in suborder (3) by striking out "not exceeding 4 minutes" and substituting "not exceeding 6 minutes," and
      - (ii) in suborder (4) by striking out "up to 7 Members" and substituting "up to 6 Members";
    - (b) in Standing Order 52
      - (i) in suborder (1) by striking out clauses (a) to (e) and substituting the following:
        - (a) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing, consisting of 10 Members;
        - (b) Public Accounts, consisting of 10 Members;
        - (c) Private Bills, consisting of 10 Members;
        - (d) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, consisting of 9 Members;
        - (e) Legislative Offices, consisting of 10 Members.
      - (ii) in suborder (2) by striking out "consisting of 11 Members" and substituting "consisting of 10 Members";
    - (c) in Standing Order 52.01(1)
      - (i) by striking out "consisting of 12 Members each" and substituting "consisting of 10 Members each," and
      - (ii) by striking out clauses (a) to (c) and substituting the following:
        - (a) the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future is mandated to consider areas related to Advanced Education; Agriculture and Irrigation; Arts,

- Culture and Status of Women; Immigration and Multiculturalism; Infrastructure; Jobs, Economy and Trade; Technology and Innovation; Tourism and Sport;
- (b) the Standing Committee on Families and Communities is mandated to consider areas related to Children and Family Services; Education; Health; Justice; Mental Health and Addiction; Public Safety and Emergency Services; Seniors, Community and Social Services; Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction;
- (c) the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship is mandated to consider areas related to Affordability and Utilities; Energy and Minerals; Environment and Protected Areas; Forestry and Parks; Indigenous Relations; Municipal Affairs; Transportation and Economic Corridors; Treasury Board and Finance.

- B. And be it further resolved that the amendments set out in this motion come into force on passage.

**Mr. Schow:** I think that is all she wrote on that one.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any speakers to the motion?  
Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Government Motion 6 carried]

#### Committee Referral for Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act

7. Mr. Schow moved:  
Be it resolved that
- (a) the Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Families and Communities and the committee shall be deemed to be the special committee of the Assembly for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive review pursuant to section 14 of that act;
- (b) the committee may, without leave of the Assembly, sit during a period when the Assembly is adjourned or prorogued; and
- (c) in accordance with section 14 of the Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act, the committee must submit its report to the Assembly within six months after beginning its review and that report is to include any amendments recommended by the committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other speakers?  
Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Government Motion 7 carried]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Environment and Protected Areas.

#### Federal Carbon Tax

8. Ms Schulz moved on behalf of Mr. Schow:  
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Government of Canada to
- (a) acknowledge the negative impact of the federal consumer carbon tax on the cost of living;
- (b) recognize that the recent exemption from the consumer carbon tax provided for home heating oil will create inequities amongst Canadians, particularly with respect to those in Alberta who use lower carbon-emitting heating sources for their homes such as natural gas; and
- (c) take all necessary steps required to end the federal consumer carbon tax.

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is an honour today to rise to move this government motion on behalf of the Government House Leader. First of all, I want to say that my colleagues and I understand the significant affordability pressures faced by Canadians right across our country, specifically in Atlantic Canada.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Sorry. Hon. minister, can you move the motion first and then speak to the motion?

**Ms Schulz:** Sure. Madam Speaker, the motion reads as follows:

- Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Government of Canada to
- (a) acknowledge the negative impact of the federal consumer carbon tax on the cost of living;
- (b) recognize that the recent exemption from the consumer carbon tax provided for home heating oil will create inequities amongst Canadians, particularly with respect to those in Alberta who use lower carbon-emitting heating sources for their homes such as natural gas; and
- (c) take all necessary steps required to end the federal consumer carbon tax.

**The Deputy Speaker:** You may speak to the motion.

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Once again, first, I want to say that my colleagues and I do understand the significant affordability pressures faced by Canadians right across our country, specifically in Atlantic Canada. The last number of weeks and months we've seen considerable media attention out of Atlantic Canada and across the entire nation about the cost of living and the impact that the federal carbon tax is having on everyday Canadians, so we are happy for the break Atlantic provinces will be receiving from the Liberal-NDP carbon tax.

However, Madam Speaker, it is completely unacceptable that Canadians in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and other provinces who heat their homes with natural gas, a lower carbon-emitting heating source for their homes, are being left in the cold. By exempting home heating oils and nothing else, Ottawa has decided that only one part of Canada is worthy of a carbon tax break while those living everywhere else are not. It means that a condo in Calgary using natural gas is paying the carbon tax while a house in Halifax with an oil furnace gets a break. This is totally unacceptable and unreasonable as Canadians from coast to coast struggle with the cost of living and affording basic necessities and utilities. The NDP has refused to stand up and tell their bosses in Ottawa that it's time to abolish the carbon tax.

With this motion, Madam Speaker, my hope is that today is the day that we can stand united in this House, representing Albertans,

to tell the feds that it is time to axe the tax. The carbon tax raised the cost of everything for Canadians – groceries, utilities, fuel – at a time when affordability is a top issue for everyday people right across our country, and the truth is that the consumer carbon tax has no impact on our country's emissions. It is nothing more than a punitive cash grab.

Now, Madam Speaker, the federal government has still never met a single emissions reduction target to date. We here in Alberta have taken a different approach in our emissions reduction and energy development plan. Our commitment is to work with industry to outline our path forward, of course, to implement regulatory requirements but also to provide incentives which we know are necessary to get there.

So today, Madam Speaker, I do want to take an opportunity to talk a little bit about some of the investments that we have made in emissions reduction over the last number of years. When we look at Emissions Reduction Alberta, we've invested \$225 million in Emissions Reduction Alberta over three years to support the development of clean technology. That includes \$152 million in funding projects and competitions announced since this June alone. We know technology is the key to emissions reduction, and we will continue to make those investments. We've invested \$17 million in the Alberta methane emissions program to support investigating and testing alternative approaches to detection and quantification of fugitive and vented emissions, and \$2.5 billion has been invested in programs that support emissions reductions and climate resiliency through our technology innovation and emissions reduction funding.

Now, I also just want to talk a little bit about our record because our record is what matters as much as these investments. The government of Alberta is absolutely committed to mitigating emissions, environmental stewardship, sustainable development as our province is poised to grow over the next number of years.

Alberta was the first province in Canada to establish a climate plan. Just this spring, as I mentioned, Alberta released the emissions reduction and energy development plan. This new plan does include our aspirations to carbon neutrality by 2050, but we need to do that in a common-sense way and by working alongside industry, who do believe that technology is necessary to get to these goals in the long term. The regulatory system here in Alberta captures more than 60 per cent of Alberta's greenhouse gas emissions, including electricity, oil and gas, oil sands, forestry, chemicals, fertilizers, minerals, food processing, and other sectors. We are reducing emissions in all economic sectors through constant technological innovation.

3:30

We are on track to reducing methane emissions. We were the first province to put a target in place on methane emissions reduction. The goal was 45 per cent by 2025, Madam Speaker, and we are already at 44 per cent, well ahead of schedule. Again, we've done that not through a punitive approach but by working with industry and providing incentives for us to get there.

We've seen emissions per barrel out of the oil sands being reduced by 21 per cent, Madam Speaker. That is exceptional. We've safely captured more than 11 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> underground with CCUS through the Quest and Alberta carbon trunk line projects. Our companies here in Alberta whose innovative and entrepreneurial spirit – that spirit that we have been known for for decades is leading the way on new technology and innovation, again, from CCUS to geothermal to hydrogen to renewables. We have done this by taking a different path than the federal government, by choosing common sense over ideology. We've done this by working with industry instead of against them.

So it is time for the Liberals to understand that investing in technology, not taxes, is the key to lowering emissions. Albertans

and, quite frankly, Canadians deserve better. At the very least they deserve fairness in Confederation and respect. Less than one month ago, Madam Speaker, Minister Guilbeault, my counterpart in Ottawa, said this to the media, and I quote: how fair would it be for the rest of the federation if we started carving out exceptions for provinces? Now, this was on the clean electricity regulations. He went further, saying, quote: we didn't do it for pricing; we worked with all provinces to ensure we had a fair and equitable system when it came to pricing, and we will do the same for the clean electricity regulations.

Now, less than a month later the Prime Minister reversed that and issued a carve-out for Atlantic Canada on the carbon tax. Now, although the Prime Minister is citing lower energy costs as the reason to reverse their decision, I want to point out that that's actually really quite an admission that the carbon tax is a direct cause of higher energy costs. Now, the federal natural resource minister has said that there are no more carve-outs coming. How is that fair? How is it equitable? How does that reduce emissions? The answer: it's not, and it doesn't. Madam Speaker, this is unfair, unacceptable treatment of the Canadians the government is supposed to be representing.

Now, I did reach out last week to my counterpart Minister Guilbeault, and I do want to quote my letter to Minister Guilbeault so that it is on the record in this House. I said, Madam Speaker:

In his remarks, Prime Minister Trudeau specifically referenced Atlantic Canada as a reason for this carve-out. As you know full well, heating oil use is overwhelmingly concentrated in Ontario, Québec and Atlantic Canada . . . [Now] Alberta does not have abundant hydro and nuclear power. Over 70% of Alberta's electricity is generated from natural gas.

This means that your regulations [the federal government's] will have catastrophic consequences for Alberta that other provinces will not have to worry about.

Now, this is where what we're seeing in the clean electricity regulations is very similar to what we are seeing here in this decision by the federal government to carve out only certain provinces when it comes to the carbon tax. I have not yet received a response, Madam Speaker. It's likely because the federal government doesn't have an answer, because this policy is frenetic and panicked policy coming out of a government who is tanking in the polls. It is completely disrespectful of Albertans and all Canadians, who deserve a government who represents and looks out for the best interests of everyday Canadians from coast to coast to coast. That is the federal government's responsibility.

Even the federal Liberal minister from Alberta, from here in Edmonton, Randy Boissonnault, defended this unfair policy, saying, and I quote, that the federal government is simply being responsive and flexible to a region of the country that simply doesn't have alternatives. Alberta does not have alternatives to natural gas, nor does Saskatchewan or other provinces and Canadians using other energy sources across this country. This is deeply unfair, and it cannot be allowed to stand. Now, Madam Speaker, Ottawa has a duty to support all Canadians regardless of where they live or who they voted for. In Alberta we are Canadians. That's why I'm calling on all members of this House to support this motion today.

Now, I know that this might be challenging for the members opposite. The opposition NDP leader was the one who forced the consumer carbon tax on Albertans, again, a tax that they never campaigned on. They did this despite calls from everyday Albertans saying that this was driving up the cost of living in every aspect of their day-to-day lives, from groceries and gas to home heating and fuels. I know, Madam Speaker, that doing the right thing might be challenging because the Leader of the Opposition and the members of the NDP

were taking orders from their bosses in Ottawa – Justin Trudeau, Jagmeet Singh, the Liberal-NDP coalition – when they introduced that carbon tax. They were supporting the same federal NDP-Liberal coalition making these unfair, unacceptable, and disrespectful decisions today. Now, because of that, Albertans have no confidence in the opposition, their leader, or the federal government doing the right thing when it comes to a consumer carbon tax.

Here we are today, sitting in this place of the people with the honour and responsibility of representing everyday Albertans, Albertans who do not support the federal carbon tax, who, like Canadians across the country, are struggling with the cost of living and, quite frankly, deserve a break, and who are tired of the feds continually attacking our major industries and the economic engine of our country and, quite frankly, misleading Canadians on the real, true costs of their devastating policies, including the carbon tax, and the impacts on affordability concerns that they're faced with. As we, each one of us here today, are standing in this House representing those Albertans, we have to do more.

Madam Speaker, my United Conservative colleagues have been fighting the federal government on this carbon tax since the beginning, and today the NDP has the responsibility and opportunity to do the right thing, to show Albertans that they have heard their very real concerns about affordability and the carbon tax. Despite having worked with Jagmeet Singh and Justin Trudeau to implement that tax here in Alberta, the opportunity today is to do the right thing and stand united with us in support of Albertans.

Our motion today, Madam Speaker, would demand that the federal government do the right thing, abolish the carbon tax or make this exception for every province and every fuel type across the country. We must send a clear signal to Justin Trudeau and the federal Liberal government. Let's tell the feds it's time to axe the tax.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Other speakers to Government Motion 8? The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

**Mr. Rowswell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to the matter that has many Albertans and indeed many Canadians across our beautiful country very concerned, and rightfully so. Justin Trudeau and his NDP allies have caused an affordability crisis. Prices are skyrocketing across the country, caused by the Trudeau-NDP's inflationary spending. As a result, Canadians are having difficulties getting to work, putting food on the table, and heating their homes in these cold Canadian winter months.

I have criticized Trudeau for being out of touch. I've argued that Trudeau doesn't understand the struggles of the everyday Albertans he punishes with the carbon tax, but as it turns out, Madam Speaker, I was wrong. In fact, Justin Trudeau understands very well the challenges his carbon tax is causing, which is why he paused it. That would be great, except – and get this – he has only paused his tax for houses heated with heating oil.

Now, heating oil isn't a form of heating that is very common in Canada. In fact, it really is only used in Atlantic Canada and virtually nowhere else. We certainly don't have very many oil-heated homes in Alberta or anywhere in the Prairies. As it turns out, if greenhouse gas emissions are the standard of measurement, then heating oil also isn't particularly a good way to heat your home. In fact, natural gas, which many Albertans use to heat their homes, produces significantly less greenhouse gas emissions.

3:40

So if heating oil isn't cleaner and it's not used more commonly, why then would Trudeau only exempt heating oil from his carbon tax but not other forms of heating like natural gas? Well, often with

the Trudeau-NDP alliance, if you want to find out why they're doing what they're doing, you only have to listen to them speak, and indeed a few days ago one of Trudeau's ministers actually came out and dared to say it. She went on TV and suggested that if Albertans wanted a carbon tax exemption like the one that Atlantic Canadians are getting, we just had to vote for more Liberals. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. Is this a democracy, or is it the mafia?

The Trudeau-NCP alliance claims that their carbon tax is about the environment, but then they provide exemptions to it for what they say are more polluting forms of heating. It's clear that the only consideration at play is a political one. The Alberta government won't stand for it. That's why I'm so proud to stand in support of Government Motion 8 on the federal carbon tax.

For so long the carbon tax has cost Canadians their livelihoods and the ability to heat their homes and feed their families. The most vulnerable Canadians, those who can't afford these extra costs, those who deserve the government's support, have instead been hit the hardest. I know farmers and ranchers, like many of my constituents who rely on fuels to provide us with the food we all need, have been particularly impacted by the carbon tax.

Now Trudeau and his NDP allies are using the carbon tax to create a crisis of national unity. This is where the line must be drawn. I call on all members of this Assembly to vote in favour of this motion to send a message to Ottawa and put the Trudeau-NDP alliance on notice. We will not be treated as an inferior partner in Confederation any longer. The carbon tax must go.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there others to speak to Government Motion 8? Seeing the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mr. McDougall:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm glad to rise for the first time in this Assembly as the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek to speak to a motion that I know is incredibly important to my constituents and to all Albertans. As we all know, the Trudeau-NDP carbon tax has been making lives less affordable for Canadians for many years, from the farmers and ranchers who grow our food to the energy workers who drive our economy to the single mother forced to choose between heating her home and feeding her kids. Canadians from coast to coast have had enough of the Trudeau-NDP alliance's nonsensical and unaffordable tax.

To understand why the carbon tax is so harmful, perhaps it may be useful to review the basic argument underpinning the purpose of a carbon tax as espoused by Nobel prize in economics winners William Nordhaus and Paul Romer. Its purpose is to make the price of certain goods more expensive. That's the purpose. Higher prices will encourage firms and consumers to find alternatives to carbon-based products as well as to encourage new technologies that will make those substitutes competitive. In other words, the whole point is to make hydrocarbon-based energy products unaffordable so consumers use alternatives or use less or none at all. The implication is obvious when there are no available cheaper alternatives.

There is also the matter that the overwhelming majority of our competitor countries have not adopted carbon taxes. So not only do they needlessly make our citizens pay more to heat our homes, but we also put ourselves in a competitive disadvantage by merely transferring production and jobs and government revenues to other jurisdictions that don't have the tax, with no net reduction in global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. And this is the point: no net reduction in global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, just transferring to other jurisdictions.

I have a question. What other hydrocarbon exporting country on this planet has a high carbon tax?

**Some Hon. Members:** Norway.

**Mr. McDougall:** I'll get to that.

Not Saudi Arabia, not Russia, nobody in OPEC, not Qatar. [interjections] Hold on. And Norway . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, I hesitate to interrupt. I think this is a great opportunity to remind all members to speak through the chair at all times.

**Mr. McDougall:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the case of Norway, 98 percent of their electricity comes from hydroelectricity, so they can afford to pay a tax because they do not use it for their electricity to heat their homes. It might be, you know, an interesting observation to make and understand.

What is the country that has the greatest CO<sub>2</sub> reductions in the last 15 years? It's the United States of America. No carbon tax. What they've done and how they did it is a substitution of natural gas for coal. That's the reason.

It's no wonder that Canadians have had enough. Like people all across our great country, Atlantic Canadians are fed up with the carbon tax, but unlike the rest of Canada, including Alberta, Atlantic Canadians are getting a break. You heard that right, Madam Speaker. Atlantic Canadians who heat their homes with heating oil, which produces more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than natural gas, are finally getting a break from the carbon tax. You don't see the hypocrisy? You don't see the inconsistency? Meanwhile Albertans, many of whom heat their homes with natural gas, have to deal with the ever-increasing costs to heat our homes this winter.

So why? Why relief for heating oil but not natural gas, you may ask? Well, it's not because of the environment or the hypothetical underpinnings of the carbon tax. In fact, as I mentioned, natural gas is a far greener way to heat your home and produces significantly less greenhouse gas. So why aren't Albertans being treated the same as Atlantic Canadians? Well, according to one Liberal cabinet minister it's because they don't elect enough Liberals. With answers like that, why would any Albertan – the Trudeau-NDP alliance currently has no problem with taxing their voters less and taxing everyone else more. This is an insult to democracy and the constitutional equality of provinces, and our United Conservative government won't stand for it. That is why I am pleased to speak in support of Motion 8, which will tell the feds to stay in their own lane. But while we act in the interest of Albertans, the opposition, the NDP opposition, continues to stand with their bosses Justin Trudeau and their leader Jagmeet Singh.

At this time I would like to read a few statements that have been made by members of the opposition regarding the carbon tax. The Member for Lethbridge-West has called opposition to the carbon tax, quote, an epic fail. The Member for Edmonton-North West has called the carbon tax, quote, not a negative tax. And, of course, the Leader of the Opposition has said the following: people who talk about effective carbon pricing acknowledge that as time progresses, it needs to go up. She also went on to encourage, hurting from the additional burden, to take a bus. Madam Speaker, the Trudeau-NDP alliance is hopelessly out of touch with everyday Albertans. Instead of asking Albertans to take the bus, my constituents would agree that perhaps it's the Trudeau-NDP alliance that should take a hike. That would make a real difference to Albertans.

I'd like to conclude by calling on all members of this Assembly to vote in favour of Motion 8 on the carbon tax. It is clear to Albertans that the carbon tax is just another burdensome tax on hard-working, everyday people. It doesn't do what it purports to do. Let's make sure Ottawa gets the message.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there others to Government Motion 8? The hon. Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As we heard on Thursday, what our government has been saying for years was finally recognized and put into action by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The punitive, ineffective, and inflationary carbon tax was put on hold, at least in part. The federal government rightly decided that it was time to suspend the carbon tax on home heating but only for a few years and only for a part of the country where he needs to shore up votes. Through this action, Ottawa has all but admitted their carbon tax is a failure. This is the first domino to fall, and I know as time goes on, more will follow.

Madam Speaker, the truth is that this opposition-supported carbon tax simply exists to squeeze money out of Canadian families so the federal government can continue to spend money at a reckless rate. It does so at the expense of every good and service we rely on living for a long, fulfilling, and productive life. Hospitals and schools suffer from the increased cost of goods and transportation due to the carbon tax, harming our children's education and making it more difficult to provide the life-saving care many need. Supported living becomes more expensive for the same reasons, placing an undue burden on our society's most vulnerable people. As inflation and interest rates continue to soar, Ottawa is happy to make the lives of all Canadians even more unaffordable by exponentially increasing a tax that makes life more expensive and less affordable.

**3:50**

Pausing the carbon tax on the people of Atlantic Canada recognizes the fact that the supposed motivation behind this tax, which is to disincentivize the use of fossil fuels in everyday life, is a mistake at best and a sham at worst. The people of Atlantic Canada rely in large part on oil to heat their homes. As the seasons change, the looming threat of the carbon tax on the budgets of Atlantic families was too much for them to bear or the provincial governments to help support. They went to Trudeau, and he, rightfully, gave in, recognizing how absurd it is to financially punish people for simply heating their homes.

Or did he? The government of Alberta has been saying this and more for years. We have warned Ottawa, and their response was to continually increase the carbon tax year over year, making life even more unaffordable during an affordability crisis caused by their own misgovernance and financial incompetence. This suspension occurred only a few days after Trudeau's own housing minister spoke to Parliament and stood resolute in his rejection of any carbon tax exemptions.

This may be a record, Madam Speaker. Only a few days and the government of Ottawa is already flip-flopping on its own decisions. This is far from the first time Ottawa has gone back on its word and certainly won't be the last. At least this time it is good for Canadian families, at least some of them.

The Prime Minister is also picking winners and losers. Another one of Trudeau's cabinet ministers simply said that if we wanted to also have a carbon tax exemption in Alberta, we should just elect more Liberals. Madam Speaker, this is high time that we end this carbon tax not just for one sector, not just for one region of the country but for all Canadians. The same logic ought to apply; suspending the carbon tax on Atlantic home heating can be justified in ending it across every sector throughout the whole of the country, but they refuse to do so.

Why is that? Is it because their vision is clouded by ideological zealotry, or is it because they are so greedy for the tax dollars they



so desperately need to maintain their inflation-inducing spending spree? Madam Speaker, the unfortunate answer is both.

I am happy for our fellow Canadians in Atlantic Canada. I am pleased that many of them will no longer have to worry about whether they'll be able to pay their heating bills this winter. I simply wish that all Canadians could be relieved of similar fears. Natural gas, a fossil fuel which produces far less emissions than oil, is still being punished while other Canadians receive a reprieve. It is unjust and it is unfair, and we in Alberta are used to it. More times than I can count the Liberal government in Ottawa has thrown us under the bus while we are continually forced to disproportionately pay for their social programs.

As Alberta's Minister of Affordability and Utilities it is my responsibility to ensure that Albertans receive a fair deal when it comes to issues like this carbon tax suspension. Every day Albertans are forced to pay out of their pocket for more goods and services of all types because of this carbon tax, and it must stop. Madam Speaker, it is time for the federal government to admit it was wrong and end this tax once and for all for all Albertans, for all Canadians.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there others to Government Motion 8? The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today it is my pleasure to rise and express my support to Government Motion 8, the government motion on the federal carbon tax. This motion is needed to bring reassurance to Albertans that our government is committed to our mandate.

Firstly, I would like to thank my constituents for sending me here to speak on their behalf as their representative of Calgary-East who values the hard work of all Albertans. I'm more than willing to speak for this motion. The well-being of Albertans is important to me, and I wouldn't want to see hard-working Albertans worry about paying more taxes than they already are. I don't want to see them struggle as much as they did under the former NDP government.

In 2019, when the government assumed the administration of the province, the very first bill that we passed, Madam Speaker, was to repeal the NDP provincial carbon tax. That bill was passed so that Albertans would not have to worry about paying consumer carbon taxes and the inability to afford the lifestyle they want and they deserve. However, the federal government eagerly pushed for their version of a carbon tax in this province.

As of January 1, 2020, the federal carbon tax in Alberta directly increased prices to gasoline consumption to 4.42 cents a litre, \$1.049 per gigajoule to natural gas usage, and \$3.10 a litre to propane consumption. By the following year those rates increased to 6.63 cents per litre of gasoline, \$1.57 per gigajoule for natural gas, and 4.64 cents per litre for the propane. In the same year the federal government announced an increase to the carbon tax annually at the rate of \$15 per tonne from 2023 to 2030.

This year, Madam Speaker, the carbon tax on gasoline was increased to 14.3 cents a litre, \$3.32 per gigajoule on natural gas while Alberta's government suspended the provincial fuel tax. That is 13-cents-a-litre savings for all Albertans. The federal government does not seem to back down with their carbon tax as they increase the carbon price for individual and small businesses on April 1 of this year by \$15 per tonne of greenhouse gases emitted to a total of \$65 per tonne. Like I previously mentioned, this \$15 per tonne will be the annual amount of increase until it reaches a total of \$170 per tonne.

This indirect impact on prices is similarly huge, Madam Speaker, when there is an increase on the materials, including gas, that our

farmers use to cultivate and produce everyday food and that our truckers use to transport these food products. We also see an increase in the prices of these items at the groceries. These increases will in turn be shouldered by consumers. Basically, the federal carbon tax is aimed at driving up the cost of fossil fuels while also increasing prices of many commodities that use fossil fuels to manufacture, produce, and transport these products.

These continuing increases of federal carbon tax, Madam Speaker, do not seem to hit the federal government's target in lowering greenhouse gas emissions. In 2021 we saw an increase of 1.8 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. That is 670 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, from 659 megatonnes in 2020. There is no point of increasing the carbon tax if the result it is aimed to achieve is not met. The burden is left to the consumers, who face yearly increases on the cost of their basic needs, while the federal government collects more and more tax.

Madam Speaker, this carbon tax would also put tens of thousands of workers at risk of losing their decent-paying jobs working in our responsible, ethically produced oil and gas sector while other oil-producing countries with less regard for human rights continue to emit greenhouse gases, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia, and China. Safeguarding Albertans and Alberta businesses from federal carbon tax hikes provides much-needed certainty and relief to families. Instead of providing all Canadians with relief during these hard times, the federal government plans to raise the carbon tax for most Canadians, making everyday purchases even more expensive for Albertans.

4:00

We are not happy about the recent federal government decision to provide relief from the carbon tax on home heating oil in Atlantic Canada while ignoring the difficulty of Canadians who heat their homes with natural gas. This is very unfair and breeds inequity among provinces. Heating oil is not a form of heating that is very common in Canada. Only a few Albertans have oil-heated homes. In fact, oil-heated homes are mostly found in Atlantic Canada. So although I'm happy for residents of Atlantic Canada who will be receiving a carbon tax break on home heating oil, I'm extremely sad that the majority of Canadians who heat their homes with natural gas or other sources have been ignored by the federal government once again.

This brings up major questions from the federal government. Why should a family in Atlantic Canada get a break on their heating bills during winter while a family here in Alberta does not? Why are you playing and causing inequity among hard-working Canadians? As a matter of fact, heating oil is not even as environmentally friendly as gas-fuelled homes, so why would the federal government promote a heating system that is more harmful than the other while punishing the innocent Canadians that are trying to reduce greenhouse emissions in a direct impact on the federal government's target to lower the emissions in Canada? This makes it obvious that the federal government doesn't genuinely care for all Albertans.

Madam Speaker, Alberta's government remains determined in its duty to represent and protect Albertans. This is why we are responding to Standing Order 42, which the Leader of the Opposition is using to propose an emergency motion on the same topic. This government motion shows that, unlike the federal government, our provincial government has been standing up for the interests of Albertans from day one. This motion keeps a major campaign promise that we made to Albertans during the election. It was a promise made by our government, and if passed by this House, this motion will make Albertans' lives easier and more affordable.

Madam Speaker, for us to better understand the negative impact of the federal consumer carbon tax on the cost of living for Albertans and how this motion will help everyday Albertans, we

need to first realize how far we have come from where the NDP government left us when they were in government, because the unsuccessful passing of this motion will empower the federal government and their NDP friends to take us back to those days. Our government has been taking stringent actions. Our measures are working. Albertans have been able to keep more money in their pockets than Canadians living in other provinces. Alberta currently has the lowest overall taxes compared to other provinces as well as the lowest corporate taxes in the country. We are also working hard to lower the cost of gas and diesel for Albertans, and we'll continue to suspend our provincial fuel tax.

Albertans have been experiencing real relief from our affordability action plan. Alberta's inflation rate slowed in February thanks to a decline in electricity, gasoline, natural gas prices. Key elements of our affordability action plan: we also index personal income taxes to inflation. In addition, affordable child care, food bank funding, low-income transit passes, and a \$600 affordability payment to seniors, parents, and people on social support have helped many Albertans make ends meet. These policies have given us a clear advantage over other provinces, and we vote to continue making Alberta the most affordable province in Canada for individuals, families, and businesses.

This government motion on the federal carbon tax is an important piece of legislation that aims to protect the hard-earned income of Albertans while preserving Alberta's advantage, that has made our province the hub for economic growth and prosperity. Passing this motion will help show our commitment to the mandate Albertans presented to us.

Madam Speaker, I want to remind this House that it was the NDP government that first imposed a consumer carbon tax on Albertans, and our government repealed the provincial carbon tax as our first act of government after being elected in 2019, like I mentioned earlier. We thought that the federal government was beginning to understand the impact of carbon taxes on Canadians and was going to end the carbon tax only to find out that they only posed it for oil-heated houses. This isn't acceptable.

Madam Speaker, Motion 8 is proof of the fact that the government is committed to supporting and protecting Albertans against all forms of impractical plans put forward by the federal government. Therefore, Alberta joins most of our fellow Canadians in calling for either an end to the carbon tax or at the very least an exemption on all home heating fuels. I urge members on both sides of this Chamber to support this motion for the betterment of not only Albertans but Canadians at large.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there others to Government Motion 8?

**Mr. Wright:** Madam Speaker, I rise today to support this motion calling on the federal government to end the carbon tax that is driving up the costs on hard-working Albertans. The recent federal decision to provide relief on the carbon tax for home heating oil in Atlantic Canada while ignoring the plight prairie families are having here, heating their homes with natural gas: it shows the hypocrisy, the unfairness, and general failure of this failed Liberal policy.

What the Liberal minister's response to this or solution would be: elect more Liberals. Madam Speaker, this is corrupt and morally bankrupt. Why should struggling families in Nova Scotia get a break on their home heating bills this winter while struggling families here in Alberta and in my riding of Cypress-Medicine Hat do not? What makes heating your home with oil more worthy of relief than heating your home with natural gas? This arbitrary exemption exposes the carbon tax for what it really is, nothing but a cash grab, and it hits western Canadians hardest. This comes after

the federal government just weeks ago said that there would be no carve-outs, there would be no exceptions for their new clean electricity regulation, that effectively targets Alberta's energy sector. Apparently, the rules are different when you come from eastern Canada.

Madam Speaker, Alberta families are struggling with inflation and the rising costs of living. While Alberta's Conservative government has provided electricity and natural gas rebates, indexed income taxes to inflation, and introduced a host of other relief methods, the looming federal carbon tax increase on April 1 will make everything more expensive yet again. As an example, our Conservative government looks to put more money in the pockets of struggling families by eliminating the provincial tax collected on fuel, but the federal carbon tax has rendered that moot.

Enough is enough. The time has come for the federal government to listen to Albertans, to ditch this ineffective, unfair regressive tax. It's time for the Prime Minister to stop ignoring prairie families. Either end the carbon tax completely or at the very least provide the same exemption to all home heating fuels, not just those found in eastern Canada. Madam Speaker, I urge all members of this Assembly to unanimously support this mission to send a clear message to Ottawa that Alberta will not be ignored. The carbon tax must go, and Albertans deserve equal treatment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll be voting yes to this, and I encourage all members to do the same. It's time for Alberta to speak with one voice on the carbon tax.

**4:10**

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there others?

**Mr. Dyck:** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on a matter that has been putting financial strain on Albertans and Canadians alike. The federal carbon tax: a tax brought on by Justin Trudeau and his friends in Ottawa, that has worked to drive up the price of fuel, food, electricity, and everything else we need to live and support our families. And now Justin Trudeau has announced that the Canadians over in Atlantic Canada will be getting a break from the carbon tax on home heating oil. While that's great for our friends in Atlantic Canada, the rest of Canada, including Alberta, will not be receiving that same break.

Let's not pretend that this is about the environment. Many Albertans use natural gas to heat their homes and keep their families warm. Natural gas releases significantly less emissions than home heating oil, yet we're still being hit with this extra tax. How is that fair? Honestly, the whole thing showcases like they're picking favourites. One minute the federal Liberal government tells us that there will be no exceptions carved out for specific provinces regarding clean energy regulations and the next they're making exceptions here and there and, as previously stated, only if prairie provinces would have voted Liberal, as suggested by Trudeau's rural development minister.

Now let's talk numbers for a second. On average, with this tax, families in Alberta are shelling out an extra \$710 every single year – that's money that Albertans could be using to buy the groceries to feed their families and pay their rent – and I've heard whispers that this tax might even triple by 2030. Now, I'm no mathematician, but tripling doesn't sound too good to me, nor is it good for Albertan bank accounts, especially when times are already tough.

Now let's take a stroll down memory lane, Madam Speaker. Remember who first brought this tax to Alberta? Yup, the NDP. That decision felt really heavy. It felt like our concerns about managing our budgets and living comfortably were just thrown out the window, but then, thankfully, our UCP government came in, listened to Albertans, and made sure the provincial version of this

tax was shown the door. Sadly, though, the federal version, with Prime Minister Trudeau at the helm, is still hanging around. We need a solution that doesn't hit the pocketbooks of everyday Canadians.

With this pause on home heating oil the federal government is acknowledging that Canadians are struggling with high prices due to inflation and federal taxes, yet they only provide relief for certain Canadians. The UCP government won't stand for it. It's a call for fairness – is it not? – a shout-out to remember the families, the ones who are trying to get by, the ones dreaming of vacations, of college funds, of just being able to go out for a meal without worrying about the bill. The government motion on the federal carbon tax is a call for fairness and financial relief for all Albertans. We want the federal Liberal government to acknowledge that this tax is a flawed approach. It treats us unfairly, and it's making life harder for ordinary citizens.

It's time to prioritize fairness and affordability while working towards a brighter future for all Albertans. Let's stand united for a better tomorrow, urging our federal leaders, including Prime Minister Trudeau ...

**Mr. Williams:** Will the member give way?

**Mr. Dyck:** Yes.

**Mr. Williams:** Madam Speaker, I just want to ask the Member for Grande Prairie – we share a Member of Parliament, Mr. Warkentin. I'm not sure if the Member for Grande Prairie heard, but the federal Liberals proposed a solution to this problem we're facing in Alberta. If only we just would stop voting for who we like and, instead, vote for who they tell us to, they would listen to us and eliminate the carbon tax. So I wonder if the member has heard from his constituents what they think about having the federal Liberals tell us we should be voting for them rather than the representatives we want in this democracy.

**Mr. Dyck:** Thank you so very much for the intervention. Constantly my constituents are coming forward and saying that they do not want this carbon tax. They do not want to see their hard-earned dollars going towards Ottawa. They want to keep the money in their pockets, they want to keep Alberta's money here, and they do not want the federal government interrupting their opportunity to get ahead in Alberta. [interjections] Thank you so very much.

In closing, it's time to prioritize fairness and affordability while working towards a brighter future for all Albertans. Let's stand united for a better tomorrow, urging our leaders, particularly Prime Minister Trudeau, to reconsider this detrimental policy called the federal carbon tax. Let's support Motion 8.

**The Deputy Speaker:** First intervention of the Legislature. Take this opportunity, a learning experience for all. Even on replies and questions, interventions are all still directed through the Chair at that time. Thank you for teaching us how it's done.

Are there other speakers to Government Motion 8? The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

**Mr. Cyr:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate it. I am proud to stand in this House today to speak in favour of the Government Motion 8, to

acknowledge the negative impact of the federal [consumption] carbon tax on the cost of living; recognize that the recent exemption from the consumer carbon tax provided for home heating oil will create inequities amongst Canadians, particularly ... those in Alberta who use lower carbon-emitting heating sources for their homes such as natural gas; and take all necessary steps required to end the federal consumer carbon tax.

I was also proud to stand up in my previous life as an opposition MLA against the former Alberta NDP government's carbon tax. As the opposition at the time we tried desperately to get the NDP government to grant exemptions from the tax to schools, hospitals, charities, even our low income, yet they didn't listen. Not only that; they intentionally voted it all down. And now we see them all saying they're concerned about carbon taxes being inequitably put forward by their Trudeau-loving friends.

The former NDP government and the current Leader of the Opposition showed no interest in acknowledging the fact that this ineffective tax was making it harder for Albertans to heat their homes and drive to work, and they act as if they're surprised that these policies are chasing away thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in investment from our province. In fact, the former NDP leader: her own minister of energy told Albertans to go move to B.C. if they can't find a job here in Alberta. Well, Madam Speaker, this is something that I think we all can be alarmed with, but that is exactly what we expect from the NDP government should they ever form government again. It is no surprise that the Leader of the Opposition blindly takes steps for ineffective tools that simply act to make our lives unaffordable, dragged on when her friend and ally in Ottawa, Justin Trudeau, introduced the carbon tax of their own.

I am surprised now, however, that the NDP is calling for the federal government to remove the carbon tax for Albertans using natural gas to the heating of their homes. Natural gas is, of course, one of the most effective home heating methods out there, but Trudeau has apparently decided to pursue a vote-buying scheme to exempt homes using heating oil, essentially diesel fuel, to heat their homes from the carbon tax. They are now effectively supporting the exemption of one of the most ineffective home heating methods out there from a tax that is supposedly meant to promote efficiency. That seems strange.

Well, Madam Speaker, in the light of the NDP's discovery that the carbon tax truly is – and I invite the members from the other side of the Chamber to join me – an absolute tragedy, that it has ever moved forward in the first place, I encourage them to move forward with Motion 8. We all as Albertans will see the benefit should the NDP and the Liberals decide to bring that down in the federal government. This also reaches out to the Bank of Canada governor who confirmed yesterday that removing Trudeau's carbon tax not only decreased your cost of living but would bring us closer to the target inflation rate. And we all know how much the banks' interest rates increase have significantly impacted the cost of borrowing for our mortgages, lines of credit, and our businesses.

4:20

You know, when it comes to seeing our youth unable to get into homes right now, this is really something that I believe we could have prevented, but the NDP and the Liberals continue to pursue this ideology that continues to fail them, and that's unfortunate.

This UCP government will always stand for making life better and more affordable for Albertans, Madam Speaker, not just when it's convenient, whether it's affordability supports or electricity rebates that this government provides to Albertans earlier this year or the suspension of the fuel tax that remains in place. This government also provided natural gas rebates, increased AISH payments, income supports, senior supports, child tax benefits. Our government is out to make sure Albertans' lives are more affordable.

Our government also brought in low-income transit passes, increased food bank funding, reindexed personal taxes, invested in affordable child care, and provided auto insurance rate relief. That is why, Madam Speaker, I am proud to support Motion 8, and you know I invite all of the members to do that.

Now, having said that, I would like to talk about the Member for Airdrie-East. Airdrie-East has put Motion 509 on the Order Paper. I recognize that this is one of those things that I think needs to be acknowledged. The member from our side, the UCP, actually put this forward before Prime Minister Trudeau made this decision to give a gift to eastern Canada. It shows that we are committed to making lives affordable for Albertans.

I thank the Member for Airdrie-East for putting forward that motion because it is important, and – you know what? – to see the government put forward a motion that is very clearly close to the motion she put forward is something that I am very proud of. So, fellow members, I invite you, I ask everybody in this Chamber: please vote for Motion 8.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there others to speak to Government Motion 8? The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

**Mrs. Petrovic:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today for the first time to show my support of this motion and to stand up for Albertans.

Albertans join the vast majority of our fellow Canadians in calling for an end to the failed carbon tax and burden it places on each of us and our families. Our government is concerned that the federal government has decided that one part of Canada with one type of home heating is worthy of a carbon tax break while those living elsewhere in another type of home heating are not. This is also the same government who told us earlier this month that there would be no carve-outs for specific provinces in the clean electricity regulations.

Alberta has been calling on the federal government to eliminate the carbon tax since 2019. The federal announcements to pause the carbon tax on home heating oil is an acknowledgement that Canadians continue to struggle with high prices due to inflation and other factors like federal taxes. This change does not benefit the people across the country equally.

Our government will continue to make Alberta the most affordable jurisdiction in Canada for individuals and families, along with businesses. Our measures are working. Albertans are seeing real relief from our affordability action plan. We are working to lower the cost of gas and diesel for Albertans and we'll continue to suspend our province fuel tax until the end of June.

Alberta is taking meaningful steps to keep more money in Albertans' pockets. We continue to call on the federal government to eliminate this tax and work with us to develop and deploy clean technologies to reduce real emissions and keep Canadians working. The federal carbon tax hike means Albertans will now pay around 30 cents in federal taxes on every litre of gasoline. The carbon tax is costing Albertan families \$710 annually after rebates according to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

While we are trying to keep more money in the pockets of Albertans, the federal government is making life more expensive. It was the NDP government that first imposed a consumer tax on Albertans. The NDP carbon tax drove up the cost of everything and made life more unaffordable for Albertans. Madam Speaker, if the NDP cared about making life more affordable for Albertans, then they would have never introduced the carbon tax in the first place and will stand with us, the UCP government, unanimously to support this motion.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there others to join the debate? The hon. Minister of Mental Health and Addiction.

**Mr. Williams:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I think that this motion is incredibly important for us as a House to consider because of the decision made by the Trudeau Liberal government. What we know about the national discussion surrounding the social licence of climate change and the associated carbon tax is that it was a moral argument. It was fundamentally saying that we have an obligation to do something; that obligation comes in the form of a tax. That tax is a sin tax, for lack of a better phrase. It's meant to disincentivize people to continue using it.

And we heard it. We heard it loud and clearly with absolute moral language for years. For my entire adult political life we've been accustomed to this language, and we can look to the conversation we had here in Alberta under the previous NDP government's term, where they said that we needed social licence, which is a moral permit from the people of Alberta. It was a moral argument. It was saying that we have an obligation to do something. We heard it as we saw Prophet Thunberg in her moralizing language at the United Nations cry out in total dripping indignation, "How dare you?"

Well, the mask of the moral argument has turned into a slipping mask of the moralizing, Madam Speaker. We see through what it is now and the consequences of that argument falling apart in front of our eyes as they carve out certain consequences and exceptions for parts of this country, not others, not based on the moral argument of the harms or not of the harms of the disincentivizing moral sin tax – no, no – for nothing so shallow as the self-interested political gain of electioneering. That is the argument being made, and the consequence of that has great consequence for us in this House, in this province, and how we make our decisions and respond to what we on this side of the Chamber have always known is a condescending hypocrisy.

But we can now see right through the federal government and what they're doing, and now the question is, Madam Speaker, as we come to a division in this in a short time: will the members opposite rise with us and count their names amongst those that also see clearly now, with a moral vision of their own, that they had been duped, that that is over now? The truth is that from the very start it was not about the moral argument; that condescension, that dripping moral indignation was all a sham. Its purpose was nothing more than to gain power and to gain your tax dollars at the expense of trust in our institutions, including this one here.

So this motion is the first opportunity we have in the Chamber united as a province, as the representatives of all 87 constituencies, to push back against that in a meaningful way and to say that we recognize the truth of the matter. If truth should be spoken anywhere, it should be spoken here in this Chamber, in the place that is our provincial debate, in the place where we engage in the most serious conversations. Here we are now with that opportunity, and I cannot wait for members opposite, especially the strongest advocates for that really punitive, moralizing carbon tax, to stand with us together as a province against the hypocrisy of the Trudeau Liberals and against the hypocrisy of an entire movement that sought only to lead us down a path without any true prize at the end of it. As the minister said: all pain and no gain; all economic pain and no environmental, no climate, no societal gain.

With that, Madam Speaker, I offer the opportunity for this Chamber to make its voice heard as we vote on this division coming up. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. minister has some sort of foresight here that I'm not aware of, but perhaps the hon. Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland would like to speak.

4:30

**Mr. Getson:** Madam Speaker, it is quite the honour and privilege to be back in the House. This is the first time I get to rise again and represent

the community of Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland, my constituency, famously known as God's country, one of the prettiest parts in the entire province here. This is like déjà vu all over again, coming back here and seeing some of the folks across the aisle. I love you, too, baby. To see you across the aisle, this is great. [interjection] No. It was all in good faith. The folks on camera can't see this. We have some really good colleagues across the aisle that are talking about the same thing, how we're really honoured to be back here together.

I am very excited and very proud of our new members who rose today and spoke, some of them for the first time, and the déjà vu part was that when I was first elected, it was the same thing. We were having the same conversation about carbon tax. When I was out in the constituency for the first time, you know, running around to get elected and I had my face literally splashed on my pickup, one of the folks came up to me at 6 in the morning, while I'm fuelling up my truck at the UFA, and they were basically saying all the impacts that they had from the carbon tax. The quote at that time was: I just wish the government would stop stepping on my throat while they're picking my pocket.

These are the issues that this carbon tax, the consumer carbon tax, has placed on all Albertans and Canadians. The hypocrisy is that they're not even hiding it anymore, Madam Speaker. I mean, my little 13-year-old girl collects snow globes, and we had a conversation about the climate. A snow globe: a nice little thing. Everyone has had one of those. It contained a nice little scene. You shake it up, and all of a sudden all those little snowflakes go around from one side to the other, but they always stay within that globe. Well, the kids can't even understand how in the heck this works. If I'm burning diesel fuel on the eastern side of the country, that old snow globe concept doesn't work out here. So why is it that when we heat our homes out in the west with cleaner fuels, that's not given a break? They're not even hiding the hypocrisy anymore.

The nefarious thing about this tax is that it's compounding. It's a levy. Let's get the record straight on that. It's a levy, because you can't tax a tax, but you sure as heck can have a compounding tax on a levy. It has made absolutely every single thing that we touch in the supply chain way more expensive, and we're finally at the breaking point, where folks can't handle it anymore. If there's one unifying thing, I think, that should be in here today, it is to realize we all make mistakes, and the opposition made one heck of a mistake bringing in that carbon tax initially, propping it up until the point where it's failing.

One of my colleagues, Calgary-Fish Creek, had mentioned here, which I was very happy to hear, about the Nobel prize winning mathematicians that brought in the model for the carbon tax, Madam Speaker, and I'd spoken to that before in here as well. Those folks, the mathematicians, when they put it in their model, said: "Here's a model that you can use to change behaviours. If you want to change the behaviours of folks using carbon or whatever that model might be, you put on these taxes. It's an escalating tax, and all of a sudden it starts changing behaviours."

But – but – to make this model work, there are a couple of simple things that you have to do. You have to make sure that your trading partners are following the exact same model. You have to make sure that you remove all the other pre-existing taxes that are out there, and you have to make sure that you don't accelerate that model too fast, or the economy fails, and the model falls apart. So, lo and behold, what did they do? They didn't follow the guidelines, Madam Speaker, and everyone is kind of scratching their noggins wondering why this thing is cavitating and crashing down. It's because they never even followed the model that they were putting in place the first time.

And here's where we are. Everything is driven up exorbitantly, over the moon, driving people that can't afford this anymore. I am

so glad to see our fellow prairie partners with economic corridors. Saskatchewan is taking a hard stand on this. I'm very happy to see the folks down east, who just recently received a carbon tax, because they basically had a free pass for a number of years. I heard even recently over in the rotunda the other day, when we had our first throne speech, a lady lamenting about her friend down in Halifax going: "Did you hear about this carbon tax thing? This is bad." And the friend from Alberta had to say: "Yeah. For five years it's been bad. You guys just got a sniff of it."

So for three months they tap out, rightfully so, saying that this is unfair, and here's where we're at. I honestly hope, folks, that we, as colleagues across the aisle that show mutual admiration and respect for each other, can do the right thing, put pressure on, and make sure that this consumer-based carbon tax goes away, especially for folks that are trying to heat their homes, because we have no choice living in the north, Madam Speaker.

With that, I would love to close remarks on this that I have to make, not presupposing that anyone else wants to jump up and speak to this. But, by gosh, we have to get rid of this blessed thing. It is absolutely punitive. And when you've got the government at the time no longer even hiding their hypocrisy, that this is exactly about behaviours and trying to put on painful restrictions that harm people and their bottom lines and how they actually care for their families to get you conditioned to vote a certain way – Madam Speaker, this thing was a Trojan Horse, and that's why our at the time court of Queen's bench had ruled against this, and that's why our administration had managed to at least get rid of this punitive thing and kick it on down the road and give Albertans a relief.

Here's where we're at. We're hoping that our work and all those that worked before us will do the same thing for the rest of Canadians, because we are very much proud to be Albertans and proud to be Canadians, and it has to be fair right across the board if this thing works.

Thanks, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there others that would like to speak to Government Motion 8?

**Mr. Williams:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'll decide when the question is called.

I will now call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 8 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:36 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Armstrong-Homeniuk	Jones	Schow
Boitchenko	LaGrange	Schulz
Bouchard	Loewen	Sigurdson, R.J.
Cyr	Long	Sinclair
de Jonge	Lovely	Singh
Dreeshen	Lunty	Smith
Dyck	McDougall	Stephan
Ellis	McIver	Turton
Fir	Nally	van Dijken
Getson	Neudorf	Wiebe
Glubish	Nicolaides	Williams
Guthrie	Nixon	Wilson
Horner	Petrovic	Wright, J.

Hunter	Pitt	Yao
Jean	Rowswell	Yaseen
Johnson	Sawhney	
Against the motion:		
Arcand-Paul	Elmeligi	Metz
Batten	Eremenko	Renaud
Brar	Goehring	Sabir
Calahoo Stonehouse	Gray	Schmidt
Ceci	Hayter	Shepherd
Chapman	Irwin	Sigurdson, L.
Dach	Kasawski	Tejada
Eggen	Kayande	Wright, P.
Ellingson	Loyola	
Totals:	For – 47	Against – 26

[Government Motion 8 carried]

**The Speaker:** I think the real hero this afternoon is the Clerk.

### Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Ms Lovely moved, seconded by Mr. Lundy, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To Her Honour the Honourable Salma Lakhani, AOE, BSc, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, His Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Member for Camrose.

**Ms Lovely:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my sincere honour to rise and move the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne given by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor on putting forward provisions for the Legislature and the province we all enrich.

The throne speech clearly showcased the priorities of our government this session and how we will work to create policies to strengthen Alberta as it grows, adapts, and diversifies. Albertans have been trusted to keep life affordable, strengthen and diversify the economy, combat crime in both rural and urban communities, and stand up against the federal intrusions into our provincial jurisdiction.

As the federal government continues its reckless economic mismanagement, which is increasing inflation and the cost of living for hard-working Alberta families and businesses, our government has taken a stand. Right now affordability is at the top of Albertans' minds, and it continues to be a top priority for our government. Many of my constituents have vocalized their concerns over the increased cost of their utility bills, groceries, fuel, and everyday essentials. This is not right. No federally imposed carbon tax is worth a family's peace of mind over whether they can afford to put food in the fridge or gas in their vehicle. It is not fair that Justin Trudeau's irresponsible spending has prompted widespread inflation and costs increasing, causing Alberta families to face economic insecurity. Enough is enough.

Our government is doing what we can to off-set the federal government's poor fiscal management and inflationary policies. Last December we passed a multibillion-dollar inflation relief package that is helping to make life more affordable for everyday

families and businesses. This package included direct affordability payments, electricity rebates, natural gas rebates, and a full provincial fuel tax cut, which we extended until the end of 2023. We paused rate increases on auto insurance to protect Albertans from skyrocketing premiums and ended the graduated driver's licence program, helping Albertans to afford more accessible transportation. For Alberta students who have taken student loans to finance their education, we extended the interest period to 12 months in addition to capping tuition increases at Alberta postsecondary institutions.

Our government is prioritizing sound economic management. This was showcased this past spring, when we balanced the budget and paid down \$13 billion in debt. We also invested another \$2 billion in the Alberta heritage savings trust fund and have kept our provincial inflation rate below the national average. These successes are helping us build a legacy of economic security that will benefit Albertans for generations to come. To keep Alberta on the path of economic prosperity, we have created a climate for business to thrive while attracting landmark investments from major international companies like Amazon, Walmart, McCain Foods, Air Products, Dow, and more. These investments are thousands of high-paying jobs for Albertans as we speak.

Just in the first quarter of 2023 over 5,000 new businesses were incorporated in Alberta. Meanwhile our film and television industry is taking off, with projects like HBO's *The Last of Us* and *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*, which added nearly \$1 billion to local economies, created thousands of high-paying jobs, and paved the way for new job and investment opportunities. In addition to the film and television industry, we've witnessed record growth in burgeoning industries like technology and innovation and agrifood processing.

Alberta is a growing leader in renewable energy development. This includes hydrogen production, that will work alongside our traditional oil and gas energy resources, creating a more dependable and affordable electricity grid. Hydrogen is expected to be a \$2.5 trillion to \$11 trillion industry world-wide by 2050, and Alberta is on track to emerge as a global leader in this industry.

Another key tenet of our government is keeping Albertans safe and secure in their homes and communities. Soon after the recent election our government implemented zero tolerance for crime. This zero-tolerance policy is to protect Albertans from criminals and violent repeat offenders. New measures such as new targeted prosecution units will address increased levels of crime experienced in downtown cores of Edmonton and Calgary, protecting Albertans from offenders. We are providing funding to hire more police, more sheriffs. We have also implemented changes to the bail practice protocol, helping prosecutors prioritize public safety at bail hearings for all accused offenders, especially those with a history of repeat offending.

5:00

We have terminated the outrageous NDP-initiated triage practice protocol that resulted in alleged convicts walking away free without prosecution, proceedings going against the public interest. We brought in Bill 61, the Vital Statistics Amendment Act, to prevent convicted sexual offenders and dangerous offenders from legally changing their names. This helps to protect our communities, assuring residents that their neighbours are not hiding from past violent criminal convictions by changing their names.

We increased supports for victims of sexual assault, providing \$1 million to ensure rural Albertans who are victims of sexual assault have access to care and the collection of forensic evidence. We implemented real-time 24/7 guidance and support for health care

providers to help care for sexual assault patients and provided \$10 million to support women's shelters throughout our province.

Finally, I'm pleased with our government's dedication to ensuring quality health care for all Albertans. Every Albertan should have access to care when and where they need it. To ensure this is the case, we signed a public health guarantee as well as a \$24 billion, 10-year health care funding deal with the federal government, ensuring no Albertans will have to pay to see their doctor.

We invested an additional \$1 billion into Alberta's health care budget to build a stronger and more resilient system for the future, and we are tackling long-standing issues in our health care system and making major changes to surgery and emergency wait times and restoring local decision-making.

Further, we have allocated \$57 million over the next three years to provide family doctors and nurse practitioners the administrative support they need to help manage their increasing number of patients. We will reduce the administrative workload for providers so they can spend more time with their patients and spend less time doing paperwork. We are expanding our online mental health services so patients can meet with doctors virtually to receive necessary consultation and care, and we are introducing a payment system that will support nurse practitioners in opening their clinics to take patients and offer services, helping all Albertans to have more readily accessible and available health care and supports.

We can do all this because we have renewed the Alberta advantage, making this once again a place where families and businesses come for economic freedom, prosperity, and opportunity. An affordable, economically strong, safe, and healthy Alberta is precisely why Albertans voted for another UCP government. As a member of this government I take pride in knowing that we are building a stronger, brighter, more economically diverse future, and I'm grateful to move acceptance of the Speech from the Throne, given by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta. God save the King, and may God bless Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to rise today and second the motion to accept the Speech from the Throne, given by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, and what great joy it is to do so during my first time speaking in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I plan to address this Assembly in three parts: first, to provide some information about myself, my family and friends, and my journey to this special place; second, I want to highlight the amazing citizens, families, businesses, and local governments that make up the incredible riding of Leduc-Beaumont; and lastly, I want to talk about the key priorities and issues that I hope to address during my time here.

Let me begin with two numbers that on their own are meaningless, 977 and 928, but taken together paint a picture of my path here today. Shortly after I was elected, I started to wonder: how many people in Alberta's history had ever served in the Legislature? Having previously given the issue little to no thought, I remember thinking the number was probably well into the thousands. I was surprised to learn that when I was nervously sworn in back in June, I was the 977th Albertan to ever have that honour. Now, a few more of my colleagues shortly followed, but 977 has stuck with me.

Out of the millions of Albertans who have ever called this province home, raised their families, lived through triumphs and tragedy, sent their sons and daughters off to war, and persevered through every setback to build the greatest place in the world to live, just a thousand have ever had the privilege to serve in this

House. Mr. Speaker, I ask: what number could possibly be more humbling? It is in this spirit of humility that I hope to serve. Not in weakness, mind you; I will fight passionately and strongly for the things I believe in but will strive to do so with humanity and grace.

And 928 is an even more obscure number. That, Mr. Speaker, is the population of Forestburg, Alberta, in 2022 according to the government of Alberta's Regional Dashboard. Forestburg is, of course, the small rural town where I was raised and represented by MLA from Camrose. Almost got me there. My parents still live in Forestburg, as does my brother, and my grandparents worked the farm just outside of town for decades. Alberta is full of small towns like Forestburg, where people work hard, raise their families, and contribute so much to the fabric of the province. I remember playing endlessly with my friends growing up – road hockey in the winter, baseball or football in the summer – not a care in the world, running home for dinner to doors that didn't need to be locked at night, an idyllic version of childhood that I'm afraid feels all but lost to many Alberta families today.

I mentioned my parents, who are still here and have now witnessed the same number of divisions in person as I have. I owe them a debt that could never possibly be repaid. Former Premier Ralph Klein would often famously refer to Martha and Henry when he was trying to tap into the ethos of the typical Alberta family, but honestly he could have been referencing my parents, Terry and Gordon, as together they represent everything good that it means to be Albertan: loving, kind, hard working, family and community orientated, and, above all, sincere. What impressed me most was that even as they saw advances in technology and society that would scarcely have been believable in their youth, they stayed humble and connected to their family and community. In other words, Forestburg was always enough. Committing to hard work, raising a family, and lending a hand to a neighbour might never make the front page of the newspaper, but at least in my books it will always be enough to see Alberta thrive.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about something else near and dear to my heart, and that is the amazing riding of Leduc-Beaumont. Before I bring forward the many attributes that make the riding so incredible, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the best thing to ever come out of the riding: my amazing, compassionate, and beautiful wife, Chantelle. Chantelle was here earlier, and I was honoured to be able to introduce her to the Assembly. I can't thank her enough for her love and support.

Chantelle and her family moved to Leduc early in her youth and have lived there ever since. They quickly became pillars of the community. In fact, Chantelle's mom, Bernadette, is still very active, most notably volunteering with Special Olympics Leduc. Bernadette is also a support home for someone who is very close to Chantelle and I: Grace. Grace is a Special Olympian, an all-star in the community. She's constantly recognized and happy to have a good chat with everyone she meets. I always tell people if I can become even half as well known and liked around town as her, then I would be tremendously successful. Chantelle's sister Kim works diligently at the Leduc eco centre, although don't get any ideas if you are looking to drop off a load from Edmonton. I'm told they are quite strict on enforcing residency requirements.

On the campaign trail I often said that both Leduc and Beaumont reminded me of the small town that I grew up in. Sure, there are modern businesses and services, but deep down there is a commitment to community, a friendliness, a neighbourly charm that reminded me of my youth.

**5:10**

But make no mistake. Ever since the discovery of oil at Leduc No. 1 the riding has been punching above its weight in its

contributions to the provincial economy. Both cities along with Leduc county strive to create a business-first regulatory environment that encourages businesses of every size to flourish. The riding is home to the Nisku and Leduc business parks, that serve companies from all over the province and have a unique role in supporting our vital energy sector. Equipment, pipelines, parts, and hardware that get built, fabricated, or repaired in the riding play a vital role in Fort McMurray, across the province, and even across the country in building and sustaining the world's best energy economy.

The riding includes the Edmonton International Airport, whose impressive campus is on the cutting edge of the logistics and transportation sector. Initiatives such as the adoption of a hydrogen fleet as a first step to exploring the full potential of hydrogen as tomorrow's transportation fuel demonstrates the airport's commitment to embracing a modern transportation sector. Edmonton International also serves the province's agriculture sector by providing quick and easy access to foods that are processed in the riding and beyond but shipped all over the globe.

There are numerous entertainment opportunities in the riding, including the Century Mile Racetrack and Casino; some of Alberta's best golf courses; unique and distinct restaurants and pubs; and a strong and growing local brewing and distilling industry, with the Rig Hand Distillery being a personal favourite. I would advise anyone who stops by to try their award-winning whisky. Outdoor enthusiasts can canoe or kayak on beautiful Lake Telford in Leduc or enjoy their time at Beaumont's Four Seasons park. Both communities host numerous outdoor family-focused events during the summer months in these great locations.

Leduc is also known for its amazing baseball and softball infrastructure, hosting several provincial championships over the years.

I'm always impressed with the strong arts and culture scene in the riding. Both Leduc and Beaumont feature annual art walks that I along with numerous community members enjoy attending each year. The Leduc Arts Foundry provides a place for local artists to feature their work and for residents to pick up a brush and learn. There are several smaller locally owned art stores such as the Painted Door in Beaumont that are very popular and pillars of the community.

Both Leduc and Beaumont have modern indoor recreation centres that serve not only as community hubs but as host to several youth sports, including hockey. Speaking of hockey, I have the pleasure to regularly lace up the skates in one of the world's longest running continuous recreational hockey leagues, the Leduc Old Blades. The Old Blades began in 1972 and have been operating ever since. While the quality of hockey might sometimes vary or, frankly, drop off a fair amount when I'm on the ice, I think the real secret to the league's longevity is the chance for conversation and friendship after every game and, yes, maybe a beer or two while discussing the current political issues of the day.

Mr. Speaker, just as I'm committed to my riding of Leduc-Beaumont, I'm also committed to making sure my conduct and decisions benefit all Albertans. Canada is, by any objective measure, one of the best places in the world to live, and Albertans from all corners of the province are eager and proud to see Canada succeed. But these same Albertans are understandably disappointed and frustrated when a federal government that is supposed to represent them is instead holding them back.

Not surprisingly, the number one issue that I hear about from my constituents is affordability. Mortgages and rents have doubled; grocery and utility costs have skyrocketed. Mr. Speaker, people are struggling. And what has our federal government done to address the concerns of Albertans? I would say nothing, but it's actually

worse than that. If they had simply done nothing, Alberta would have been better off. Alas, this federal government has doubled down on its own disastrous fiscal policy, that has driven inflation sky-high. Our Prime Minister famously said that he doesn't think about fiscal policy. But you know who does think about it? Those families who are scared of losing their home, who have to choose between paying for groceries or paying their bills. So what, then, has the federal government been thinking about? Lately that answer has been looking for ways around the Constitution to ram through their ideological agenda and cripple Alberta's energy sector, their latest target, of course, being Alberta's electricity grid, whose only sin, apparently, is not being located in Atlantic Canada.

I will not stand idly by as Alberta families potentially freeze in the dark or pay four times their current amount for energy so that out-of-touch federal ministers can pat themselves on the back at the Sierra Club.

Mr. Speaker, before being elected, I worked for the Alberta public service in several intergovernmental-relations roles. I had a front-row seat to a federal government whose attitude towards the provinces and territories, particularly Alberta, became increasingly hostile, ideological, and incoherent. Many times I had to listen as federal civil servants would sigh heavily as they were forced to read or repeat nonsensical talking points, clearly written by minister offices, that were completely offside or ignorant to the real issues at hand. It drove me crazy to see how federal ideology was damaging these important relationships.

I will use my time in the House to stand up for Alberta, to call out a federal government that is intentionally harming one part of the country to score political points in another. Albertans have given so much to this great country and are willing and prepared to continue to do so. I will stand behind them and fight for their right to build a strong economy, raise their families in a free and prosperous province, and continue to make Alberta the best place in the world to live.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to second the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Are there others? The hon. Member for Calgary-Edgemont has the call.

**Ms Hayter:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise and offer my maiden speech in this sitting of the 31st Alberta Legislature. It is a privilege to stand here today in the city where I was born and in a city where my grandparents raised my mother. Both of my maternal grandparents were raised during the Depression by single mothers, and both had to cut their education short to support their families to survive.

My grandpa George Mayor showed me what public service was as captain in the Edmonton fire department. He was very curious but also proud that his first granddaughter was getting involved in running in politics. My grandma Dorothy was full of unconditional love, and I still cherish the knitted keepsakes that she made for me. She worked for the provincial government but had to resign to raise her kids. They built their first home on what had been farmland on the edge of the city, just over the river on 79th Street, now just a 10-minute drive from here. They were avid pigeon fanciers, and every time I drive underneath the 97th Street Bridge, I see the engraved pigeons and I think of my grandparents on my way here.

I'm also pleased to recognize that we are in Treaty 6 territory, where this House is sitting, and I begin by thanking the Indigenous people whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries. I'm especially pleased to speak to you as the MLA for Calgary-Edgemont, and in the spirit of reconciliation I recognize that my constituency is located on the traditional territories of the



Blackfoot Confederacy, the Siksika, the Kainai, the Piikani, the Tsuut'ina, and the Nakoda nations, and the Métis region 3, and to all the people who make their home on Treaty 7 in the region of southern Alberta.

I'm not too sure how much all of you know about my constituency, so let me tell you about this thriving community in the northwest of Calgary. You would love this place. Calgary-Edgemont is a living and breathing microcosm of what makes Alberta a good place to live. The heart-shaped constituency provides a suburban home to more than 48,000 people. Some are enjoying an early and well-earned retirement. Others work one job and then another to make ends meet. Calgary-Edgemont has 12 public schools. We have a range of faith-based worship places that provide spiritual nourishment and community outreach.

Constituents of Calgary-Edgemont live in seniors' homes and social housing buildings. They live in housing co-operatives and multifamily units and in single-family homes. They are homeowners, and they are renters.

### 5:20

The homes in Calgary-Edgemont are located on parks and cycling paths. They sit on tree- and sidewalk-lined streets, where neighbours get to come and they walk and they talk. Calgary-Edgemont has community centres, community gardens, a bazillion little free libraries, and some backyard bird feeders.

This constituency includes thriving business hubs, and it excites me to say that many of these hubs are purposely located in walking distance of a range of housing options. My constituents – and I am so humbled by that phrase – have access to recreational facilities that include soccer fields, outdoor rinks, and now, of course, all these pickleball courts. This riding also sits next to a constituency with a publicly funded university, a health care centre, and, thanks to the foresight of many of the MLAs in this House today, a world-class cancer treatment centre.

Best of all, the people in Calgary-Edgemont reflect the incredible diversity of Canada in 2023. My constituency is home to people from all over the world. Many of these folks have called Alberta home for several generations. Calgary-Edgemont includes Canadians who have moved here in search of jobs and education. It welcomes newcomers and refugees. It makes space at tables for everyone from new babies to senior citizens and a lot of pets.

Now, do you want to know how I know about all those pets? Because I met a lot of them when I was out door-knocking in Calgary-Edgemont. And how did I get from there to here? I did it by caring about the people and the place that I call home: Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

In my personal life I'm a mother raising three kids: Joshua, Liam, and Clara. Joshua, thank you for making me a mom and showing me this world in a new perspective. Liam, I appreciate your inquisitive mind and the hard policy questions that lead into some amazing conversations. It's greatly helpful that both of you are assisting me around the house and even doing some cooking so that I can come and do this. Clara, you are definitely my top supporter. I love how you join me in the community of Calgary-Edgemont so we can spend more time together and also so that I can do this important work. It's great to always have you by my side. I'm also the daughter of Carol, a woman who has been so dedicated to helping me accomplish this dream and supported me to do this. Thank you for teaching me to be a strong, independent woman. Kids, I love you, and, Mom, thank you.

I stand here today as a mother and as a daughter. The people I call family taught me to care about today and make sure that I plan for tomorrow. I'm reminded to be grateful for the generations of women that came before me and the activism they did so that I can

be here in this Chamber as I look to the future and ensure a better future for my children. I want my children to grow up in a community and a society that they can be proud of, where they don't have to fight hate and they don't have to fight bigotry, that they live in a world that's fair and good. I am here for our collective children's future.

In my professional life I worked as a caregiver and an advocate for individuals who lived with disabilities. That is where I learned more about why it is important to care about today and why it matters that I plan for tomorrow and why compassion for others should be my foundational truth. Compassionate people care about today. They will also work hard to make the world a better place for tomorrow. I stand here equally proud of my work as an educational assistant and a volunteer as the chair at a parent council with our public school system. That work taught me why it is important to be an engaged, committed, and compassionate member of my community. Why? Because people who care about today will work hard to make the world a better place for tomorrow.

I've also worked in a constituency office of one of our Calgary MLAs; it was a transformative experience. I enjoyed helping individual constituents navigate issues. More importantly, I saw how good government policy impacts the issues that impact the lives of individual Albertans and the people that they care about. My decision to run for public office is rooted in my own life story. I believe that Albertans want a government that cares about the lived experiences of Albertans, and the constituents of Calgary-Edgemont agree.

Constituents tell me that they want action on affordability. They want action on improvements to quality and accessible public health care and public education. They also want policies that do a better job protecting clean air and clean water. They want to be able to show their great-grandchildren the majestic and forested slopes of the Rocky Mountains. They want to know that the water that flows through the city will continue to nourish Alberta's people and its wildlife. They want to know that water is abundant and fit to grow the agricultural crops that literally help feed the hungry world. That's why I stand here today as a member of the Alberta New Democrats.

The great thing about democracy is that while we each only get one vote, we also get to park that vote where we believe it's going to do the most good. I'm so excited to belong to a political party that believes that individual MLAs, regardless of affiliation, are called to work together to make Alberta a better place. Thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. You are proof that leadership matters. I am one of 38 members in the largest Official Opposition ever seen in Alberta. Twenty-two of us are women, and it thrills me to say that that's over 57 per cent women here on this side of the House.

And thank you, Calgary-Edgemont voters and volunteers. I am so grateful for your confidence. I am very fortunate to have a team that supported me for four years so I could become their MLA. Thank you, Alfredo Louro, Alana Luft, Alec Bernardo, Alexandra Campbell, Barb Hoinkes, Bill Kirk, Christine Birdgeneau, Carol Baker, Elspeth Kirk, Jessica Wiseman, Joy Gregory, and Keith Scharnau. We did it.

To the constituents of Calgary-Edgemont: I look forward to getting to know you better. I look forward to meeting more residents in the riding, those who have newly moved here and those whom I haven't had the opportunity to meet on the door. We have work to do. I know that. I also know that I am willing to roll up my sleeves and work with you in the days ahead.

Historically speaking, Alberta has been a good place to live and work. It's been a good place to raise kids, a good place to get involved in community, a good place to play, and a good place to

retire. Life here has been a gift. But could it be better? Yes, I think it could. I am driven by the worry and the fears of the people I represent in Calgary-Edgemont, but I'm also fuelled by the hope and the optimism that I see on the faces here around me. We owe Albertans who elected us a chance at a better future, and I think we are all up to the task.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed is next.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today for the first time with exceeding gratitude for my family, the constituents of Calgary-Lougheed, and my fellow members. Thank you for all your support as I begin this journey as the United Conservative MLA for Calgary-Lougheed. It's truly an honour to serve this beautiful province.

I was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec. My father, Larry Bouchard, was a shift worker for Kraft general foods. I remember having to play very quietly when he worked night shifts because he slept in the day. My father taught me the value of hard work and that providing for a family and living a good life did not come free or easily.

I'd always wanted to be my own boss. My first business was delivering newspapers at the age of 10. I had the responsibility to collect money, pay back the newspaper, and keep the rest. I did that until the age of 17, when I left home and went to the only college that recruited me to play basketball. I funded my education by planting trees in the spring and summer. It was hard work, but I was paid per tree planted, so the more I planted, the more I earned.

As a young man in 1992 I answered an ad in the *Montreal Gazette* for a door-to-door sales job in rural Alberta. I flew here the next day. Mr. Speaker, the open skies and vast landscape blew me away as I drove from the Edmonton airport to Red Deer. Over the next month I worked from Airdrie to Cold Lake and just about every town in between. Although the sales job was certainly not ideal, the authenticity of the people I met in these towns reminded me of what really matters: hard work, family, and community.

Eventually I made my way to Banff, and I started off working as a housekeeper. I was pretty sure that position wasn't my calling, so I continued to look for more work and eventually found my way into the bar business. If you buy me a beer sometime, I'll tell you that story.

5:30

The end of the story, however, is that I'd found my place here in Alberta. The hospitality industry was also very much like my own business. The more I engaged with my customers, the more money I made, all the while saving for my future. In 1997, on a surfing trip in the south of Mexico, I was caught in a hurricane. I spent two days with no electricity and a night in complete darkness. It was a transformative time for me, and I contemplated some major life changes.

I finally returned to Alberta, decided to settle down in Calgary, and that's where I met my beautiful wife, Roxane. We were married, had our first child, and bought our first home all in 1999. Over the next 20 years we had three more children and invested in multiple businesses, including real estate and restaurants. I grew a small café into a busy downtown restaurant and catering company that increased in sales each year over a 10-year period. As our business grew, we expanded our operation multiple times, all funded by personal guaranteed bank loans.

In 2015 my business as well as countless other businesses in Alberta flatlined as we faced a new government. Mr. Speaker, over the next four years Albertans left this province for opportunities

elsewhere. These were my toughest years as a business owner. Higher costs out of my control forced me to reduce my staff by over 50 per cent during this time. My last expansion was in January 2020. After four years of no growth I was finally seeing increased sales again.

Mr. Speaker, after 10 weeks of no business I was forced to close the doors. I laid off all my employees, which was really difficult. Most had been with me for over five years, and we were like a family. I wasn't alone in my grief. Business owners across the province struggled with changing government policies. What followed me for the next two years was a lot of anger, pain, and frustration while my debts and costs accumulated.

The business I had built and the business that had provided for my family was gone. I cannot emphasize strongly enough how much Roxane and my four children – Erika, Andrew, Danielle, and Tyler – helped me keep it together during this time. Fortunately, Roxane had returned to university a couple of years prior and had started a new career as a schoolteacher. For the first time in our lives together she was the sole provider for our family. I see first-hand how hard teachers work in this province. I'm thankful for those passionate teachers like my wife who spend countless hours of their personal time to better the education they're providing for their students.

While Roxane was starting up her new career, I continued to navigate uncharted waters, which led me to send a life-changing letter in January 2021 to small businesses who I had connections with. Mr. Speaker, I felt that owners needed to do something. We needed to advocate for our businesses and for our families. My letter was forwarded to another business owner I didn't know, but he wanted to meet with me.

That was the start of the new journey. We began as a small group. We met weekly to discuss what we could do to get our businesses open again, to protect our livelihoods, and fight for our freedoms, the freedoms that my grandfather Roger Bouchard fought for as a Canadian soldier in World War II. Our group wrote to local, provincial, and federal governments. We felt like we were making a difference. The camaraderie and support I felt from this group helped me get through some very difficult times.

Almost a year later I was served for the last business loan I had taken. I'm not sure if anyone else in this room has ever been served, but it was surreal. It was something out of the movies. A man knocked on my door, said, "Are you Eric Bouchard?" handed me an envelope, and was gone.

Two days later, with no knowledge as to what had happened, my group asked if I would consider running as the MLA for Calgary-Lougheed. My response was: I'm not a politician. And their response was: exactly. I thought it over with my family over the Christmas holidays. I was sure my family would have said: don't do it. I'm here today. They were obviously behind me one hundred per cent.

The campaign began in early January, Mr. Speaker. Throughout the process I was in awe at the number of everyday, grassroots Albertans who volunteered with my campaign. My volunteers were a diverse group, coming from all backgrounds and demographics. What united us is our passion for our province, our concern for our families and communities, and our desire to have a say in the policies formed here. Over the past year, through many conversations with the constituents in Calgary-Lougheed, I've come to know the great diversity that exists in the communities of Shawnee, Evergreen, Millrise, Bridlewood, and the newly constructed Alpine Park. I recently attended the Evergreen Multicultural Festival, which showcased the vibrant cultural diversity in the community. Calgary-Lougheed holds a large population of new Canadians and also many seniors.

Mr. Speaker, the constituents in Calgary-Lougheed want to see a strong health care system, good education for their children, an affordable cost of living, better mental health and addiction support, as well as improved public safety. They want to raise their children with the values and traditions they deem important. Families form the foundation of our society. Children are the energy and lifeblood of our communities. To ensure that we as Albertans can impart our values within our children, this should be done without government interference. The United Conservative Party affirms the family as the building block of society and believes that families should be protected from intrusion by government.

Mr. Speaker, the small-business owners in Calgary-Lougheed want to be independent and free to run their operations in environments that support growth and economic development. They don't have the time for bureaucracy. They're busy running and trying to grow their businesses. Calgary-Lougheed is named in honour of former Premier Peter Lougheed, who worked to stimulate economic development and diversification. Small businesses help reduce unemployment rates, increase consumer spending, and promote economic resilience. They keep taxes closer to home, build community identity, and diversify local marketplaces. Our government can support small businesses and families through policies that lower taxes, reduce red tape, and protect energy costs.

I've always believed in the entrepreneurial spirit Alberta is founded on. Like most hard-working Albertans, I know first-hand what it's like to go through the boom-and-bust cycles, having navigated my businesses through not one but two economic recessions. I also know, Mr. Speaker, what it's like to make difficult decisions to keep my business going, and that's part of the reason why I'm here today. As a member of the United Conservative Party I'm going to work to ensure that businesses throughout Alberta are supported and valued, and I'm proud to be working on some initiatives that will put Alberta tech ahead of Ottawa's taxes.

Over the last few years business owners like myself have become more engaged. We realize that without getting involved, we cannot effect change. More people have come to this process through joining parties, joining boards, and volunteering because they want better representation. Mr. Speaker, as elected politicians we should be promoting, encouraging, and welcoming diversity in the democratic process. I'm newer to the world of politics, and it's my intention to welcome new ideas, new thoughts, and new members to this process.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to have the opportunity to support and work with our Premier. Her vision and direction for the province inspire me. She's a strong leader who answers tough questions and works tirelessly to put Albertan families and communities first.

I want to sincerely thank all my colleagues who offered me a helping hand since the election. I'm grateful to the experienced MLAs who have graciously reached out to me. I also am very grateful, Mr. Speaker, for my fellow new MLAs, with whom I've already formed bonds. In times of stress, laughter, camaraderie, and team building have truly contributed to a great working environment. And I'd like to thank the entire caucus. I look forward to working with you and with all the Members of the Legislative Assembly on behalf of all Albertans.

I hope my story as a pretty boring, small-business, family guy turned MLA can inspire other regular Albertans to get involved. Throughout my life I've always risen to the challenge. As a basketball fan I'm going to humbly compare myself to Michael Jordan here. Humbly, I said. I, too, was cut from my first basketball team. The following day, shaking with nerves, I visited the coach to tell him he was wrong for cutting me. He gave me a second chance, and I joined the team. I ended up staying with the team until high school was over and we had won multiple championships.

We are the drivers of our own destiny. Albertans are ready to take the bull by the horns and be the drivers of destiny for this great province. My journey to becoming an MLA would not have been made possible without the strength of regular Albertans who are committed to the truth, ask questions, know that facts matter, and remain curious and involved. Mr. Speaker, as a father of four and a former small-business owner I understand when politics don't work for small-business owners and families. I will work hard in the coming years to protect and grow the Alberta advantage by putting small businesses and families first. That's why I'm committed to making politics work for everyday Albertans.

Thank you.

5:40

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

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today in response to the throne speech for this session of the 31st Legislature. The Banff-Kananaskis riding has a varied and long history in Alberta, and in many ways it has been at the heart of our nation's development and our provincial identity. From time immemorial Banff has been a gathering place for First Nations to connect from all corners of Turtle Island, or North America.

In Banff-Kananaskis we are blessed to be the home of the Stoney Nakoda, the Goodstoney, Bearspaw, and Chiniki nations, and of the Tsuut'ina First Nation. Our riding falls into Treaty 7, so it is also home to the Blackfoot, Piikani, Kainai, and Siksika. Sharing a border with B.C., we are also home to the Ktunaxa and the Secwepemc – that one is the hardest, for sure – as well as part of the Métis homeland. This land is rich with a history that stirs in the soil, the air, and the water.

Present day, however, there are immense challenges that our Indigenous communities face. During the campaign my team and I frequently visited the Stoney community of Mini Thni. It was difficult to connect to the people in the community, however, because in a period of three and a half weeks there were 17 funerals, the majority of which were for young people who died too soon from drug poisoning, 17 needless deaths.

If this was happening in any other community and not on an Indigenous reserve, people would be shouting from the rooftops, demanding action, so consider this me shouting from a rooftop. While the Alberta government's commitment to grow the AIOC and Indigenous tourism is appreciated, it may not address the priorities of communities that are literally in a constant state of grief. We must do better.

Shortly after becoming MLA, I was invited by Stoney chiefs and elders to a pipe ceremony on the Stoney reserve. The elders prayed that I would stay honourable, retain integrity, and represent them in a good way. Their prayers stay with me as I navigate this new role, and I remain humbled and honoured for their blessing. I am truly grateful for the many generations of stewards that have come before me that enable me to live, work, and play where I do.

In 1887 the government of Canada and CP Rail saw the tourism potential in the uniqueness of this landscape and created Canada's first national park around the hot springs. Banff national park is the birthplace of the tourism industry in Canada, making tourism one of the oldest industries in our province, older than any resource extraction practice, and it continues to be a significant portion of our economy, a fact you will hear me reiterate multiple times in this House.

Canadian mountaineering was born in the Rockies and continues to shape our communities as we are home to globally renowned athletes and Olympians, a very active community and a long history of people who are the most hardcore you've ever heard of. This

history is captured in amazing photos at the Whyte Museum of men in woolen knickers and women in skirts summiting snowy peaks for the first time.

While we've exchanged the hemp ropes and boots with heels for better gear, mountain athleticism is reflected in everyday life. People come from around the world to race, compete, and get their heart rates up in the Bow Valley. Until this year we were home to the Alpine Canada World Cup at Lake Louise, an event that I and many of our tourism and sports stakeholders hope to see return soon.

The communities of the Bow Valley, from Dead Man's Flats to Lake Louise, have been welcoming the world for over 130 years. While we revel in this opportunity, it comes at a cost. Affordability has been at crisis levels for near a decade. The ever-increasing cost of housing continues to impact the fabric of these mountain communities as businesses can't attract or retain staff, teachers and nurses can't afford to settle here, and young people can't afford to start families here.

My riding also boasts the most loved provincial parks in the province. People have been camping along the shores of the Kananaskis River for 5,000 years. In 1959 Bow Valley provincial park was designated, and in 1978 Premier Lougheed officially dedicated Kananaskis Country and what eventually became Peter Lougheed provincial park. Today over 4 million people visit the Kananaskis parks and recreation areas each year.

With a village in its centre and being a combination of protected areas and public lands, Kananaskis is defined by a complex matrix of land jurisdictions that have been studied and applied around the world to effectively address various land management objectives. It is a gem in the Alberta landscape for countless reasons.

On the eastern edge of Kananaskis the communities of Bragg Creek and Redwood Meadows nestle into the forest. Redwood Meadows is unique in Alberta as an independent municipality on leased land from the Tsuut'ina First Nation. This is a warm community where children's toys cover front yards, neighbours chat while walking the dog, and a community barbecue is the best way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Bragg Creek is a vibrant, growing community filled with passionate people who balance retaining their community identity with welcoming thousands of people from Calgary and beyond to recreate on their vast trail network. Residents here are interested in planning that creates opportunities for businesses to thrive while also retaining the character of the community.

Springbank is a diverse community, home to third generation cattle ranchers, agriculturalists, equestrian enthusiasts, and city residents. Here I learned how to make butter and met donkeys on the same day that I chatted with folks about gardening ornamental perennials. Springbank has taught me that you cannot know a community until you spend time in it, and I have loved every trip I've made into Springbank.

The east side of the riding is filled with a history of Alberta settlement and agriculture. In the far northeast corner the Bottrel General Store proudly stands surrounded by cattle ranches. Operating since 1901, it is the oldest general store in continuous operation in Alberta. In the south the agricultural and acreage communities of Millarville and Priddis span the eastern slopes. The Millarville Racetrack, established in 1905, continues to draw all kinds of people to its markets and races, and the Millarville Racing and Agricultural Society remains at the heart of these communities who celebrate who they are at every opportunity.

North to the village of Waiparous and the summer village of Ghost Lake: these communities are characterized by people who enjoy the quiet of the woods, the peacefulness of watching the mist lift off the river or the lake, and who appreciate each other. The

Ghost landscape holds an incredibly special place in my heart. It might be one of the best, most important, and most politically ignored landscapes in Alberta. This is a recreational haven for hiking, equestrian trails, motorized recreation, and climbing. It is enjoyed by many, but sadly poor provincial oversight, funding, and enforcement have led to significant damage and user conflict. Damage to the Ghost wetlands and ecosystems can be reclaimed, trails can be better managed, and better camping infrastructure can improve the experiences of native trout and people alike. When I consider the government's objectives to double tourism by 2035, I see this as a land of opportunity.

One thing I've learned touring my riding is that we do a disservice to every single rural community in Alberta when we lump them all together under the title of rural versus urban. They are all unique and have their own characteristics, challenges, and solutions. This underscores our need to work collaboratively to address the needs of our communities. When we embrace diversity, we are stronger.

The LGBTQIA2S-plus communities in Canmore and Banff have also taught me the importance of intentionally embracing diversity. The queer community here is vibrant and growing and an essential part of who we are as we welcome people from diverse cultures and nations. With their support I have learned the importance of being an ally is found not only in our words but in our actions that denounce hate and empower the people in our communities to be who they are wholly and with pride.

While the people living across Banff-Kananaskis riding differ in many ways, we all have one thing in common. We love the land and choose to live here because of our connection to it. Whether we want to stare out at it with a morning coffee, ride or hike through it, raise cattle or sheep, or come from generations of stewards before us, we all love this land and we all come together to fight for it to remain as beautiful as it is today.

My constituents want to retain a sense of place. They also want guaranteed access to a doctor regardless of how rural they choose to live. They want a government who listens and who wants to address their concerns about losing the best of this landscape to climate change and development pressures. They demand a government that is accountable, honest, and transparent. I am proud to be their representative in this House.

*5:50*

I am a first-generation Canadian. My dad immigrated to Calgary from Egypt and my mom from England in the early 1970s. My dad left Egypt because of a corrupt dictatorship government. He always reinforced in me the importance of democracy and to appreciate that not everyone in the world has it. He consistently voted Conservative, and my mom has consistently voted NDP, so I guess I'm a mixed family. We didn't shy away from these differences. We listened to each other to understand them. My dad and I rarely agreed about politics, but in our heated discussions I learned that it is possible to strongly disagree with someone and walk away with love in your heart.

As a conservation biologist I have worked diligently to ensure our wild spaces retain their biodiversity, environmental integrity, and recreational access. In my career I have been part of teams that successfully got grizzly bears listed as threatened, campaigned to create the Castle provincial park, engage communities in the South Saskatchewan regional plan, increased conservation programs across Alberta's grasslands, improved planning for wildlife corridors in the Crowsnest Pass, and so much more. Coexisting with wildlife is a theme that all communities in my riding face and an issue that was the focus of my PhD and full-length book. I believe

that wildlife management is mostly people management, and this means understanding what the people want and need.

Before becoming an MLA, I had already worked across the Banff-Kananaskis riding for years with many different stakeholders. I am just as comfortable branding a calf as I am hiking to the top of a mountain or taking in a show at the Banff Centre. I love a beef burger just as much as a mushroom burger, and I love every square inch of the Banff-Kananaskis riding. That love is what drove me here. The last four years I felt increasingly disenchanted with what our provincial government was doing or, rather, not doing when it came to addressing the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

This reached a peak for me when coal mining on the eastern slopes was opened up and when 165 Alberta parks were placed on a chopping block for delisting. This combined with the systemic dismantling of Alberta Parks as a public service division and the inequity of the Kananaskis conservation pass frustrated me. While I have always lived with a Conservative government except for those four glorious years, this was honestly the first time I felt like the government was destroying everything I loved about the Banff-Kananaskis riding and about Alberta, and I wasn't alone. I heard common concerns about a government that wasn't listening, that wasn't representing us, and that wasn't using evidence to inform decision-making.

So I stand here today in this House as a proud resident of the Banff-Kananaskis riding. I am a woman in STEM, a biologist, a strategic and a holistic thinker. I am a wife, a mother, and a

daughter. I believe in using data and evidence to inform decision-making. I believe in working collaboratively. I believe in putting truth and reconciliation into action and ensuring equity in decision-making. I believe in representing the people of my riding to the best of my ability. I believe in my caucus as a team of incredibly experienced and competent individuals, who all come to the table with their own expertise and perspectives.

I want to thank the amazing people of my constituency association, the hundreds of volunteers who knocked on thousands of doors, the many donors, and the thousands of supporters who made this possible. I want to thank the people of Banff-Kananaskis for giving me the opportunity to be their voice in this room. I am here because of them and for them.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

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

**Mr. Williams:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we've had a wonderful first day back in the Chamber. I'm looking forward to more vigorous debate on important topics and more wonderful heartwarming speeches in response to His Majesty's Speech from the Throne. I also move that we adjourn the Assembly until 1:30 Wednesday, November 1.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:55 p.m.]



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