



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature  
First Session

# Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, November 30, 2023

Day 16

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),  
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Glubish, Hon. Nate, ECA, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UC)  
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)  
Gray, Hon. Christina, ECA, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP),  
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Guthrie, Hon. Peter F., ECA, Airdrie-Cochrane (UC)  
Haji, Sharif, Edmonton-Decore (NDP)  
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Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, ECA, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP),  
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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)  
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Kayande, Samir, Calgary-Elbow (NDP),  
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Loewen, Hon. Todd, ECA, Central Peace-Notley (UC)  
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UC)  
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(UC)  
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Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)  
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Phillips, Hon. Shannon, ECA, Lethbridge-West (NDP)  
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)  
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Sinclair, Scott, Lesser Slave Lake (UC)  
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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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Andrew Boitchenko	Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous Relations
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Martin Long	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health
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### **Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future**

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McDougall  
Sinclair  
Sweet

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 30, 2023

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

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

Hon. members, as is our custom, we pay tribute to members and former members of this Assembly who have passed away since we last met.

**Mr. Peter Elzinga**

April 6, 1944, to November 8, 2023

**The Speaker:** Peter Elzinga served as the Progressive Conservative Member for Sherwood Park from 1986 to 1993. He was the minister of agriculture from 1986 to 1989, minister of economic development and trade from 1989 to 1992, and the minister of federal and intergovernmental relations and the Deputy Premier from 1992 to 1993.

Mr. Elzinga was raised in Edmonton and had a farming background in grain and livestock production before turning to federal politics. He was a Member of Parliament for Pembina, Alberta, from 1974 to 1986. After retiring from the Assembly, he remained involved in politics and government, running campaigns and as Premier Klein's chief of staff. Mr. Elzinga described his time in public life as, quote, a beautiful burden and expressed his appreciation for the chance to contribute ideas and perspectives to the matter of public interest.

His exemplary contributions include the Elzinga Family Foundation, created in 1994 to provide educational scholarships for those in financial need, and his decision in 2004 to donate a kidney to a long-time friend. Among his many honours and awards Mr. Elzinga received the Queen Elizabeth II golden jubilee medal in 2002 and the Alberta centennial medal in 2005. Mr. Elzinga passed away on November 8, 2023, at the age of 79.

In a moment of silent prayer I ask that you each remember Peter Elzinga as you may have known him. Rest eternal grant unto him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him.

Hon. members, it is the last sitting day of the week, and we will now be led in the singing of *God Save the King* by the hon. the minister of environment.

### Hon. Members:

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

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

### Introduction of Visitors

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, there is a great debt of gratitude that is owed to the family members of those who have served in public

office. It's my honour to introduce members of former Member Elzinga's family and friends who are joining us here in the Speaker's gallery. I'd like to introduce to all members Peter's wife of 58 years, Patricia; his sons Greg and Roger; Mr. Elzinga's daughter-in-law Gaylene and grandson Aaron. We also have Peter's sister and brother-in-law Dorothy and Tom Portas. Lastly, we have Peter's long-time constituency assistant and friend, Linda Lessard. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction.

**Mr. Nally:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you 114 students and teachers from the wonderful Lois E. Hole school in the amazing riding of Morinville-St. Albert. If I could please ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Sherwood Park has an introduction.

**Mr. Kasawski:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly I'm honoured to introduce Linda Lessard of Sherwood Park. I know every member of this Assembly values the incredible work of our constituency staff. Linda was the constituency manager for Peter Elzinga for his entire elected career. Linda, you've been introduced once, but please rise once again and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Grande Prairie.

**Mr. Dyck:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you a school group from Stettler and some of my family. I would love to introduce my sister-in-law Bonnie and her kids River, Clayton, Lily, and Hunter. Would you please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you from the University of Lethbridge the president and vice-chancellor, Dr. Digvir Jayas, as well as Richard Westlund, executive director of communications, marketing, and government relations. I ask they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

**Mr. Sinclair:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to introduce both to you and through you my amazing constituency manager, Chad Bowers, and his family – Brianne, Reed, Tricia, Ethan, Natalie, and Jack – and also a couple of friends of mine, young business leaders from the Harms Auto Group, Mitch and Kurt Buban. Please rise and accept the warm reception of this Assembly.

**Mr. Ip:** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you dedicated community volunteers and team members from the *Chinese Multicultural Herald*: the editor-in-chief, Yan Xie; journalists Cheryl Wang and Wanli Ma. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

**Mr. Jean:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you Mr. Vikas Kapoor and Mr. Kamal Ji Khinda from Choice Travel and Tours, a couple of entrepreneurs who have

successfully operated here in Edmonton. They reflect the small businesses across Alberta, that are the backbone of our economy and society. Please rise and receive the warm welcome.

**The Speaker:** Are there others? The hon. Member for Camrose.

**Ms Lovely:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you two members from my community: Eugene Hrabec, who is the chair of Beaver Foundation, and Owen Ligar, who is the CAO. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Chamber.

Thank you.

## Members' Statements

### Support for Postsecondary Students

**Member Hoyle:** As we get close to the end of the fall semester, many students are feeling the overbearing weight of the affordability crisis. So many students have reached out to me and told me that they feel abandoned by this government, that their calls for action are falling on deaf ears. And who can blame them?

Many of these students live in Edmonton-South, and while many of them are young people, many are folks that are going back to school to reskill and upskill in order to meet the changing needs of our economy. They have families they're providing for, and they can barely cover the cost of tuition, books, food, and rent. How is it acceptable that they must choose between paying their tuition and having a roof over their heads and putting food on the table?

The University of Alberta campus is seeing a 400 per cent increase in demand for services compared to 2022, and they're going through 500 pounds of food per week. Nearly one-third of their clients are under the age of 18. They are children, Mr. Speaker, children whose parents are doing everything they can to pursue their education and provide a better life for their families.

1:40

It's no question that challenges of student affordability will continue to be an issue with this government refusing to properly fund postsecondaries here in Alberta. Without a stable, predictable funding model, institutions are forced to put more of the burden on students. So why does this government continue to refuse to provide relief to keep life affordable for students and their families? This is a question I will continue to ask on behalf of thousands of students across Alberta and in Edmonton-South.

Thank you.

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

### Provincial Fiscal Update

**Mr. Dyck:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am excited to discuss the significant strides Alberta has taken in managing its financial resources prudently, fostering a path towards a more promising future. The mid-year fiscal update is a testament to our government's commitment to fiscal responsibility and balancing the budget. Despite navigating through economic uncertainties, Alberta's economy shows resilience, with a projected surplus of \$5.5 billion, an impressive increase of \$3.2 billion from the initial Budget 2023 projections.

This surplus shows our dedication to careful financial planning and effective governance for a more positive economic future. We are actively addressing the provincial debt by the reduction of our province's debt burden, and this year we're going to be able to pay down a forecasted \$3.2 billion of Alberta's debt. This demonstrates

our commitment to fiscal prudence and ensures our government isn't mortgaging our future with reckless spending.

By addressing these financial obligations, we are fortifying Alberta's economic foundation, strengthening our credibility and appeal to potential investors. However, amid our fiscal achievements we remain aware of global economic uncertainties, high interest rates, and high consumer spending. Our legislated fiscal framework remains more important than ever, serving as a guiding compass in ensuring our decisions are measured and sensible in the face of unpredictable global dynamics. This surplus is not just good luck, nor is it just a windfall. It represents a strategic resource that we intend to use to foster sustained economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, our government's commitment to fiscal responsibility shows. As we move forward, let us continue to embrace responsibility and innovation in our financial strategies. Together let's pave . . .

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

### Protests and Law Enforcement

**Mr. Sabir:** The Charter protects basic rights and freedoms of all Canadians, including freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression and freedom of peaceful assembly. These rights and freedoms are essential and fundamental to our democracy. Albertans exercise these rights to voice their concerns, opinion, thoughts, and show their support for or opposition to issues they care most about.

In the last few weeks we have seen many Albertans expressing their concerns over the crisis in Gaza and Israel. On November 19 a protest was held in Calgary where some arrests were made by law enforcement. In one instance a hijab-wearing woman was arrested, which resulted in her hijab being removed during the arrest. In another instance a 14-year-old boy was arrested. There are numerous videos circulating on social media of these arrests. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that concerns over these arrests run deep and wide in the community. Many community members, faith leaders, and community organizations have reached out to us, and I'm pleased to see that now ASIRT is investigating.

I recognize that it's important that Albertans have trust and confidence in their law enforcement and the work they do each and every day. That is why it's important that the concerns raised by the community must not go unaddressed. It's also why the Leader of the Official Opposition and I are writing to the Justice minister today to ask for the development of national policing standards, for enhanced co-ordination among law enforcement agencies, and for additional funding to be provided to assist with security at places of worship. We are also asking the minister to consider referring all matters concerning these protests to ASIRT.

Mr. Speaker, in a healthy democracy no one is above the law, and accountability is key to that. I urge the government to take these concerns and suggestions seriously and act now.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

### Rural Alberta

**Mrs. Petrovic:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm deeply proud to call myself a rural Albertan. The people I represent and the breathtaking landscapes we call home are second to none. I'm proud to have served as a rural nurse, mayor, and now as MLA. These experiences have given me a profound understanding of the unique challenges that rural Alberta faces and the tremendous potential and opportunities we have

as well. Unfortunately, not everyone appreciates rural Alberta as much as I do.

When the NDP was in power, they mistreated our rural communities. They called us names like sewer rats, embarrassing cousins, and they told us to walk or take the bus if we couldn't afford their job-killing carbon tax. They ignored our economic future by doing things like investing zero dollars into rural broadband expansion, and they waged war on our family farms and ranches with their Bill 6 legislation.

Some may disagree, but I am proud that rural Alberta has strong representation in this Chamber and in this government. The United Conservatives have shown a steadfast commitment to the well-being and prosperity of rural Alberta by doing things like investing in local infrastructure and community development projects, bolstering essential services, introducing rural-focused grants, and allocating a historic \$390 million into rural broadband expansion and piloting the cutting-edge Starlink satellite technology.

We have also been successful in onboarding 190 doctors to work in Alberta, strategically placing them in communities like the Crownsnest Pass. We know that rural Alberta is no longer just a place you come from but a place you go to for high-paying jobs, quality education, and affordable living.

While our government has achieved a lot already, there's always more work to be done, just like on the family farm or ranch. Unlike the NDP, who recoil at all things rural Alberta, we will be here for all Albertans, including those who live in rural communities, every step of the way.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

#### Former MLA Peter Elzinga

**Mr. Kasawski:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the constituency of Sherwood Park, especially my mom, who I know is watching right now, I want to extend my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Peter Elzinga for your recent loss. My parents, Edwin and Nancy, met Peter and Patricia Elzinga in 1978 through the Sherwood Park Kinsmen and Kinette clubs. These clubs hold the ideals of friendship and giving back to one's community.

The Elzingas, Lessards, Kasawskis, and many more families built Sherwood Park one community-led initiative at a time. They built the first swimming pool, created Kinsmen Park, established a volunteer information centre, brought the Christmas Bureau to Sherwood Park, established A Safe Place for women and children facing family violence. They took the initiative and raised the money and support needed to have firefighters cross-trained as EMTs in Strathcona county. Many won't forget a time when people in Sherwood Park waited for ambulances to come from the city.

It can be difficult to know how we are affecting others, but I can tell you a story about a young man and how a meeting with Peter Elzinga restored his faith in this Assembly. In 1997 a controversial coal mine was proposed on the eastern slopes of Jasper national park. It was in the news. The mining company seemed to be getting preferential treatment by the government, and I was losing faith in the system to protect our environment. My dad told me to call Peter Elzinga.

Peter took my call. He invited me here for a simple lunch in the basement cafeteria of the Legislature. I don't know if he was the Premier's chief of staff or the executive director of the PC Party or both at the time, but he met me and he left an indelible impression on me.

I have Peter Elzinga as my role model for how I think an elected representative should serve their constituents, and I am eternally

grateful for his service to our province and Sherwood Park. God rest his soul.

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

#### Wildfire Prevention in Banff-Kananaskis

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year Alberta and Canada experienced their worst wildfire seasons. It's horrifying for communities. While the members opposite like to downplay the role of climate change and blame an epidemic of arsonists for this, we prefer to base our policy recommendations on facts. Fact: climate change is making our forests drier. It's late November, and Banff is under a fire advisory. Fact: climate change is altering precipitation patterns across Alberta. Fact: a drier soil throughout the year leads to increased fire risk in the spring, summer, and fall. It's not a matter of if a devastating wildfire hits Banff-Kananaskis; it's a matter of when.

Our communities need to reduce wildfire risk. In a rural riding with a lot of provincial land, much of the responsibility to reduce wildfire risk falls to the provincial government. Canmore and the hamlets within the MD of Bighorn are surrounded by a mature forest of highly flammable spruce. Apparently, there's a Bow Valley wildfire and vegetation management plan in the works. This plan must be a top priority and publicly released, and soon.

The MD of Bighorn has volunteer on-call firefighters and a massive 2,800 kilometres square land base, making prompt response to wildfire challenging. They need support to increase capacity and build another fire hall. The volunteer fire department in Benchlands needs the autonomy to update wildfire risk signage at the entrance to the Ghost so that recreationists are prepared. The communities of Redwood Meadows and Bragg Creek need provincial support to increase firesmartering efforts in and around town.

Alarm bells are going off. Banff-Kananaskis needs help. Literally millions of people visit this riding each year to enjoy the outdoors, and they generate billions of dollars for the provincial economy. Our small municipalities are charged with keeping them safe, ensuring they enjoy their experience, and continuing Alberta's legacy as an international tourist destination. We can't do those things without government support for wildfires.

1:50

#### Oral Question Period

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

#### Government Policies

**Ms Hoffman:** The UCP just try to pretend like everything's sunny, but the truth is that many Albertans are facing very dark times. Calgary's rental prices are rapidly increasing, faster than anywhere else in the country, Mr. Speaker, and there are currently 5,300 families on the wait-list for affordable housing in Calgary alone. So how can the Finance minister paint such a rosy picture when these families don't even have a place to call home?

**Mr. Nixon:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister is painting a rosy picture because the Conservative government is fixing the mess that was created by the NDP when it came to our affordable housing stock. Under the NDP, you saw affordable housing stock go down by 76 per cent, shockingly, because they invested no money in affordable housing. This government, together with our partners right now, is investing \$9 billion to create 25,000 more units of housing. Many of those units are already online, and

Calgary and Edmonton continue to be the most affordable large cities in the world.

**Ms Hoffman:** Mr. Speaker, none of those talking points – which aren't based on fact – actually put a roof over those 5,300 families' heads. The UCP government spun a balance sheet this afternoon, but the truth is that Edmontonians are being pushed out of every room they need to access, like emergency rooms, classrooms, even one-bedroom apartments. Public services are bursting at the seams, and the UCP is telling them to hop on the Henday and find a high school or hospital somewhere else. Will the minister commit to building the south hospital and the necessary schools that we desperately need in Edmonton?

**Mr. Nixon:** Well, Mr. Speaker, again, the Health minister and the Infrastructure minister have answered that question before, but let's talk about facts. The construction rates across this province have increased by 11 per cent right now, in this year, the most in history. Over 30-some per cent of that are purpose-built rentals, also the most in history. Those are facts.

Here are the facts, Mr. Speaker. When the NDP was in government, they made life unaffordable for all Albertans. When the Conservatives were in government, we have tackled affordability, including with the largest investment in affordability anywhere in the country. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Ms Hoffman:** The question was about building schools and hospitals to the Finance minister, and we got hot air from another minister.

In terms of moving forward, Mr. Speaker, Bob Ascah, the former director of the Institute for Public Economics at the University of Alberta said, and I quote, pension money is not government money. The majority of Albertans would agree with this fact. The UCP government is acting, however, like they're entitled to the reward that Albertans have worked their entire lives to enjoy. This isn't fun money, Mr. Speaker, this is basic income that seniors are offered to sustain their golden years. Why won't the government back off their plan to take their pensions?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, that member knows that Alberta's pensions are completely safe. We've been clear with Albertans that we are engaging, we're consulting. We've been told we have the right to consider this by the federal government. We've asked them to get back to us with help from the Chief Actuary. We'll come back to them with new information on this.

The other part of the question was about our finances. Yeah, today's a great day; a \$3.2 billion increase. Schools, hospitals, all of that important infrastructure will be looked at as part of Budget '24. [interjections]

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

The only one with the call is the hon. Member for St. Albert.

### Provincial Pension Plan Proposal

**Ms Renaud:** Merci, M. le Président. Mr. Speaker, at the Rotary Club in St. Albert the minister of service Alberta praised the UCP's risky pension scheme, calling the LifeWorks report compelling despite it being riddled with miscalculations and gaps. This plan jeopardizes the retirement security of countless Albertans, especially our seniors in need who depend heavily on the reliable Canada pension plan. How can the minister advocate for this

precarious alternative, putting the financial stability of our most vulnerable seniors at risk?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, we've been clear since the Fair Deal Panel recommended that we pursue this, since we RFPed the report, since Morneau Shepell won the RFP, former federal Finance minister Bill Morneau's company. It's not like this was some rinky-dink outfit. We're engaging with Albertans. We've made clear to Albertans that if this ever were to be pursued by this government or a future government, they would need to go through a referendum. We're committed to that process.

**Ms Renaud:** So far the UCP's sham consultations have included a biased survey, screened telephone town halls, and more recently a long-winded workbook that still doesn't give Albertans any meaningful information, not to mention it's not in French and not accessible. Two weeks ago the minister was this close to attending a face-to-face town hall with seniors in St. Albert, and then he cancelled a day before the event, rebooked it, and cancelled four hours before it was meant to happen. Why won't this minister meet with his constituents and meet with Albertans? What is he afraid of?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if that member or any of the members opposite have actually looked at the report. The report clearly shows that through the interpretation of the formula, the methodology that was used by LifeWorks, Alberta is entitled to a large asset withdrawal because the formula contributes a lot of the investment income to the net contributors, of which there are only three in this country: Alberta, Ontario, and in small part B.C. What we're asking Albertans: is this something they want to pursue? Should this be considered? That's it. And we're protecting with a referendum.

**Ms Renaud:** Today we hosted our second in-person town hall in St. Albert and – what do you know? – over 400 people showed up, not an empty chair in sight. Albertans are desperate to meet with this government, yet the UCP seem to prefer a game of hide-and-seek over genuine engagement. We've rolled out the red carpet multiple times for the UCP, even reserving a VIP seat. Will the minister grace us with his presence at the next town hall, or are they planning to RSVP with another no-show?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, our engagement isn't concluded. The first round of telephone town halls reached 77,000 Albertans . . . [interjections]

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

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I was saying, the first round of telephone town halls is done, the first round of engagement. I look forward to having a meeting with Mr. Dinning and the panel to discuss what he's heard so far, what they think next steps should be. We've also been clear that we think it's important to get this opinion from the Chief Actuary. I intend to find out from Minister Freeland in mid-December how that's progressing.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West has a question.

**Ms Phillips:** Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has brought forward a so-called Alberta Pension Protection Act that does anything but. That's right. He continues to gamble with a rigged deck while trying to run roughshod over Albertans' retirement security. His legislation provides no guarantee of a



referendum, no guarantee that a referendum result would be binding, and no guarantee that any information about any pension vote would be accurate. Minister, my question is: shouldn't we just call this bill the Pension Deception Act?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, Bill 2 does four things. It's a very basic bill. It ensures that Albertans know that if any government, this one or a future government, were to proceed, it would need to go through a referendum. It also makes clear that the asset withdrawal can only be used for the set-up and operation of an Alberta pension plan, and it lets them know that the benefits would have to be the same or higher or the contribution rate would have to be the same or less. I think it speaks to what we're trying to do, having this conversation with Albertans if they want it.

2:00

**Ms Phillips:** While the government is playing Russian roulette with Albertans' retirement security and we can't even get a straight answer out of them, people have been writing to us for months; 37,000-plus have filled out our online pension survey. Hundreds are attending our town halls. Just this morning they ran out of chairs in St. Albert. So can the minister tell us for the record how many Albertans he's heard from and how many of those are opposed to him gambling away our pensions? Does he even check his voice mail or his inbox?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we talk to Albertans every darn day, you know, and that will always continue. This engagement wasn't meant to rush us towards a conclusion. It was meant to be out there, where we were giving the best information possible. If the Chief Actuary comes back with an opinion, we'll come back to Albertans with new information if that exists. That's what this is about, proceeding in the most honest way possible.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, the Premier said that she took the pension gamble off the table during the election campaign, but now her UCP government, just six months in, is doubling down. We're even hearing from long-time UCP members wondering why the government would gamble away the pensions they worked their whole lives for. So can the minister stand right now, look at the camera right there over my shoulder, apologize directly to the people that voted for him, and promise to keep the UCP's hands off their CPP?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, I'm well aware that member knows where all the cameras are.

Mr. Speaker, I would just say that we are very steady in our commitment to Albertans. Once again, how would any responsible government proceed with obviously a complicated initiative? Release the report, engage, increase awareness, find ways that Albertans can participate, discuss what it potentially could look like, seek clarity and participation from the feds involving the Chief Actuary, come back to them if the information changes. It's good governing. [interjections]

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

The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

### Elections Alberta Investigation of Take Back Alberta

**Mr. Sabir:** This week we learned that the Premier's close friends in Take Back Alberta are currently being investigated by Elections Alberta. Ensuring that all election laws are followed closely and

obeyed by all Canadian third parties is a critical role of this Legislature and one of the top roles of government. Take Back Alberta is a group with close ties with the government and members opposite. Has any member of the government been interviewed in this investigation? Yes or no?

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise on behalf of the government to answer this question, being that it is not really about government policy at all, which seems to be something that is par for the course for the members opposite using this time, the people's time in this Chamber, to ask questions as His Majesty's Loyal Opposition. What I will say, though, given this opportunity to rise, is how proud I am of this government, in particular of our amazing announcement with Dow Chemical yesterday with billions of dollars of investment in this province, and I guarantee there's more to come. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Sabir:** The Premier broke the Conflicts of Interest Act, which was discovered by an independent officer of the Legislature. This House should understand and respect the rule of law and the independent officer of this Legislature. The investigation into ties between the government and Take Back Alberta should be conducted independently and without partisan interference. Can the Minister of Justice confirm that the government caucus has the policy to fully comply with the request from the independent officer and with this investigation? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite, we respect the independence and the decision-making process of the independent offices, including the offices of Elections Alberta. The members opposite have no idea what they want. On one hand, they argue that they want independence. On the other . . . [interjections]

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

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, they argue for government intervention and interference. Make up your minds; that's all we ask of this opposition.

Thank you.

**Mr. Sabir:** Mr. Speaker, all we are asking the government is to follow the law.

This government has a tangled history with Elections Alberta and investigations. A former member was fined tens of thousands of dollars for violating election laws. It was four years ago to the month that the UCP fired the Election Commissioner investigating their leadership fraud. [interjections]

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

**Mr. Sabir:** Can the Minister of Justice assure this House that the government won't repeat history and again fire the Election Commissioner while this or any investigation is ongoing?

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member opposite for the question, and I'd like to answer that through you. Everyone in this Chamber knows that Elections Alberta and the officer investigating this is an independent officer. On this side of the House we will not be getting involved in that. But what I can tell you, now that I'm on my feet: it is a great time. While the members opposite like to chide

the Minister of Finance, today is a great day to celebrate a \$5.5 billion surplus in our province because of the fiscal restraint that we have shown since taking government. We will continue to take government and defend Alberta's best interests because that's what we were elected to do. [interjections]

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

### Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction

**Ms Al-Guneid:** It is nice to see that the Premier has convinced some of her colleagues that climate change is real. Now that the UCP has finally recognized science, they must be aware that recent studies found that methane emissions are usually poorly tracked and historic data is deeply flawed. As Alberta's delegation will learn this week at COP, the world is moving towards a goal of less than 0.2 per cent leaks of natural gas. Knowing this, will the minister commit to reducing methane further by adopting international targets?

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

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As in our announcement just earlier this week we were able to reiterate Alberta's leadership when it comes to methane emissions reduction. We absolutely know that there isn't one way across jurisdictions of measurement. That's why we take a top-down and a bottom-up approach. I was pleased to say that we reached our target of 45 per cent emissions reduction years ahead of schedule with savings upwards of \$600 million to industry by working with them and not against them.

**Ms Al-Guneid:** Given that the NDP's climate leadership plan developed methane reduction instruments, implemented the coal phase-out, and created carbon pricing that the UCP embraced and even increased the industrial carbon tax to \$170 a tonne – that is their policy – and given that the UCP is trying to take credit for the NDP climate policies that led to the largest emission reductions in Alberta's electricity system, which UCP policies were specifically implemented in the last four years that lowered emissions?

**Ms Schulz:** Mr. Speaker, Alberta's proud and storied history when it comes to emissions reduction didn't begin in 2015 with light bulbs, shower heads, and a carbon tax that increased the cost of living for Albertans right across the province even though the opposition thinks that it did; in fact, most Albertans would say that it was interrupted. In 1971 Alberta was the first province in Canada to establish a department focused on environmental protection. In the early 1990s we became the first oil and gas producing province to put restrictions on emissions from flaring. From 1996 to 2014 natural gas flaring in Alberta was reduced by 63 per cent.

**Ms Al-Guneid:** Given that Alberta's emissions have declined due to the Alberta NDP climate policies that created the renewable electricity program, which set a record low price for renewables and attracted over \$5 billion in investments, and given that what this government has done is put in a renewables moratorium and is . . . [interjections]

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

**Ms Al-Guneid:** . . . now musing about nationalizing electricity assets, can the Premier explain how a Crown corporation and nationalizing our electricity system 15 years from now will help Albertans today lower their power bills?

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

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, Alberta was the first jurisdiction in North America to put a carbon price on industrial emissions back in 2007, and in 2010 we introduced renewable fuel standards regulation. The list goes on and on. However, I will say this. The difference between us and the NDP is that we're also honest with Albertans about the costs of these changes. The members opposite: I hope they actually do want to talk about electricity and policies that would be bad for everyday people right across our province, support us in opposing the federal Liberals' 2035 net-zero power grid, and stand up for affordable, reliable electricity for all. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

### 2:10 Provincial Fiscal Update

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Mr. Speaker, Alberta is the land of opportunity and prosperity. It is a land known for its pro-growth and low-tax environment. Over the last year we saw billions of dollars in investments and thousands of jobs created. Earlier today the Minister of Finance released the quarter 2 fiscal update. To the minister: can you please give my constituents of Drayton Valley-Devon an update on how our government is keeping Alberta's finances on track? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

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

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you. This is important. Listen up over there. Mr. Speaker, what we did today was great news for Alberta, everyone in this House, all Albertans. It shows that we're definitely on track with Alberta's finances; a \$3.2 billion increase from budget, projecting now a \$5.5 billion surplus in this fiscal year. It shows that we're sticking to our fiscal framework and our fiscal rules. We're staying within our budgeted contingency although that's been difficult with wildfire, but great news about low taxes, pro growth, and Alberta's . . .

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

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the answer. Given that the government's priority is to spend responsibly and given that the new fiscal framework requires the government to use at least half of available surplus cash to pay down debt and furthermore given that the world continues to face high inflation rates, can the minister please tell this House what this means for the province and how it will affect the bottom line?

**Mr. Horner:** Great question. Debt servicing is extremely relevant. Everyone knows that that's tried to refinance their mortgage. It's no different for the province. I'm so grateful that we were able to pay down over \$13 billion in the last fiscal year. If we had to refinance that at today's interest rates, it would mean about \$600 million every year going forward. That's why this is so important. We will not be able to pay down debt every year, but every year that we can, we certainly should. The fiscal framework allows us to do that while providing some flexibility with the Alberta fund.

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

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for all his hard work keeping Alberta's . . . [interjections]

Thank you. Given that we continue to project to lead the country in economic growth again this year and further given that the government is turning its focus to developing next year's budget, to the minister: please highlight how this fiscal update shows strength and Alberta's finance and economy will position us for further growth and what this means for Budget 2024.

**Mr. Horner:** Well, I think what it shows is that Alberta is on a good path, especially when you compare us to the fall economic statement of the federal government, where they're seeing a decrease in corporate income taxes of \$14.5 billion within their fiscal year. What we're seeing is a combination of things that is added to our surplus, about a \$1.8 billion increase from budget in both corporate income tax and personal income tax, speaking to the investment attraction and people voting with their feet and becoming Albertans, and \$1.3 billion in NRR even with oil . . .

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

### Alberta Energy Regulator

**Ms Ganley:** This week the CEO of the Alberta Energy Regulator, Mr. Pushor, appeared in front of a House of Commons committee to answer questions about multiple incidents involving the Kearl oil sands facility. In addition, Albertans found out that an incident at Suncor's Fort Hills facility released more contaminated water than was initially understood. Albertans are rightly concerned, but at the committee all Mr. Pushor did was evade questions and accountability. Does this government really think that a man who isn't doing his job deserves the \$115,000 raise they gave him?

**Ms Schulz:** Mr. Speaker, the AER did address these issues. We've spoken to them a number of times in this House.

But I want to be clear that the comments made by the opposition over the last week have been disgusting and unacceptable. We have heard appalling falsehoods saying that the water was laced, insinuating water was intentionally poisoned. This is unbecoming of a public servant. Mr. Speaker, I would love to hear the Leader of the Opposition apologize to the public for these completely and utterly false claims and the fear that they have been creating for Albertans.

**Ms Ganley:** Given the Auditor General found that the AER has failed to properly clean up oil and gas wells and says that the polluter-pay principle is at risk and given that a recent U of C paper concluded that the AER is too secretive and that the inability to clean up wells is a, quote, massive policy failure and given that the government's only solution is to saddle Albertans with \$20 billion in debt, the AER is failing at its function, and it has lost the public trust. Will a minister commit to a proper transparent public review?

**Mr. Jean:** Mr. Speaker, the AER works at arm's length from this government. It's independent. That might be something different than the NDP wanted and did in their government time, but this is a world-class regulator. The men and women that work in this regulator are known to be the best in the world.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what this party on the other side has done by saying that drinking water is possibly . . . [interjections]

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

**Mr. Jean:** Mr. Speaker, what this party opposite is doing by suggesting that drinking water is unsafe is irresponsible and

unacceptable. They should stand to their feet right now and apologize to Albertans. [interjections]

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

**Ms Ganley:** Given that the AER has failed on multiple occasions to notify nearby communities when toxic chemicals leaked into groundwater and given that the AER has failed to protect taxpayers and left them on the hook for corporate liabilities, does the minister truly believe that the appropriate response to a series of epic failures is a sole-source, secret review that is hidden from the public and giving the CEO a \$115,000 raise?

**Mr. Jean:** Mr. Speaker, the AER works for the people of Alberta. It doesn't work for me, and it doesn't work for them. It works for the people of Alberta to keep the energy industry safe, to make sure our water and air is safe. [interjections]

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

**Mr. Jean:** Mr. Speaker, the AER works hard, and the people within it work hard, independently from this government, to deliver for Albertans.

But what this party is doing is irresponsible, suggesting that our drinking water is unsafe. That is unacceptable. They should stand up and apologize right now, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Sherwood Park is next.

### Electricity System Regulation

**Mr. Kasawski:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week the Premier put forward a motion to nationalize the provincial electricity system. This can't be too shocking. We already know that this Premier wanted to use \$20 billion to nationalize cleaning up oil well sites in the province with her R-star scam. The UCP tried to nationalize the pipeline business, wasting \$1.3 billion on a leg of the Keystone XL that doesn't connect to anything. And now, despite their catastrophic failures, they want Albertans to trust them to nationalize and run the entire electricity system. Who are they fooling?

**Mr. Neudorf:** Apparently, we're fooling the NDP, who can't follow the motion. We're doing no such thing. We are making sure that we put a structure in place to fully protect our electricity system from the classic overreach by the federal Liberal government, with the NDP Party supporting that. We are making sure we protect the Constitution of Canada, the jurisdiction of this province, the consumers within this province, and its generators. We are making sure that people have lights on and that it's affordable now and into the future.

**Mr. Kasawski:** Overreach sounds like intervention.

Given that this government's previous interventions caused a collapse in the lab system in Calgary and saw Albertans unable to buy Tylenol and given that they already found the renewable sector so complicated, their only solution was to shut it down – talk about not being able to chew gum and govern at the same time – and given that Albertans have already said loud and clear that they don't trust this Premier or government to run their pensions, is the Premier just crossing her fingers and hoping that this time her interventions will work? What industry is she going to take over next?

**Mr. Neudorf:** I'm proud to stand with a caucus and a government that is here to protect Albertans. We're making sure that we do the work that the NDP failed to do. When they did an early transition

away from coal to go to renewables, they didn't understand the characteristics of location change; they didn't understand the characteristics of line load change; they didn't understand the characteristics that all of these things change with intermittency and lack of reliability. We're going back and doing the work that they failed to do to make sure that Albertans have reliable and affordable electricity now and into the future.

2:20

**Mr. Kasawski:** It technically sounds like micromanaging.

Given that we are in the midst of an affordability crisis and given that the Premier admitted that it was the decision of her government that caused utility bills to skyrocket and given that even the hint of nationalization will drive away investment and drive up power bills, will she look at her track record and finally put the needs of Albertans before her need to micromanage every sector in this province?

**Mr. Neudorf:** Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to say that after we began the inquiry on August 3, the Alberta Electric System Operator received 74 new applications from wind and solar projects. Investment is increasing in this province because the industry sees that they have a government that's responsible, that is going to make the system work, and we're going to have generation that will not only be able to provide all of our needs in an affordable, reliable way, but we'll be able to help our neighbours to the east, to the west, and to the south. That's what a responsible government does, and I'm proud to stand with every member in this Chamber for Albertans.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie-East.

### Health Care in Airdrie

**Ms Pitt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under our government Alberta is once again the best place to live, work, and raise a family. This is why we've seen so many people bringing their families and businesses to Alberta. But my constituents have been raising concerns about our health care system. Our United Conservative government has seen and heard their concerns, and we've been working hard on a solution. Can the Minister of Health please explain the recently announced changes to AHS and what they will do to improve health care?

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We need to refocus the system so Albertans get the right care when and where they need it. At the same time we need to ensure health professionals have the right tools and the right infrastructure to properly care for Albertans. This refocused system will centre on four priority sectors: primary care, acute care, continuing care, and mental health and addictions. It's a made-in-Alberta structure that keeps the best parts of a large single provider while also emphasizing areas of importance. With these changes, Albertans will have access to more effective care and improved front-line service delivery. [interjections]

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

**Ms Pitt:** Mr. Speaker, given that this is great news for Airdrie because Airdrie is one of the fastest growing cities in all of Canada and the existing urgent care centre is not meeting the needs of our local population and further given that Airdrie's growth isn't stopping any time soon and our urgent care facility is already well

over capacity, can the minister please tell my constituents what's being done in Airdrie to address our health concerns?

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We recognize that Airdrie is a growing community with growing health care needs. We also recognize the importance of modern infrastructure in supporting these health care needs and the effective, efficient delivery of health services. Building health infrastructure takes time, careful planning, and strategic investment, and this infrastructure must be based on the assessed needs of the community. I'm pleased to tell you that we are planning a regional health centre in Airdrie, north of Calgary, and have budgeted in 2023 \$3 million for this work. Great news for the city of Airdrie.

**Ms Pitt:** Mr. Speaker, that is great news. Given that my constituents often have health care needs that are immediate and sometimes life threatening and further given that currently the people of Airdrie either have to deal with the long wait times at the urgent care centre or travel into Calgary to get to a hospital, Minister, can you please share a timeline for when my constituents can expect to see some results?

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member for the question. In addition to my previous answer, this morning I had the privilege of meeting with Mayor Brown, the mayor of Airdrie, and his team, and we had a great discussion about addressing both urgent care and primary care needs in and around the Airdrie area. I appreciate their passion and innovative ideas and their willingness to work together. I see great things in the future for Airdrie and the surrounding area. I will share more as I have more information to share.

### Provincial Pension Plan Proposal Supports for Seniors

**Ms Sigurdson:** Only 14 per cent of Canadians about to retire have the financial confidence to do so. This number is worryingly low. Canadians simply don't have personal financial retirement security. Sadly, the UCP thinks the way to fix this is by gambling away Alberta's pensions. If one thing is clear, Canadians cannot risk losing their CPP. Why is it that the minister thinks Albertan pensions are fun money to be spent in any way the Premier pleases? Does he understand pulling out of the CPP will hurt all Canadians' retirement security?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is right about one thing. This is Albertans' money; this isn't the government's money. This is their net contributions that have helped grow the CPP fund, you know, and thank God that they did. We're saying that we're one of only three net contributors contributing in an outsized way to this plan. What the LifeWorks report shows is that at that asset withdrawal number, it has the potential to leave \$5 billion every year in the pockets of Albertans, in the pockets of Alberta businesses.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Given that nearly half of Canadians have had to use retirement savings to pay for other expenses, a number that has not been helped by the UCP and their careless financial decisions, and given that most Albertans don't see the financial benefits the Premier reserves for her retirement-age friends, will the minister apologize to every Albertan who has been forced to dip into their retirement savings to pay for essentials because life under the UCP is way too expensive?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, no one would be bringing this forward if it didn't have the potential to make life better for Albertans. What are we even talking about? The potential to leave \$5 billion in the Alberta economy, the capacity within that \$5 billion to do multiple things, potentially increase benefits while lowering the contribution rate. Like, who are you fighting for? I will advocate for Albertans every day of the week even with a complicated scenario like this. This is about Alberta. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Given that 73 per cent of households near retirement face a real risk of financial hardship and given that life under the UCP is expensive – utility bills, rents, groceries, auto insurance, property taxes all up due to the UCP – and given that Albertans are now facing inflation isolation while their dreams of a secure retirement slip away, will the minister be working to address financial insecurity for seniors, or will Albertans be left to fend for themselves in the wake of four years of bad UCP policy?

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, it's clear the NDP don't like Alberta; that's not a secret. They're just not proud of our province. I'm proud of our province. We have the lowest senior poverty rate anywhere in this country, the highest senior benefits of any province in this country, and if there are any challenges when it comes to senior payments . . .

**Mr. Eggen:** You're embarrassing.

**Member Calahoo Stonehouse:** Were you not loved as a child?

**Mr. Nixon:** . . . it comes from the federal government, that that party has stood up each and every time to support. This side of the House: we stand with Albertans, including seniors. That side of the House, the NDP: they stand with Justin Trudeau. Shame on them. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

#### **Dow Chemical's Fort Saskatchewan Ethylene Project**

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I joined the Premier in Fort Saskatchewan as Dow Chemical announced a \$9 million investment in my riding, Alberta's Industrial Heartland, to build its landmark Path2Zero project. This is a massive announcement that will create thousands of high-paying jobs and help Alberta enhance its position as a leader in clean technology and sustainable resource development. To the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas: how will this landmark project help Alberta reach its emissions reduction goals?

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

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, a point of order is noted at 2:28.

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas.

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker. I do want to thank the member for her advocacy and for this great question. The Dow project shows that investors and companies are choosing Alberta as the global head for emissions reduction technology and innovation. The Fort Saskatchewan plant would become the world's first carbon-neutral petrochemical project right here in Alberta. We're keeping people working while reducing emissions. This project does this through technologies like CCS and clean hydrogen, all areas where Alberta is leading the world. This is all part of our

emissions reduction and energy development plan, which leads the way through technologies and innovation, not taxes or anti-development . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this landmark announcement from Dow Chemical is further evidence that our government has restored Alberta's investment climate, which members across the aisle nearly destroyed, and given that our government's petrochemical incentive program played a critical role in facilitating this \$9 billion investment, to the Minister of Energy and Minerals: what does this announcement say to other international energy and petrochemical companies who are thinking about investing in Alberta and Alberta's Industrial Heartland?

2:30

**Mr. Jean:** Well, that's true, Mr. Speaker. While Alberta's NDP mother ship in Ottawa is free falling from orbit with their two copilots and just disastrous policy like the plastics ban that won't work, we're creating the first net-zero polyethylene cracker in the world – the largest polyethylene cracker in the world – and we're doing it right here in Alberta with Albertans: 5,000, 6,000 construction jobs; 500, 600 permanent jobs. There is so much more to come. Alberta: if you want to work or play or invest, it's the place to come. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

The hon. the member.

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the members across the aisle have laughably tried to take credit for this massive announcement and even though the 38 per cent tax hike they were promising in the last election would have killed investment in every corner of this province and given that the same members have been fearmongering about how our government's actions standing up against Justin Trudeau and the Liberal-NDP alliance will scare away investment, to the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Trade: why do major international investments keep coming to our province despite the best efforts of the angry socialists on the other side of the aisle? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

The hon. Minister of Jobs, Economy and Trade.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the hon. member is highlighting the stark contrast between the NDP's investment repulsion strategy and our UCP government's investment attraction strategy. You see, the NDP increased taxes, increased regulatory burden, and were openly antienergy and antibusiness. We reduced taxes, we reduced red tape and regulatory burden, and we are champions of business in our world-class energy sector. We've brought in billions in investment while they chased away tens of billions. But guess what? Ten billion just came back this week with Dow, and you're going to see a lot more from this business-friendly government. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

#### **School Construction in Northeast Calgary**

**Member Brar:** The residents of Redstone have been looking at the future school site signs on empty fields for so many years. The kids travel for an hour one way each day, to school and back. This government has not committed to building any schools in growing

communities like Redstone. Why does the Education minister continue to ignore northeast Calgary?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, Mr. Speaker, that's completely false. Alberta's government does not ignore northeast Calgary. In fact, I went there personally to talk with members of the community. [interjections]

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

**Mr. Nicolaides:** As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, I went there personally to talk with residents of the community to understand their concerns. Our government is absolutely committed to building schools. In the last budget cycle we approved 11 projects for the city of Calgary. I know that the Redstone elementary project, that maybe the member is referring to, is number 3 on the Calgary board of education's capital list currently.

**Member Brar:** Given that the parents waited for two hours in chilly cold to listen to this minister and handed in a signed petition with 1,100 signatures from the Redstone residents but given that the minister still refused to commit to the new school in Redstone, can the minister tell this House: how long will he make northeast Calgary families wait for him to build the actual school in the northeast?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, as I informed the members of the community, which they completely understood – but for some reason the member opposite doesn't understand – there is a process, and projects have to move through that process, and new projects are awarded and announced in the capital budget process. We'll have some more information in the upcoming budget about which school projects are ready to proceed, which ones require a little bit more development. But I'm always happy any time, Mr. Speaker, to sit down with the residents of northeast Calgary and hear their concerns.

**Member Brar:** Given that other communities like Cityscape, Cornerstone, Livingston are expanding and that we need new schools there as well, I will ask the simple question one more time: when will the minister replace the future school site signs on the empty fields with actual schools?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, our government is absolutely committed to significant . . . [interjections]

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

**Mr. Nicolaides:** You know, they're quite angry, Mr. Speaker, but if the project is such a priority, why didn't they build it when they were in government? Clearly not a priority when they were in government. But it's absolutely important for our government to make sure that we are building schools in our growing communities. Over the past four years we have approved 98 school projects, and we are continuing that work. I'll reiterate again: I'm very happy to visit the member's constituency at any time and talk to his residents. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

#### Anthony Henday Drive

**Mr. Ip:** Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Edmonton-South West there is a grave public safety issue at the Anthony Henday interchange at 184th Street and Maskēkosihk Trail. For months my constituents have written to the transportation minister pleading to fix a serious

design flaw that has led to many crashes. Had he acted when I wrote to him back in July, a serious crash that happened this past Sunday could have been prevented. What is it going to take for the minister to take the safety of Albertans seriously?

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

**Mr. Dreeshen:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd tell the member that he can tell his residents that we just made a huge announcement on the Anthony Henday ring road in the southwest. We went from four lanes to six lanes. That's going to improve the flow of traffic in that region. It was a \$100 million project, 18 kilometres, going from two to three lanes, and that's really going to improve not just the commutes of people in that area, but it's also going to make it a lot safer.

**Mr. Ip:** Given that the residents of Cameron Heights want to be listened to and taken seriously by this minister and given that all they want is a solution to prevent fatal collisions in their neighbourhood and given that the minister has yet to address their concerns, will the minister stop being so dismissive of Cameron Heights residents, take them seriously, and act in their best interest, or is the minister only going to do something once someone dies?

**Mr. Dreeshen:** Mr. Speaker, that's a terrible question. It's something that – obviously, as the minister of transportation we take traffic safety extremely seriously. That's why we review any accidents that happen. If there's signage improvement, redesign improvements, anything that we can do from the department standpoint, it is something that we'll always constantly do and work with municipalities across the province to make sure that our roads in Alberta are the safest that they can be.

But, Mr. Speaker, over-the-top rhetoric like that is just disgusting to hear, and I wish the member opposite would stop doing that.

**Mr. Ip:** Given that there have been at least seven serious collisions at this intersection since I first wrote to the minister in July and given that numerous Cameron Heights residents have given the minister specific solutions to reduce serious collisions and given that both I and the local city councillor wrote to the minister last week to highlight the urgency of this issue, will the minister finally sit down for a meeting with me and Cameron Heights residents to figure out a solution, or does he not care about the lives of my constituents?

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

**The Speaker:** A point of order is noted at 2:38.

**Mr. Dreeshen:** Mr. Speaker, I gave the member an opportunity to actually fix his questions. The fact that he said that I obviously don't care about his constituents is just appalling and wrong, and I wish that that new member stops those kinds of questions in the future.

But, Mr. Speaker, in the southwest part of this city we did a \$100 million improvement to the road network for residents in that area. It was built back in 2006 for about 40,000 commuters; it's gone up to about 80,000 commuters. We're making sure that the growth of this great city is something that we can live up to and make sure that we have the investments to go forward.

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

#### Skilled Trades Training

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Business is booming again in Alberta. Alberta's economy is leading the nation in

economic growth, and because of that, families are moving from across the nation to our amazing province to partake in the Alberta advantage. A constituent of mine owns a salon and has noticed rising labour demands that she has struggled to meet considering the high-quality results she strives for in her business. Could the Minister of Advanced Education please share what the government is doing to ensure that apprenticeship graduates are skilled and prepared to enter industries such as my constituent's?

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

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. Alberta's economy is rapidly evolving, and our government is helping students get the skills and knowledge they need to meet the labour market demands of tomorrow. Alberta delivers 47 apprenticeship education programs in the skilled trades, and we have more than 900 apprenticeship scholarships every year. We also work with organizations like Women Building Futures, Careers, and Skills Canada Alberta to promote skilled trades and showcase rewarding opportunities for ambitious Albertans.

2:40

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for her answer. Given that our government has invested an additional \$12.4 million in apprenticeship training, which will create nearly 2,000 more apprenticeship spots across the province, and further given that our UCP government has been committed to investing in Albertans by expanding apprenticeship opportunities to meet the fast-rising demand for skilled workers, could the same minister please tell the House about the integral nature of investing in our trade schools and apprenticeships?

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

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Thank you for that great question, Mr. Speaker. The contributions of skilled trades workers are felt in every region of our province, and apprenticeships are the cornerstone of their education. That's why we've invested \$54.4 million for apprenticeship education this year alone, and this will create nearly 2,000 apprenticeship seats across the province, ensuring there is space for everyone who chooses to pursue a rewarding, in-demand career in the trades.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Given that stories like those of my constituents corroborate the fact that we need to invest in our trades schools and apprenticeships to ensure quality education is provided and to produce high-level future business owners and further given that the UCP government was elected on a platform that is committed to recognizing and expanding trade-related fields and expanding apprenticeships to meet the fast-rising demand for skilled workers, could the same minister please expand on proposed legislation such as Bill 203, that aims to address increased labour shortages and demands?

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Another good question, Mr. Speaker. Our government is taking action to address labour shortages and enable skilled newcomers to grow our economy. Our Labour Mobility Act is making it easier for new Albertans to bring their expertise regardless of where in Canada they received their credentials. The Fair Registration Practices Act and the fairness for newcomers office are supporting internationally trained skilled workers to begin careers in regulated professions and trades. We know that

when Albertans reach their full potential, it benefits our economy, communities, and the entire province.

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

### Notices of Motions

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move Government Motion 14 on the Order Paper.

Be it resolved that, pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) and for the duration of the 2023 fall sitting of the First Session of the 31st Legislature, the Assembly shall meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings for consideration of government business unless the Government House Leader notifies the Assembly that there shall be no evening sitting that day by providing notice under Notices of Motions in the daily Routine or at any time prior to 6 p.m.

**The Speaker:** I will clarify with the Clerk, but I believe that you need to move the motion at the calling of Orders of the Day. Notices of Motions would have been you providing an oral notice or otherwise of some other motion. We will do this again in 30 seconds or less by all likelihood.

### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Chestermere-Strathmore, followed by the Minister of Advanced Education.

**Ms de Jonge:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the *Red Deer Advocate* article titled Rural Municipalities Call for Bigger Role in Energy Project Approvals. The article describes eight recommendations made by an RMA committee to the AUC and the AER, which include a call to include public interest evaluation frameworks within these organizations' approval projects.

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Advanced Education has a tabling.

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the requisite five copies of an open letter to Premier Smith in support of free use of the "software engineer" title. Notably, this letter was signed by the Member for Calgary-Foothills – and thank you – alongside numerous other representatives of the tech sector.

**The Speaker:** I believe there may have been the use of a member's name, which would be wildly inappropriate.

The hon. Minister of Forestry and Parks.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a document here further to a question from yesterday in question period. We have 611 people working in wildfire management along with resources like aircraft and heavy equipment operators.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you for your tabling.

Are there others? It looks like the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore would like to rise.

**Mr. Haji:** Yeah. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table an e-mail from Linda Lindsay, a constituent of mine, a concerned resident, about the CPP with anxiety and uncertainty that it will bring. I have five copies of that for the record.

**The Speaker:** Are there others? The hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis, followed by Edmonton-Meadows.

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week, when debating Bill 202, the education classrooms data piece, I quoted from letters from the Foothills school division and Rocky View school division. I just want to table requisite copies of those letters now.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadows.

**Mr. Deol:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite number of copies of the article, the information I referred to during the QP yesterday, when the hon. Minister of Infrastructure started explaining the P3s and expense benefits in response to my question requesting to abandon P3 bad models, school projects. I'm tabling the CBC article published online on December 26, 2022. The minister then of Infrastructure – I'm not sure if I can state the name because the minister is the hon. member.

**The Speaker:** No, you can't. You don't need to describe everything in the article as the purpose of tabling is so that we can read it, but if you can be quick, you can continue.

**Mr. Deol:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here are the copies.

**The Speaker:** Thank 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 Public's Right to Know Act a report on crime and justice statistics, 2018-19 to 2022-23.

On behalf of hon. Mr. Nally, Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction, pursuant to the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis commission 2022-2023 annual report.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, that brings us to points of order, and at 2:27 the Government House Leader rose on a point of order.

### Point of Order Parliamentary Language

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order on 23(h), (i), and (j), particularly in this instance. The Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, while the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services was speaking, said – I believe the line was “Were you not loved as a child?” This is language certainly to cause disorder within this Chamber, and I would think that, actually, personal attacks are below any member regardless of political stripe in this Chamber. I suspect it wasn't caught necessarily – it wasn't said loud enough – but maybe it was that the ambient mics caught it. But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it was heard by a number of members on this side of the House. I would expect that member to apologize, withdraw, and refrain from using those kinds of personal and, frankly, offensive lines in the future.

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

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Usually during the question period I use that earpiece, so I did not catch what the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford said, but I do agree with the House leader that these personal attacks need to stop. Yesterday I think we

brought that up as well. The minister of service Alberta: he makes those kinds of personal attacks and remarks, so I hundred per cent agree with the House leader that there shall be no personal attacks. Heckling is something different than personal attacks. I didn't hear what was the exchange.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Are there others?

I am prepared to rule. Fortunately or unfortunately, as it is the case for the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, not only did I hear her remark as well as – the Speaker is reluctant to rule without either hearing it or there being an accurate record, and in this case I have both. The facts as reported are entirely correct, and I might just add that immediately prior to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford saying, “Were you not loved as a child?” the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West said, “You're embarrassing,” both unparliamentary, both unacceptable. I will anticipate an apology and withdrawal.

2:50

**Mr. Sabir:** I apologize and withdraw.

**The Speaker:** I consider this matter dealt with and concluded.

I would encourage all members of the Assembly: while they may choose to engage in heckling, personal attacks of any nature are never the order of the day.

We are at point of order 2. At 2:38, somewhere around there, the hon. the Government House Leader rose on an additional point of order.

### Point of Order Allegations against a Member

**Mr. Schow:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I certainly did. At this time the Member for Edmonton-South West was asking a question to the hon. minister of transportation. I rise on 23(h), (i), and (j). This is certainly on the record as it was part of his question. Though I do not have the benefit of the Blues, my understanding of the remark was: does he not care about the lives of the people or of these people? I know that member. I've limited time speaking with him, but I know him to be a man of integrity, and this is a remark that I believe is probably out of character for that member. Maybe the emotion of the moment got the best of that member, but that kind of remark, suggesting that members on this side of the House, in particular the minister of transportation, who is charged with the lives of those who are on our roads and streets, keeping them safe – I believe that that remark is certainly out of order, causes disruption, and I would argue that it is a point of order.

**The Speaker:** The Official Opposition deputy House leader.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the benefit of the Blues, but I do have the question from the member. The question was about a grave safety issue on the Anthony Henday, and the member, before asking this question, has written to the minister in July, mentioning that since then there have been seven incidents, serious incidents. Then he went on to ask the minister: will he sit with his constituents? And the words he used are: “Does he not care about the lives of my constituents?” I think it's not a point of order in the context. The question was about safety concerns on a highway that could cost Albertans' lives. It was a serious question, and I don't know why the House leader thinks that that should be a point of order. I think those are the kinds of concerns Albertans elected us to raise in this Legislature where their safety is at risk. The member has every right to ask that question.

Thank you.



**The Speaker:** Are there others?

I am prepared to rule. I do have the benefit of the Blues. I don't think anyone is questioning the serious nature of the question. The point of order specifically as to whether or not the hon. Member for Edmonton-South West made an allegation about the hon. minister of transportation: we do have a very clear record of the Blues, and in fact he did say, "Or does he not care about the lives of my constituents?" Whether or not a statement as such rises to the level of a point of order, I think, is a matter that could be debated inside this Chamber. I want to caution the hon. member that it sounds a lot like he may have been making an allegation about the hon. the minister of transportation. It also sounds a lot like he may not be speaking through the Speaker. A much more appropriate way to ask the question would be, "Does the minister not care," as opposed to the personal of the "he" in this case.

Having said that, we will provide some grace to the hon. Member for Edmonton-South West, who is relatively new to the Chamber. I would provide some caution for him, though, when crafting his questions, that he does so in a way that is both through the Speaker and not unintentionally making an accusation that may rise to the level of a point of order. This is not a point of order. I consider the matter dealt with and concluded.

Ordres du jour.

## Orders of the Day Government Motions

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

### Evening Sitings

14. Mr. Schow moved:  
Be it resolved that, pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) and for the duration of the 2023 fall sitting of the First Session of the 31st Legislature, the Assembly shall meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings for consideration of government business unless the Government House Leader notifies the Assembly that there shall be no evening sitting that day by providing notice under Notices of Motions in the daily Routine or at any time prior to 6 p.m.

**Mr. Schow:** Okay, Mr. Speaker. Let's run it back and try it again. I rise to move Government Motion 14 on the Order Paper.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) this is a nondebatable motion.

[Government Motion 14 carried]

## Private Bills Second Reading

### Bill Pr. 1 St. Joseph's College Amendment Act, 2023

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

**Ms Sigurdson:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move second reading of Bill Pr. 1, St. Joseph's College Amendment Act, 2023.

I just will share some short remarks regarding this bill. We know that St. Joseph's College is a very proud institution on the campus of the University of Alberta, and I have the honour of being the MLA for Edmonton-Riverview, which is where both the University of Alberta and St. Joseph's College are situated. Since 1926, so almost 100 years, St. Joe's College, as it's affectionately known,

has served students on the campus for all those years. They teach on an annual basis over 70 courses in the liberal arts tradition using the Catholic religion, the lens through which they teach those courses. They have approximately 2,700 students that enrol annually in the courses, 10 tenured professors, and roughly 20 adjunct professors. They have two chapels with religious services in the Catholic tradition for nearly 300 members on campus along with campus ministry supports for students. They also provide space for religious expressions in Coptic Orthodox and Ukrainian.

This amendment that's presented here before the House today, if passed, will allow St. Joe's College, as it's affectionately known, to offer diplomas and degrees. The amended legislation will also update the board composition to be in line with the academic institutions governed under the Post-secondary Learning Act and create a senate. The affiliation with the University of Alberta will not change under this legislation, and the University of Alberta, as we know, is a world-class public research university. President Flanagan of the U of A wrote a letter of endorsement for this legislation.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Certainly, St. Joe's has a very long, proud history, and people who have attended St. Joe's are people that we know. Certainly, we know that our own retired member Richard Feehan took courses at St. Joe's when he was first enrolled at university, and Joe Clark, a former Prime Minister of Canada, lived in the men's residence at St. Joe's. We also know that our current Justice Kevin Feehan also took courses at St. Joe's. So there are political leaders that have attended and many, many more that I won't go into details about. Certainly, the ability for St. Joe's to now grant degrees, update their boards, and create a senate will put them in line with other institutions, as I said, under the PSLA here in our province, and it will give them much more of a mandate to attract students.

3:00

Certainly, they have a very credible history, and I just urge all members of this Assembly to vote in favour of this legislation. This will be a real asset for all Albertans because people come from all across our country, all across our province, certainly even western Canada, and a lot of people like the sort of smaller structure, the more community-focused sort of atmosphere of St. Joe's, and certainly many people from rural Alberta have taken their first steps at university, going first to St. Joe's College and then going on to other academic pursuits. Again, I just urge all members of this Assembly to vote in favour of this bill. I think it's going to really serve the students of Alberta.

With that, Madam Speaker, I'll take my seat.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Perfect.

Are there any other members that wish to join the debate on Bill Pr. 1 in second reading?

Seeing none, would the mover like to close?

**Ms Sigurdson:** Well, thank you. I just would again like to thank everybody for looking at this legislation. I think it's really a positive move forward, and again I urge everyone to support it.

Thank you.

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

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Prior to going into Committee of the Whole, I rise to ask for unanimous consent for one-minute bells in Committee of the Whole, including on the first division.

[Unanimous consent granted]

## Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Pitt in the chair]

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

### Bill 5 Public Sector Employers Amendment Act, 2023

**The Chair:** This is the first time we are hearing this in Committee of the Whole. Are there any members that wish to join the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I just want to take a few minutes today as we consider Bill 5, which is titled Public Sector Employers Amendment Act, 2023, to do a brief reminder of how we ended up in this place in which the government has taken this opportunity to focus on increasing already large compensation for executive leadership positions. Particularly, I want to focus on postsecondary institutions.

In 2018 I think it was well aware that there were a number of executive positions in the province that were being paid far in excess of any other comparators across Canada, in fact, any other comparators across North America. The president at the University of Alberta at that time took home \$960,000 in compensation, direct compensation. As has been highlighted by my colleague for Edmonton-Gold Bar, who was the minister at the time, there was also additional compensation built in through a number of strategic initiatives, including the purchase of a home that had previously been purchased and for which the board of the day at the University of Alberta significantly paid more than what the president had just paid a few years earlier for the house. So the compensation that year was far in excess of a million dollars for the president at the University of Alberta.

At the same time oil was around \$20 a barrel. We all know that there were fiscal realities and constraints in the province. But no matter what the price of oil, no president, as amazing as the university is – and it is my alma mater for two of my degrees, through you, Madam Chair – needs to be paid a million dollars. It is absolutely something that students, I think, rejected in a significant way, that other academics at the university rejected in a significant way. I know that generally taxpayers across Alberta were gobsmacked to know that that was the reality.

We worked as a government strategically in 2018 over a few years to roll back that compensation to rates that were far more reasonable, still very high but not as out of line with other major institutions across Canada and North America. For example, instead of \$960,000 a year, the pay came down to \$684,000 a year, and it was for 20 leaders at postsecondary institutions across Alberta. This is one of the things that the government has decided needs to be their top priority when it comes to this legislation, repealing those salary bans and allowing for the gravy train to continue as it once did under former Conservative governments, under the current Conservative government.

At this time I also want to take a moment to reflect on what's happened to postsecondary tuition, domestic tuition in particular, students who are Canadian, the vast majority of whom are Albertans, who are going to postsecondary institutions in the province of Alberta. Just in the first four years that the UCP was governing, the four years prior to this, we saw domestic tuition increase from 29 per cent to 74 per cent, Madam Chair. I want to acknowledge that we know that that has led to extreme increases in student debt and student debt financing.

I also want to acknowledge that there are many students, particularly lower income students, students who might have other pressures outside of the family that are also causing financial burden, but students who are lower income are less likely to be willing to take on personal debt to finance their future income-earning opportunities through postsecondary investment, Madam Chair.

We've seen tuition in programs like pharmacy, dentistry, and law go up the most, meaning that we will see people from diverse economic backgrounds less likely to pursue careers in those areas because of decisions that the university had to make as a direct result of the \$222 million in direct cuts to the University of Alberta alone.

We've also heard from my colleague the MLA for Edmonton-South earlier today about food bank usage and the need for financial aid for students at the University of Alberta, many of whom are accessing the food bank for themselves, either to feed themselves or their children, but the majority of whom, in fact, are under the age of 18.

So as this relates directly to Bill 5, Madam Chair, I want to rearticulate that the Public Sector Employers Amendment Act, 2023, does in no way address the direct impacts on students at universities who are seeing their tuition skyrocket or the cost of living increase for them. It does, however, directly impact the compensation for executives who run the university. I know that other members have said that this is because of cost-of-living increases. I wish that members of this Assembly would focus on cost-of-living increases for folks who are trying to go to school, trying to pay their bills and focus less on upping the top end of compensation for those who are already incredibly well compensated, especially when you look at interjurisdictional comparators.

With that, I have to say that I am disappointed by the direction this government has chosen to take, and I continue to be frustrated with the fact that they're putting the pay and compensation of those who are most executive in our systems ahead of those most in need.

With that, I'll save the remainder of my time.

**The Chair:** Any other members who wish to join the debate on Bill 5 in Committee of the Whole?

Seeing none, I will call the question on Bill 5, the Public Sector Employers Amendment Act, 2023.

[The clauses of Bill 5 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Any opposed? Carried.

### Bill 6 Public Health Amendment Act, 2023

**The Chair:** Are there members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Minister of Justice.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Bill 6, the Public Health Amendment Act, 2023, is a decisive move to strengthen the authority in our public health decisions. The idea behind Bill 6 is simple. We want decisions about public health to be made by the people elected by Albertans. The origin of Bill 6 lies in a careful consideration of the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is evident that the decision-making process

regarding COVID-19 public health orders did not align with the existing legislative framework, as highlighted by the Ingram decision.

3:10

If Bill 6 passes, elected representatives chosen by Albertans will ultimately have discretionary authority to make final decisions on public health orders in respect of all persons or a class of persons, including a class of individuals, bodies corporate, associations, nonprofit or for-profit organizations, all while taking into account the advice of the chief medical officer of health during a declared state of public health emergency. Albertans elect their MLAs and rely upon public officials to make significant decisions on their behalf. It is therefore crucial to shape Alberta's laws in a manner that facilitates elected officials making informed decisions for the well-being of all Albertans.

Madam Chair, in the context of a public health crisis it is imperative that lines of authority and responsibility remain clear and adhere to established laws. The passage of this bill will empower cabinet to take necessary actions to mitigate the impact of public health emergencies during a declared state of public health emergency, including measures to control the spread of disease, safeguard individuals from exposure, disrupt the transmission chain, and eliminate the sources of infection.

Madam Chair, we're making changes to section 29 of the Public Health Act. This is the part of the act that tells us who has final decision-making authority during a declared state of public health emergency. The changes make it crystal clear who does what during a declared state of public health emergency. Medical officers of health, including the chief medical officer of health, still have the final say on specific cases, but during a province-wide declared state of public health emergency, cabinet would now have the power to make broader decisions affecting broader classes of persons, including individuals, businesses, nonprofits, and educational settings.

Why do we need this? Well, it's about putting Albertans first. We want the elected officials in charge to have the power to make decisions quickly and clearly where it matters most. The chief medical officer of health will continue to play a vital role in the public health advice, making sure that decisions are based on scientific and medical evidence, with sound public health considerations taken into account.

Madam Chair, as a member of the opposition once so eloquently stated, there are other provinces in Canada where government holds the final responsibility in terms of issuing public health orders, so it's not an unprecedented step. In fact, it is a necessary stride, underlining the commitment to transparent decision-making during a declared state of public health emergency and in all circumstances.

Now let's talk about transparency. I want to reiterate to you, Madam Chair, that this is about transparency and clarity. Albertans want to know who is ultimately making the final decisions that impact their lives. Bill 6 doesn't hide anything. Section 74.1 of this bill, granting the Lieutenant Governor in Council discretionary authority to "by order reverse or vary any [public health] decision of any decision-maker . . . under this Act" outside of a declared state of public health emergency, further clarifies cabinet's final decision-making authority. By incorporating that paramountcy clause, the legislation ensures that crucial decisions can be effectively made by elected officials.

We saw, Madam Chair, during the COVID-19 crisis that sometimes decisions need to be made outside or beyond a declared state of public health emergency, and this clause gives us the authority to keep people safe at all times. This underscores the

accountability and transparency that elected officials must uphold as they bear the responsibility ultimately for discretionary decisions made outside of the specific context of a declared state of public health emergency. In aligning these proposed amendments with the Ingram court decision, Bill 6 establishes a robust foundation, ensuring our legislative framework remains not only resilient but also adaptable to the ever-evolving nature of public health challenges.

Madam Chair, Bill 6 is a statement, a testament to our dedication to transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs of Albertans. Again, public health is a top priority for this government, and we will always value input from the medical community. Their knowledge and advice plays an indispensable role in building a strong and reliable health care system for our province. As we reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic, I trust that the committee will carefully consider the merits of Bill 6 for the betterment of our province and for all of its people.

With that, Madam Chair, I think I've made it clear as to why the proposed amendments are needed, and I urge each and every member to cast their vote in favour of Bill 6. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Are there others wishing to join the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak to Bill 6, the Public Health Amendment Act, 2023. I thank the minister for quoting me, certainly, as the government is skilled in taking a rhetorical inch and running it for several miles. Acknowledging that there are other provinces that have a similar model is in no way a ringing endorsement of many of the sweeping changes that are made in this bill. Indeed, there are some very significant concerns with some of the decisions that this government has made in bringing forward this legislation. And it's not just me that's saying so. Indeed, I'll note the minister has not quoted a single legal expert, public health expert, anyone else with knowledge or expertise in this field supporting what they are putting forward in this legislation. I will be happy to quote and put forward the thoughts of several who are raising concerns.

Now, to give a bit of context, Madam Chair, this is part of a consideration, as the minister said, of how decisions are made in the case of an emergency and indeed based on a fairly significant impact that was had on all of us under the most recent pandemic and how those decisions were made. Unfortunately, what we have here in Bill 6 is not just an attempt to clarify and correct legislation. Indeed, if that was what this government wanted to do, they had multiple opportunities to do so in the midst of the pandemic when they indeed amended the Public Health Act, but they did not introduce these changes then.

The minister just spoke about, you know, how this is supposed to provide clarity on who's making decisions. Let's be clear. The government under which this minister sat were the ones who obscured that decision-making process, which is what led to the Ingram ruling, which is what led to this legislation. They obscured the fact that cabinet was making decisions when the law clearly said that that was the province of the chief medical officer of health. That was this government. They are patting themselves on the back for doing now what they should have done years ago and could have clarified. So if there was a lack of clarity during the pandemic, that was a choice, a deliberate choice of this government.

What this legislation does, Madam Chair, is it continues a pattern of this government seeking to seize unprecedented levels of control, undemocratic levels of control. And I don't use that word lightly. You see, governments in general are afforded a pretty wide latitude

of power. They're afforded an enormous level of power, and that is because they're also afforded an enormous level of responsibility. Governments are called on to make incredibly difficult decisions, at times in unpredictable, very uncertain circumstances, so they are given a lot of power and a lot of flexibility in what decisions they make and what actions they choose to take to meet those circumstances.

3:20

In a democratic system we seek to balance that power and authority with some appropriate checks and balances to ensure that power is not abused. Now, one of those checks and balances, of course, is all of us here, the elected members of the Legislature, because the government consists of, as we all know in this Chamber, the ministers and the Premier. Every other MLA in this place is a private member and intended to act as a check and balance on the exercise of power by government. So even when a government holds a majority, even when there is a majority and we have more government members than opposition members, and even if those government members choose to consistently vote with their government and their ministers, at least when we have that debate here in the Legislature, we have the opportunity for the public to see. We have transparency. We have the accountability of open debate, scrutiny of government decisions, just as we are having here and now.

We also have the protection of freedom of information laws, that empowers opposition, empowers media, empowers the public to be able to hold the government accountable by keeping them informed about decisions that the government makes. All of those mechanisms, though, ultimately depend, to an admittedly fairly significant extent, on the assumption that those who are governing are doing so with integrity and that they are going to respect the rule of law.

Now, unfortunately, in its tenure this UCP government has given us good reason to believe that is not the case on repeated occasions. As I detailed in my earlier debate on this bill, we have Bill 10, the first attempt by this government to amend the Public Health Act in the early days of the pandemic, in which they chose to seize sweeping powers to not only adjust or amend or add to any existing law but to create entirely new laws without ever setting foot in the Legislature. That, Madam Chair, to me, is the very definition of undemocratic. It flies in the face of public accountability. It certainly flies in the face of the kind of clarity, transparency, and accountability that the Minister of Justice just claimed they wish to uphold. But they flagrantly passed legislation which flouted that. They passed that bill. The Minister of Justice himself was part of that government, part of the government that voted that through.

Now, of course, the other checks and balances that exist, thankfully, did work. The public spoke out loudly, as did we in opposition, and the government walked that back. But then when they brought forward their sovereignty act last December, they did it again, giving themselves the unprecedented power, the undemocratic power, Madam Chair, to create entirely new legislation without ever setting foot in this House. That is the record of this government.

And then after that, Madam Chair, we had the case of the Premier herself, who chose to try to influence a decision of the Crown in the prosecution of a single individual, Mr. Artur Pawlowski. As the Ethics Commissioner noted, it is improper for any elected official to try to interfere with the administration of justice by interfering in a prosecution and by speaking to an Attorney General about a specific ongoing criminal case in the way that the Premier did on her call with the then Minister of Justice. It was not acceptable.

Indeed, in her view, it was a threat to democracy. That is the track record, that is the history of this government.

Now we have in front of us Bill 6, where, Madam Chair, I dare say this government is seeking to do it again. As I said, I've yet to see any expert, legal or in public health, express any praise for this bill, but I am seeing several raise concerns. A recent blog post from Dr. Lorian Hardcastle and Shaun Fluker, both associate professors in the Faculty of Law, the University of Calgary, Dr. Hardcastle with a joint appointment to the department of community health – in her view, Bill 6

is nothing more than a knee-jerk reaction by the UCP government to judicial decisions, and a seemingly superficial response to placate those who blame the CMOH for pandemic restrictions. While it might satisfy a desire for revenge politics, Bill 6 fails to properly address the real governance problems in the act.

**An Hon. Member:** It's true.

**Mr. Shepherd:** I hear that a member of the government agrees; this bill fails to address the real issue on the table.

Now, I'm going to begin by looking at a specific section of this act. I'm talking here about section 74.1. We again are talking about seizing unprecedented power, Madam Chair, looking to circumvent democracy, looking to circumvent the proper procedures of this House, indeed to do an end run around the Legislature. In this case the government is seeking unprecedented power that does not exist in any jurisdiction. The Minister of Justice was happy to quote the piece where I talked about the fact that this does exist in some others. The Minister of Justice will know that section 74.1 does not exist in any other jurisdiction in Canada. That is because section 74.1 essentially gives cabinet the ability to override anybody who has made any decision about public health at any time without justification, without transparency, without any checks and balances.

Now, again, this is a power that is afforded to no other government in Canada. The Minister of Justice has not offered any explanation on why he feels that he has the expertise or that he and his cabinet should be able to override it. If the minister wants to rise and provide that explanation, I would certainly welcome it. I would be happy to hear it. But the fact is that this is not a power that's taken by anyone. Now, let's be clear. That means any decision that's made by public health in regard to the sort of situation we recently had with E coli – the minister believes that cabinet should have the ability to go in and override any decision that is made in that case in or outside of a public health emergency.

This is not something that was raised within the Ingram case. This is not something that was raised by anybody. This was not called for by anyone or raised as a concern by anyone in the field, any legal expert, any public health expert. The government has not demonstrated any reason why they need this extraordinary power, but we know that we have a track record of a government that seems to believe it deserves extraordinary power, that it deserves to hold power that no other government in Canada holds.

We also know that this is a government that is headed by someone who sought to interfere in the administration of justice specifically related to public health orders. Now the minister, under that Premier, is seeking to give the cabinet, under that Premier, the ability to essentially override absolutely any public health decision. There seems to be some alignment between those two cases: a government that repeatedly has tried to put itself even further above the law, sort of trying to rewrite the law to give itself the right to write the law without ever setting foot in this Legislature, feels it needs to give itself even more extraordinary power.

I had someone reach out to me who works in the public health field, deep experience, raising concerns about this particular provision. They pointed out that public health has to do with more than just pandemics and infectious disease; it has to do with, say, situations like the Domtar site here in Edmonton, where AHS environmental health made rulings about what needed to happen at that site, what needed to be done to contain, holding a specific company and corporation to account.

Now, this government believes it should have the power to be able to interfere in that kind of a decision, a government that has demonstrated that they, at least the Premier, have been willing to attempt to interfere in those sorts of decisions to benefit a single individual. This government wants to give itself the power now to interfere with any ruling against any individual, any corporation, any organization, with no accountability. There is accountability currently in the structure, Madam Chair. There are multiple levels within public health by which decisions get made and scrutinized. There is an appeal board, and in fact there are the courts.

3:30

But this government believes it should set itself above all of those things, a government that has repeatedly demonstrated a lack of judgment on so many of these matters, again, a provision that does not exist in any other legislation across Canada for which the minister has provided no justification for a government which has shown it lacks judgment and indeed is willing to push the boundaries. That is why, Madam Chair, I would like to introduce this amendment.

**The Chair:** Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A1.  
Hon. member, please proceed.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The amendment reads: myself to move that Bill 6, Public Health Amendment Act, 2023, be amended by striking out section 3. Section 3 being the part that adds in 74.1, the portion for which there has been given no justification, the portion which does not exist in any other provincial legislation in Canada, the portion which gives the government sweeping powers to override absolutely any public health decision made by absolutely anyone in the system, a government, I would dare say, that has demonstrated it lacks the judgment to indeed be able to exercise.

Albertans need to know, Madam Chair, that this government, that has twice attempted to give itself the power to create entirely new legislation without ever setting foot in the Legislature, twice in the space of two years, under a Premier who directly tried to interfere in the administration of justice to benefit a single individual: that government is now once again attempting to take unprecedented power for itself that is not matched in any other jurisdiction in Canada through section 74.1 in Bill 6, granting themselves the power to override any public health decision in the province of Alberta.

On this side of the House, Madam Chair, we believe that if you want to take that kind of sweeping power, you should provide justification. You provide a reason. The minister has provided none, so we are moving this amendment and calling for section 3, containing section 74.1, to be removed from the legislation.

I look forward perhaps to hearing the minister's thoughts on this amendment and his justification for the change. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Any members wishing to speak to the amendment as recently moved?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A1 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:34 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Pitt in the chair]

For the motion:

Al-Guneid	Goehring	Shepherd
Brar	Hoffman	Sigurdson, L.
Dach	Ip	Wright, P.
Ellingson	Sabir	

Against the motion:

Amery	Jean	Rowswell
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Johnson	Sawhney
Boitchenko	Jones	Schow
Bouchard	LaGrange	Sigurdson, R.J.
Cyr	Loewen	Sinclair
de Jonge	Long	Singh
Dreeshen	Lovely	Stephan
Dyck	Lunty	Turton
Ellis	McDougall	van Dijken
Fir	Nally	Williams
Getson	Neudorf	Wilson
Glubish	Nicolaides	Wright, J.
Guthrie	Nixon	Yao
Horner	Petrovic	Yaseen
Hunter		

Totals: For – 11 Against – 43

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

**The Chair:** Are there any speakers wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, we attempted a protection of democracy. The government was not a fan, but we will see if we can try perhaps another time.

When we were talking about Bill 6, the Minister of Justice rose.

**An Hon. Member:** Bill 6?

**Mr. Shepherd:** Yes, Madam Chair. You could say that this is the UCP government's Bill 6.

When we were speaking about this bill, these amendments to the Public Health Act, the minister spoke of careful consideration of the process by which decisions were made during the pandemic. He talked about new decisions being made now by cabinet, holding that control, taking into account the advice of the chief medical officer of health, that that would facilitate elected officials making decisions for the well-being of all Albertans.

Now, of course, we know what the track record of this government has been in terms of actually taking advice of the chief medical officer of health and how that worked out for the well-being of Albertans. Indeed, those are some of the concerns that Dr. Hardcastle and Fluker go on to discuss in their post *Haste Makes Waste: Amending the Public Health Act on the University of Calgary's law blog*. They talk about how

the debate about whether public health experts or elected officials ought to have the power to make public health decisions with general application is a serious issue . . . and [it's] certainly . . . not resolved by simply shifting decision-making power from experts to politicians.

**3:40**

Again, this bill does not resolve the problem. As they go on to say:

this shift on its own does nothing to ensure public health orders will follow norms of predictability, consistency, transparency, justification, and accountability to the elected assembly.

Indeed, Madam Chair, we must remember this was, in fact, the model by which decisions were made during the pandemic in Alberta. Now, it was contravening the law at that time, but it is still how the government managed things. The chief medical officer of health was not making the ultimate decisions; cabinet was. Therefore, the function of how we saw things roll out during the pandemic was exactly under this model and indeed this model as exercised by this government. So when Fluker and Dr. Hardcastle talk about concerns about predictability, consistency, transparency, justification, accountability, that's because those were all lacking under this government, under this model.

I can tell you staff in my office spent hours sending e-mails and updates to businesses across Alberta, including in many government members' constituencies, helping to clarify information that this government failed to clarify, updating people on changes being made at the last minute, being poorly communicated. Those were decisions by this government under this model, that they are now seeking to entrench in law after having chosen to repeatedly contravene and flout the law during the last pandemic.

Now, they go on to speak and say that

if anything, shifting decision-making power to Cabinet will only exacerbate these shortcomings because of the principle of cabinet confidentiality. We have already seen how this will play out in the next public health emergency.

Indeed, Madam Chair, we saw how it played out during the last one. So we do have an ongoing concern here because, again, this bill is not actually fixing the problem; it's simply codifying the very model by which this government chose to operate during the last pandemic, which they themselves have admitted was problematic and certainly any member of the public who had to deal with the public health restrictions under this government will tell you was problematic, again because of their failure to communicate, their failure to provide proper supports.

At so much of the time these decisions were in fact being heavily politicized by their own infighting amongst their caucus, and we can say that, Madam Chair, because they were publishing open letters arguing with themselves in the midst of a pandemic as lives were being lost. This change in this bill will do nothing to correct that fatal flaw because that flaw lies within this government.

Unfortunately, Madam Chair, we can't fix this government, but we can perhaps help fix this legislation. As I was saying earlier, one of the things that we can do in legislation to deal with governments that demonstrate a lack of ability to respect the law, the rule of law, or indeed at times to act in the best interests of the people they are elected to serve is to ensure we have proper checks and balances, ways to hold them accountable and at least ensure that the public is informed about their decisions and how those decisions are made. Again from Dr. Hardcastle and Fluker:

The underlying issue here is a lack of transparency in decision-making, which Bill 6 does nothing to change. In our recent paper (referenced above), we conducted a cross-Canadian comparative analysis of public health legislation.

And:

If Cabinet is going to make public health decisions . . . they ought to counterbalance the risk of increased politicization, for which we have had ample evidence over the last four years, Madam Chair. I return to the quote:

. . . counterbalance the risk of increased politicization with greater independence for the [chief medical officer of health] by facilitating greater transparency of their recommendations. This way, the public can make more informed health-related decisions and hold the government's feet to the fire if they choose not to follow CMOH recommendations.

Again, what we have at the moment, Madam Chair, is this government codifying and re-entrenching the model by which they operated during the last pandemic, under which we had no accountability and transparency. Indeed, despite the fact that this government was the one that signed off on every single public health order, this Premier, when she came into power, was the one who metaphorically put the head of the chief medical officer of health on a platter to satisfy their restive base, who she had inflamed throughout the length of her leadership campaign, blaming her and other public health officials for the decisions that were in fact made by this government, its cabinet, indeed many of the ministers who sit in this House today.

Bill 6 will not change one piece of that. None. It will continue to have the same lack of transparency, the same lack of accountability, give this government the same opportunity to continue to misrepresent to Albertans where decisions are actually being made and the basis on which they are being made, not only in the midst of a public health emergency, which is disturbing enough, but indeed on any public health order. This government just voted against any limitation on their ability to interfere in any public health order from any public health individual in this province. No accountability, because apparently this government believes that it should not have to answer to Albertans, that its decision should be unquestioned.

On this side of the House, Madam Chair, we disagree, which is why I will move this amendment.

**The Chair:** This will be known as amendment A2.

Hon. member, please proceed.

**Mr. Shepherd:** I'll read the amendment into the record. I am moving that Bill 6, the Public Health Amendment Act, 2023, be amended in section 2 as follows: (a) in the proposed section 29(2.14) by adding “, and a copy of any advice provided to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the chief medical officer in respect of the making of that order or exemption,” immediately after “the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall provide a copy of the order or exemption” and (b) by adding the following immediately after the proposed section 29(2.15):

(2.16) If the Minister receives a copy of an order, exemption or advice of the Chief Medical Officer under subsection (2.14), the Minister must immediately publish a copy of that order, exemption or advice of the Chief Medical Officer on the department's publicly accessible website.”

This is a very simple amendment, Madam Chair, addressing a question of accountability, the question raised by Dr. Hardcastle and Shaun Fluker and by others. Now, indeed, the minister spoke, and he said that the elected officials, the folks that are elected by Albertans, should be making all decisions on public health. If he believes that, then that same public should be informed about why this government is making its decisions and what advice was presented for it to consider. Indeed, if the government is acting in the best interests of Albertans, they should not fear demonstrating that. If the government feels that the only way that they can act in the best interests of Albertans is for Albertans to be uninformed, I would suggest they are not acting in the best interests of Albertans.

This amendment would simply require that a copy of any advice provided to the Lieutenant Governor in Council, so to the cabinet, by the chief medical officer regarding the making of an order or an

exemption be made available to the public. The government, of course, having exercised its best judgment, as the Minister of Justice has assured us they will, will be able to demonstrate to the public that indeed, as the Minister of Justice said they would, they have listened carefully to and taken into full account the advice of the chief medical officer of health.

3:50

Now, of course, we know that during the last pandemic, when the government was operating essentially under this model while contravening the law, they did not do so. Indeed, repeatedly they chose to obfuscate and hide even the fact that they were making the decision. They were happy to hide behind the chief medical officer of health even as they were actively overriding her. The fact is that, as I discussed, the government is afforded incredible power. The government is now taking even further power. The check and balance on that power are transparency and accountability. Now, sadly, we do know that this is a government that seeks to avoid that and to hide from that in every case.

Indeed, when it comes to data about current COVID-19 infections and the state of our hospitals and ICU beds, the government has gone out of its way to make that much harder to find and track because they don't want Albertans to know and be informed and be able to hold them accountable. This government is currently under investigation by the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for some unprecedented stretching, it seems, of freedom of information laws and practices.

If a government that has already demonstrated that it seeks to hide information from Albertans, to have less transparency and less accountability, wants to now take even more extraordinary power for itself, the least they could do is show a gesture of good faith in ensuring that they are being transparent and accountable, especially in a matter as serious as its decisions and its conduct in the midst of a public health emergency. Unfortunately, Madam Chair, I'm not seeing many nods of agreement; I'm seeing much studious looking at phones.

The second part of this would provide that if, when the minister receives a copy of an order, an exemption, or the advice of the chief medical officer of health, under subsection 2.14 the minister would immediately publish a copy of that order, exemption, or advice of the chief medical officer on the department's publicly accessible website.

Now, there was a requirement during the pandemic that these public health orders be published, but repeatedly, Madam Chair, through the pandemic public health orders that had significant impact on individuals, organizations, businesses would not be published for days after they were issued. I remember Dr. Hardcastle frequently raising this concern, and I would get those calls to my office. We would get those e-mails from folks we had reached out to, that we were communicating to, indeed in many of the government members' constituencies, asking for clarity, seeking this information, and this government dragging its feet on providing it to Albertans.

Again, a simple provision to ensure, then, that for the public health orders which this government is now giving itself the power to create and the sole power to create, when it does so, it's a simple thing. Publish it; put it up on the publicly available website. You've had the chance to debate it in cabinet. You've had the chance to oversee it. You've reviewed it multiple times. You've got the wording right. What's the delay? Put it up on the website along with the advice of the chief medical officer of health, whose advice the Minister of Justice has assured us they will absolutely, certainly be taking into account, and since they will be making principled

decisions in the best interests of Albertans, this government should have no fear of publishing what that advice was.

Indeed, this government has repeatedly assured us that they only want to make these decisions in the best interests of Albertans, that they simply want to do right by the people who have elected them. Well, they can do so, then, by holding themselves accountable, by being genuinely transparent. If they choose to vote against this amendment, Madam Chair, what they are telling the people of Alberta is that they believe they have the right to unprecedented power. They believe they have the right to ultimate decision-making on things that will have a deep impact on people's lives and that in doing so, they believe they do not have to explain themselves ever, that they can simply make those decisions without evidence, without demonstrating why, and without answering further questions.

Indeed, as we have them currently under investigation, they will probably make it far more difficult to actually even access that information at all. That is not a government that has the backs of Albertans, Madam Chair. That is not a government that is standing up for Alberta. That is a government that is looking out for itself.

Despite the fact that we repeatedly saw that kind of behaviour in the midst of the pandemic, it's my hope that maybe this government might have a bit more of a conscience now. We'll give them the opportunity to see when we vote on this amendment.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Any members wishing to join the debate on amendment A2? Any other members wishing to speak?

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A2 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:56 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Pitt in the chair]

For the motion:

Brar	Hoffman	Shepherd
Dach	Ip	Sigurdson, L.
Ellingson	Sabir	Wright, P.
Goehring		

4:00

Against the motion:

Amery	Jean	Rowswell
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Johnson	Sawhney
Boitchenko	Jones	Schow
Bouchard	LaGrange	Sigurdson, R.J.
Cyr	Loewen	Sinclair
de Jonge	Long	Singh
Dreeshen	Lovely	Stephan
Dyck	Lunty	Turton
Ellis	McDougall	van Dijken
Fir	Nally	Williams
Getson	Neudorf	Wilson
Glubish	Nicolaides	Wright, J.
Guthrie	Nixon	Yao
Horner	Petrovic	Yaseen
Hunter		

Totals:	For – 10	Against – 43
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[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

**The Chair:** Any members wishing to join the debate on Bill 6?

Seeing none, I will call the question on Bill 6, the Public Health Amendment Act, 2023.

[The remaining clauses of Bill 6 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Any opposed? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we rise and report bills 5 and 6.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**Mr. van Dijken:** Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bills: Bill 5 and Bill 6. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

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

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any opposed, please say no. So carried.

### Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

#### Bill 6 Public Health Amendment Act, 2023

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you very much. Again, Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak to third reading of Bill 6 and to move third reading of Bill 6, the Public Health Amendment Act, 2023.

I want to thank my colleagues for acknowledging their commitment to this bill as we amend the Public Health Act. We are amending the decision-making process during states of public health emergencies to ensure that elected, accountable, transparent, and represented officials are making decisions during such events. We are doing this considering the Ingram court decision, which determined that public health orders issued under section 29 of the Public Health Act in response to the COVID-19 pandemic did not align with Alberta's legislation.

It's important that people elected by Albertans have the discretionary authority to make final decisions based on scientific and medical public health factors during a declared state of public health emergency. As I've noted previously in this House, the Public Health Act in its current form requires that all decisions with respect to section 29 public health orders, such as those issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, be made by medical officers of health, including the chief medical officer of health.

Madam Speaker, amendments to section 29 of the Public Health Act will clarify cabinet's role in decision-making for public health orders during a declared state of public health emergency. Cabinet would be responsible for decisions respecting all persons or a group of persons, including a group of businesses, individuals, nonprofits, and educational settings, and medical officers of health, including

the chief medical officer of health, would retain final decision-making authority for orders impacting specific persons or a specific public place.

Madam Speaker, elected representatives bear the responsibility to act in the utmost and best interests of Albertans, taking an oath to diligently and faithfully exercise the powers and trust bestowed upon them. This legislation guarantees that the ultimate authority in decision-making during a declared state of public health emergency, along with the accompanying accountability and transparency, reside in the hands of those elected by Albertans. To further cabinet's decision-making authority, proposed changes in Bill 6 add a paramouncy clause that would provide cabinet with the discretionary authority to, by order, reverse or vary any public health decision of any decision-maker under the act.

I appreciate the debate on these important amendments. I am confident that the majority of members in this Chamber comprehend and endorse the purpose behind this legislation. I urge each member once again to cast their vote in favour of this bill.

With that, Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill 6. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there any members that wish to join the debate, third reading of Bill 6? The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

**Mr. Ellingson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm happy to rise and speak to third reading of Bill 6, the Public Health Amendment Act, 2023. This government has acknowledged that the act is in response to the Ingram decision. The Court of King's Bench Justice Romaine ruled that Alberta's elected officials overstepped their authority in making the final decisions on health measures during a public state of health emergency. The statement clarifies that those decisions should have been made by the chief medical officer of health. Further, Justice Romaine stated that the interventions at the time were justified, but to ensure that we don't overstep our bounds again, this government, the UCP, is simply changing the law where the chief medical officer of health will retain the decision of authority over a single person but not over groups of persons where concerned.

It is disconcerting that decisions will be politicized and not based on science, nor will they be transparent, having seen this government vote down an amendment to increase transparency and ensure transparency in future decisions. One might ask who cabinet will be seeking advice from. If only Albertans could trust this government to make accountable, transparent decisions based on science. If the goal was to make scientific decisions, one might ask the scientific background of those others being brought in to provide advice in decision-making.

Let's take a moment to look at some past public health emergencies and outbreaks and what we learned from them. The World Health Organization has done considerable work, particularly around the 2003 SARS outbreak, and raised several points that we in this House should be paying attention to.

The first is that transparency is the best policy. It was noted during the SARS outbreak that regions and countries dangerously did not acknowledge the presence of SARS, downplayed its extent, in some instances attempted to prove that it was something else, sweeping it under the rug, if you will. It is dangerous to think that we may be bringing in additional advice not based on science with the public chief medical officer of health not being our sole source of advice and that we might be downplaying the extent of COVID.

That was a common narrative throughout Alberta in the days of the COVID pandemic, that COVID was nothing more than the standard flu, that we shouldn't be paying attention to it, that it was



not as serious as health authorities suggested. Opening the possibility of these beliefs to hold sway in decisions of public health is unacceptable.

Further to the points of transparency, it is noted that any region that has a weak response to pandemic threats and issues of public health risk the security of other regions. It is collection and collaboration amongst scientists that maps and identifies genomes of viruses to help us understand and halt spreads. It takes concerted effort from government and dedicated resources to gather data, share data, and share our understanding of the data. This bill opens the door to not only changing our localized response on the ground, putting our own citizens at risk, but the ability to gather and share data, thereby putting others at risk as well.

It is clear the government does have concerns about the economic impact of our collective response to public health emergencies, but should public health interventions be justified as they were? According to Justice Romaine's decision we should be allowing science in making those public health decisions. Madam Speaker, I have noted that a court decision states the measures taken were justified, that the UCP government overstepped its bounds, and now we simply want to make sure that we can legally make those same measures without the courts ruling that we're overstepping our bounds. What would have been the result if political decisions had been made where we did not take the interventions that we did during COVID? What might have happened to our citizens at that time?

Madam Speaker, this bill places the public health of our citizens in jeopardy, and I do strongly encourage the members of this House to vote against this bill. Thank you.

4:10

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to join the debate on Bill 6? The hon. Member for Edmonton-South West.

**Mr. Ip:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to rise in third reading and speak against Bill 6, Public Health Amendment Act, 2023. As much as members on the other side will likely disagree with me, Bill 6 stands to open the floodgates of political interference in public health and has the potential to endanger Albertan lives.

I'm troubled by how broad and sweeping the bill is. Bill 6 is self-serving in many ways that will give ministers or any government ample opportunity to insert themselves in matters that, frankly, they have no business inserting themselves into. Let me be clear. We should not be politicizing public health, especially certainly by politicians who are not qualified to be making decisions on health matters in the first place. Bill 6 creates the kind of situation where people can simply lobby their MLA to keep a negligent kitchen open and do so behind closed doors, as an example. Madam Speaker, there are privileges but also limits for members of this House. Public health decisions should be made based on evidence and science for the protection of all Albertans, not populist ideals.

I want to take a few moments to speak about the consolidation of power, which I find troubling because Bill 6 basically concentrates power with cabinet, whose members are in no way qualified to make very important and serious health decisions. In fact, I would argue that the bill gives the government godlike powers. The way that it is written doesn't just give cabinet the power to override the chief medical officer of health; it also gives cabinet the ability to override the decisions of anyone empowered within the Public Health Act.

This isn't just contained within public health emergencies; it also includes matters that are relatively routine. I'll give you the example of health inspectors: professionals, trained experts who are there to serve the public. Let me emphasize that no government

should have this kind of power. Very few members of this House, with the exception of the Member for Calgary-Varsity, have any specialized background in health care, including members of this current cabinet. That's okay, because it's not our role as members of this House to be technical experts. In fact, as elected members of this House we do, however, have a heavy responsibility to make decisions for the interests and protection of our respective constituents, and in order to make informed decisions, we rely on experts and trained professionals. Particularly when it comes to matters of life and death, public health must be governed with the principles of prudence and with the public interest in mind.

But Bill 6 eliminates those boundaries between the qualified civil service and their advice as well as political leadership. What Bill 6 then allows is politicians to insert themselves into public health decisions that they don't like, frankly, and it opens very blatantly the floodgates to political interference. I think about the matters recently when it comes to E coli outbreaks and other serious public health matters. What would have happened if it was up to politicians to sort of make those decisions? You know, if we're not careful, Bill 6 can easily mean more chaos, uncertainty in our health care system.

I think back, Madam Speaker, to the 18th Premier's particularly memorable event when the 18th Premier declared that Alberta was open for summer. It was a debacle. We later learned that this was done so against the advice of his chief medical officer, and indeed the chief medical officer at the time was right. It was a premature decision, and it cost Albertan lives. So let that be a cautionary tale, because we've seen what happens when politicians interfere in emergency public health matters.

But as I mentioned, Madam Speaker, this bill isn't just contained to public health emergencies. It is a broad, sweeping bill that empowers cabinet to actually micromanage very routine health matters. Let me take health inspectors, for example. Health inspectors should go about their business and their job without reprisal and with great independence. In fact, the minimum threshold for any nonspecialist to override decisions of public health inspectors should be very, very high, if there should be a mechanism for that to happen at all. So it would be hard to imagine that elected officials and politicians like cabinet members have any business in potentially overriding the decisions of health inspectors, but this bill enables just that. It allows and sets the stage for potential abuses of power.

I'm not just sort of talking about abstract potential abuses of power. Health inspectors have very, very good reasons to issue an order, and we don't want there to be a situation where folks who are, you know, perhaps contravening health orders can lobby their MLAs to overturn those sorts of decisions. But this bill does exactly that. It sets the stage for the dynamic and the possibility of politicians being lobbied to overturn decisions by public health officials. That simply, in my mind, is very, very dangerous.

In fact, Bill 6 doesn't even require cabinet to consult or seek advice from the chief medical officer of health before inserting themselves in a matter. There is no transparency in how, you know, cabinet members may go about interfering with certain health decisions. In fact, worse yet, if a government makes a decision that is on the complete opposite side of what public health officials advise, the public will never know about it. There is no accountability.

When we look at the crux of this act, it does not serve the public, Madam Speaker. It is a self-serving bill to give this cabinet all the powers that it wants so that they can do the convenient thing, and that is not right. We all have a responsibility as members of this House to uphold our responsibilities to protect the public. This bill fails in that, so I encourage all members of this Assembly to vote against this bill.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to join the debate? The hon. Member for Calgary-North East.

**Member Brar:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. This UCP government loves to have all the power in their hands, and that's exactly what this bill does. Health care decisions should be made to protect the health of Albertans and our province and not to satisfy the ideology of any political party.

As this Assembly heard today, the Minister of Justice said that decisions should be made based on scientific evidence, but when we look at the record of this government, when we look at the record of this Premier, there are serious questions that can be raised. During the pandemic this Premier suggested hydroxychloroquine as a cure for COVID-19. That was not scientific, that was not based on any evidence, and this shows that Albertans can't trust this cabinet or this government about the health decisions that they will be making.

Albertans would like to know which other jurisdiction has the same kind of legislation. Albertans want their government to work like a decent government. They do not want any government to give itself a godlike power. There is a reason we call experts experts. They certainly know better than others. During unprecedented times their decisions, their opinions, their analysis must be listened to, heard, and should be respected. This bill will put the cabinet in the driver's seat of the car, which they have no idea how to drive.

4:20

The Minister of Justice also claimed that the chief medical officer of health will have a vital role to play. If the chief medical officer of health does not have the decision-making power that will be implemented, then what kind of vital role is left to play?

People in my riding tell me all the time that they need more hospitals, that they need more health care workers, and that they need a better public health care system, where they don't have to pay out of pocket to go and see a family doctor. They do not want their government to give itself sweeping powers. They want their government to deliver what they need and what they deserve. Albertans are watching their elected officials today, and it is time to work for the people who elected us and not for ourselves.

Law experts Lorian Hardcastle and Shaun Fluker from the University of Calgary have raised serious concerns about this bill, which I would like to share with this Assembly so that the members of the Assembly can make a proper decision based on the analysis of experts. They have clearly said in the report that one of the fundamental problems with this act, which this Bill 6 does not address, is that the phrase "public health emergency" is used throughout the Act without an explicit tethering to the declaration in section 52.1. The Act makes reference to a distinction between the "existence of a public health emergency" and a declared "state of public health emergency" in section 12.1(2), and section 1 defines . . . there are two kinds of public health emergency under the Act: an emergency that exists based on the definition in section 1 (i.e., an illness that creates a significant risk to public health) and an emergency that is declared by Cabinet under section 52.1.

This bill does not address this.

A primary concern with Alberta's pandemic response was the extent to which public health decisions appeared to be politically motivated. As it turns out, this appearance reflected exactly what was going on as the authority to make COVID-19 public health orders was unlawfully delegated to or taken by cabinet. This concern with the politicization of public health has only deepened with the current UCP government, which has summarily dismissed public health officials and adopted a very authoritarian tone on public health governance and health care more in general. The underlying issue here is a lack of transparency in decision-making, which Bill 6 does nothing to change.

With that being said, Madam Speaker, I request all the members of this Assembly to vote against this bill. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members to join the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

**Ms Wright:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak on Bill 6, the Public Health Amendment Act, 2023. I thought I'd begin with the definition of public health. Public health is the organized effort of a society to keep people healthy and to prevent injury, illness, and premature death. It is a combination of programs, services, and policies that protect and promote the health of all Canadians. That means that protecting and promoting the health of all Canadians includes the idea of the common good: what is good for all, what is good for most.

While keeping that definition of public health in mind, I also want to add the following sentence: just because you can doesn't mean you should. This is a phrase I often used while teaching, and it was meant to remind my students about their responsibility as a member of our classroom community. Part of that responsibility meant actively reflecting on their actions and their words and, if necessary, figuring out what it was they needed to do as an individual, sometimes as a group, when a mistake was made, how they could repair the harm, how to make things better, how to reflect upon what they learned and act in a way that would show their classmates that they could be trusted.

Madam Speaker, this government made a mistake during the pandemic. The decisions were made in cabinet instead of through the authority of the chief medical officer of health, and eventually that mistake was revealed. But instead of reflecting upon that mistake and instead of learning from that mistake, we have this bill, Bill 6, the Public Health Amendment Act. This is the bill that gives cabinet sweeping power, the right to ignore the advice of the chief medical officer of health. There is absolutely no requirement to share with Albertans what advice, exactly, that expert recommended. This would be the opposite of being transparent.

I do not want my grandchildren, who, no doubt, will face both epidemics and pandemics and epidemics in their future, to be making their decisions in the absence of advice, in the absence of facts, in the absence of knowledge, and also in the absence of knowing why a decision was made and in what context. Madam Speaker, in the midst of that epidemic or pandemic, a public health emergency, the public must have a measure of trust in both government and experts. That trust is built by transparency, as my colleague from Edmonton-City Centre noted, by actions such as debate in this House, by sharing information to the public in a responsible manner. During a province-wide declared state of emergency, quite frankly, I would like to hear from the chief medical officer of health, from the scientists, from the experts, with government members alongside, not above but alongside.

Public health decisions should be made by health experts and should not be subject to political whims or as a result of the wishes expressed by a teeny-tiny, small group of people. Those public health decisions are supposed to be about the best interests and protection of Albertans, but this bill isn't about that. This bill is a perfect example of: just because you can doesn't mean you should. With that in mind, I urge my colleagues to vote against Bill 6.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to join the debate?

Seeing none, the question shall now be put.

[Motion carried; Bill 6 read a third time]

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to all the members of the Assembly for their diligent work this week. I do see

that the clock is almost at 4:30. I move that the Assembly be adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Monday, December 4, 2023.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:29 p.m.]



## **Bill Status Report for the 31th Legislature - 1st Session (2023)**

**Activity to Thursday, November 30, 2023**

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

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

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

### **Bill 1 — Alberta Taxpayer Protection Amendment Act, 2023 (Smith)**

First Reading — 10 (*Oct. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Second Reading — 57-58 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft.*), 96-97 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Committee of the Whole — 145-47 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Third Reading — 147-54 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft., passed on division*)

### **Bill 2 — Alberta Pension Protection Act (Horner)**

First Reading — 89-90 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Second Reading — 154-55 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 274-85 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft.*), 336-43 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft.*), 394-400 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 424-30 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

### **Bill 3 — Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Amendment Act, 2023 (Williams)**

First Reading — 22 (*Oct. 31, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Second Reading — 90-93 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft.*), 180-87 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft.*), 272-73 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Committee of the Whole — 307-09 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Third Reading — 334-36 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed*)

### **Bill 4 — Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (\$) (Horner)**

First Reading — 55 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Second Reading — 159-63 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 155-56 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 187-90 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Committee of the Whole — 309-13 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Third Reading — 336 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed*)

### **Bill 5 — Public Sector Employers Amendment Act, 2023 (Horner)**

First Reading — 55-56 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Second Reading — 156-57 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 190-97 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft.*), 265-72 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft.*), 403-09 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 430-35 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Committee of the Whole — 456 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

### **Bill 6 — Public Health Amendment Act, 2023 (Amery)**

First Reading — 90 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Second Reading — 157-58 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 313-20 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft.*), 435-38 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Committee of the Whole — 456-62 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Third Reading — 462 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

### **Bill 7 — Engineering and Geoscience Professions Amendment Act, 2023 (Sawhney)**

First Reading — 111 (*Nov. 6, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Second Reading — 158-59 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 273-74 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft., passed*)  
Committee of the Whole — 400-03 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 423-24 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

**Bill 8 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (Amery)**

First Reading — 209 (Nov. 9, 2023 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 299-307 (Nov. 22, 2023 aft.), 438-41 (Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed)

**Bill 201 — Alberta Health Care Insurance (Access Fees) Amendment Act, 2023 (Brar)**

First Reading — 90 (Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 114-25 (Nov. 6, 2023 aft.), 234-37 (Nov. 20, 2023 aft., reasoned amendment agreed to on division; not proceeded with)

**Bill 202 — Education (Class Size and Composition) Amendment Act, 2023 (Chapman)**

First Reading — 209 (Nov. 9, 2023 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 237-46 (Nov. 20, 2023 aft., adjourned), 358-64 (Nov. 27, 2023 aft., defeated on division; not proceeded with)

**Bill 203 — Foreign Credential Advisory Committee Act (Dyck)**

First Reading — 111 (Nov. 6, 2023 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 364-70 (Nov. 27, 2023 aft., adjourned)

**Bill 204 — Municipal Government (National Urban Parks) Amendment Act, 2023 (Lunty)**

First Reading — 332 (Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed)

**Bill Pr1 — St. Joseph's College Amendment Act, 2023 (Sigurdson, L)**

First Reading — 289 (Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills), 421 (Nov. 29, 2023 aft., reported to Assembly; proceeded with)

Second Reading — 455 (Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed)

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