



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, April 25, 2024

Day 45

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

First Session

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van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UC), Deputy Chair of Committees

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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)
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Chapman, Amanda, Calgary-Beddington (NDP)
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UC)
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Ip, Nathan, Edmonton-South West (NDP)
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Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UC)
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Wright, Peggy K., Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC),
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Yaseen, Hon. Muhammad, ECA, Calgary-North (UC)

Party standings:

United Conservative: 28

New Democrat: 38

Independent: 1

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Rowswell

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Bouchard
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Kasawski
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Wiebe

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Select Special Conflicts of Interest Act Review Committee

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Lovely
Rowswell
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Wright, J.

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Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

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Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

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Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Mr. Rowswell
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Al-Guneid
Armstrong-Homeniuk
Dyck
Eggen
Hunter
McDougall
Sinclair
Sweet

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 25, 2024

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

Mr. James Patrick Heron March 21, 1940, to November 27, 2023

The Speaker: Hon. members, as it is our custom, we pay tribute to members and former members of this Assembly who have passed away. Today it's my pleasure and honour to provide a tribute to former member James Patrick Heron. James was the Progressive Conservative member for Stony Plain from 1986 to 1989. Mr. Heron was raised and educated in Stony Plain, the area where his grandparents homesteaded. He earned his bachelor of commerce and master of business administration degrees from the University of Alberta in 1970 and 1976.

James worked in banking, portfolio management, and venture capital investing.

His first foray into public office was as councillor and mayor of the summer village of West Cove from 1979 to 1986. Mr. Heron's dedicated involvement within the community was extensive. He contributed his time and expertise to service of many organizations: the Alberta College Board, Edmonton Northlands, Edmonton Chartered Financial Analyst Society, the Masonic lodge of Stony Plain, the Scottish Rite, and the Shriners of northern Alberta, to name just a few.

Mr. Heron passed away on November 27, 2023, at the age of 83. In a moment of silent prayer I ask that you each remember James Heron as you may have known him. Rest eternal grant unto him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him.

Hon. members, it being the last sitting day of the week, we will now be led in the singing of *God Save the King* by Beki Lees.

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: Hon. members, please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: Well, hon. members, I have some good news and some bad news to share with you today. The good news is that one of my very dear friends, the consul general of the Philippines, has joined us in the Speaker's gallery today. The bad news is that his term as the consul general is coming to an end, and he's preparing to head back to the Philippines. Consul General Patron assumed his position on

July 1, 2019, and I had the pleasure of meeting with him soon thereafter. Since then we've had numerous meetings and occasions, which I always looked forward to. He understood and understands the importance of community. This is obvious when you consider his work and outreach into the local Filipino community and the way in which that community holds him in such high regard.

One of my favourite memories with Mr. Zaldy is a day we spent in the fall, where we started by visiting Dr. José Rizal's memorial in Airdrie, that commemorates the inspirational Filipino writer and national hero. From there, we warmed up at a local Airdrie doughnut shop, which was my particular favourite, operated by a Filipino family. We ended the day in an absolute driving blizzard in downtown Calgary, where we had the opportunity of taking the Mace to the consul general's office and we met with the Filipino community.

Zaldy Patron, it's been an absolute pleasure working with you and our growing friendship over the past number of years. On behalf of all members of the Assembly I want to wish you all the best in the next chapter of your career. While I look forward to meeting the new incoming consul general, they have incredibly large shoes to fill. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Hon. members, today we paid tribute to former member James Heron, and it's my pleasure to introduce the members of his family, who are joining us in the Speaker's gallery today. We will all know the great debt of gratitude which we owe to the family members of those who have served or our own family members who support us as we serve, so it's my pleasure to welcome Mr. Heron's wife of 55 years, Sharon. She is joined in the gallery by their son Rob and his wife, Carolynn, their children William and Holly Heron. Also in the gallery today is James' and Sharon's daughter Patricia Spink and her children: Patricia, Katelyn, and Isabella. Unfortunately, Mr. Heron's granddaughter Breanne Spink wasn't able to join us, but I know that she's joined us in spirit today. I invite you to all rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Lastly, hon. members, from me, we're joined by a number of new staff of the Legislative Assembly Office today that are participating in their orientation, which explores the legislative and budgetary committee processes, enabling each participant to apply their knowledge to their new role in the LAO. I invite you to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The hon. the Minister of Children and Family Services has a school group to introduce.

Mr. Turton: Yes. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly some fantastic kids from Stony Plain, from SML Christian Academy. Please rise and accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Are there any other schools to be introduced, perhaps on Member Hoffman's desk? [interjection]

It would be impossible for the Speaker to make such an error like using a name in the Assembly, entirely impossible.

Member Loyola: Mr. Speaker, through you to all the members of the Assembly, we welcome 66 students from Edmonton Christian West school, from the grade 6 class there. They're accompanied by their teacher Richard Lobb. I ask that they please rise and have the warm reception of the House.

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

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce my guests from Calgary: Asim Naveed and his wife, Ayisha Asim, and their kids: Farwa, Hadi, and Affan. Asim is a real estate professional, a community leader, and an excellent event organizer. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to introduce to you and through you Ramondeep Dhillon, Rajdeep Sran, Reshom Sidhu, and Amandeep Dhillon, business owners in Edmonton, India, and Punjab. I would ask them and their families to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Member Irwin: I'd like to introduce Allan Taylor, a constituent of Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. Allan is a single father of two autistic kids and reports that he's still on a waiting list for FSCD for both of them. Please rise, Allan, and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

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

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to the entire Assembly Candace Sales, who is an amazing organizer in central Alberta and volunteers for the Innisfail-Sylvan Lake United Conservative Party constituency association. I ask her to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

1:40

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

Mr. Boitchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you my guest and a good friend, Kara Westerlund, vice-president of Rural Municipalities of Alberta and councillor for Brazeau county, along with Kevin Wirsta, Rural Municipalities director and St. Paul county councillor. I ask them to please rise and receive the warm and traditional welcome of this House.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park has a statement to make.

Bill 18

Mr. Kasawski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I grew up in Sherwood Park watching reruns of the popular TV show *Happy Days*. Richie and Joanie Cunningham hanging out at Al's diner with their pals: Potsie, Chachi, Ralph, and the legendary character Arthur "The Fonz" Fonzarelli. *Happy Days* was a hit with audiences from the start, but by the fifth season the show had exhausted its core intent and was introducing new ideas that were inconsistent with or extreme exaggeration of its original purpose. The fifth season is when the people running the show had The Fonz jump over a live shark while on water skis, a spectacle that inspired the popular idiom: jumping the shark.

It must be difficult to lead a party that so brazenly talks about replacing their leader. Since getting elected, the Premier has prioritized the agenda of a radical activist group of her party membership over the needs and priorities of the majority of Albertans. It seems she will introduce whatever legislation she needs to pass in order to survive her party's leadership review later this year. They know and she knows that replacing their leader is a

tried and tested strategy for keeping Conservatives in power regardless of the consequences for Albertans.

With the introduction last week of Bill 18 by the Premier I wonder if she, like The Fonz, has just jumped the shark. Whatever the core intent and original purpose of the United Conservative Party was, now in its fifth season the Premier and the cabinet of the government have lost the plot and the thread that led them to run for the privilege of sitting in this Assembly.

Bill 18 is an attack on voters who choose their local municipal leaders. It's an attack on research, universities, and academic freedom. It's a threat to nonprofit organizations that receive funding from the federal government. It is a bill of the highest hypocrisy by an incredibly out-of-touch government. With Bill 18 the UCP have just jumped the shark, and these certainly are not happy days for Albertans.

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

Nurse Practitioner Program

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is working to increase access to primary care across the province to ensure all Albertans can access the care that they need when and where they need it. This commitment is achieved through initiatives such as modernizing Alberta's primary care system, or MAPS, and refocusing our health care system to better reflect patient-centred care. We are listening to Albertans, and we are acting on solutions that will support physicians to continue providing world-class health care.

Recently our government delivered a groundbreaking announcement that unveiled a new compensation model for our dedicated family physician and rural generalist health care teams. I'm thrilled that their essential contributions to our communities and unwavering support to their patients is effectively recognized through a new primary care focus compensation model.

Mr. Speaker, today our government made another announcement that brings us closer to our goal of increasing access to primary care for Albertans. We announced a new program that recognizes and focuses on nurse practitioners. Their unique scope of practice is paramount to our growing province, and we want to ensure that they are fully supported as they continue to provide comprehensive primary care services across Alberta.

This new \$15 million nurse practitioner primary care program will allow nurse practitioners to receive direct funding to practise comprehensive patient care autonomously in existing primary care clinics or operate their own practices. The program also provides base compensation pay to support practice-related business costs and overhead.

Additionally, through a \$2 million grant over the next three years the Nurse Practitioner Association of Alberta will help nurse practitioners throughout the application process, recruit nurse practitioners to participate in the program, and offer support as they plan to work independently in existing practices or set up their own clinic. Mr. Speaker, all current future nurse practitioners . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

National Day of Mourning

Ms Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sunday, April 28 is the National Day of Mourning. This is a day marked by over one hundred countries world-wide. It is a day to gather, to remember, to reflect, and to commemorate Albertans who have died from workplace-related illness or injury. It is also a day to think of those left behind. This year's theme

is safe work now, and that there is a call to action, a call to demand better from all levels of government.

Last year in Alberta there were 165 workers who never returned home: 165 Albertans who got up each day and simply went to work. They worked hard supporting themselves, their families, and their communities. But there were thousands more, Mr. Speaker, who suffered work-related illness or injury. We must remember them and honour them.

In a year which marks the 20th anniversary of the Westray Law coming into effect, a law which was named for the 26 workers in Plymouth, Nova Scotia, who were killed in the 1992 Westray mine explosion and disaster, this day, April 28, provides an opportunity for all of us to not only remember those who were lost, but it also provides a chance for all of us to recommit to supporting stronger regulations and better enforcement of existing laws, to make sure we are not content with only the minimum of standards, responses, resources, training, or prevention. We must do better. One single death is a death too many. Every worker deserves to go to work knowing they will come home safely.

On April 28, of course, we also think about those who were injured on the job. These incidents alter lives, often permanently. We know that so many injuries and occupational illnesses are preventable, and that's why safe workplaces are not a luxury, and they are not red tape. They are a fundamental right. We have a collective responsibility to do better for today's workers. We mourn for the dead, fight for the living.

Electric Power System

Mr. Long: Mr. Speaker, Albertans across the province are still being affected by the reckless electricity policies of the previous NDP government, but the NDP refuse to accept responsibility for what they caused. Electricity prices are rising as our power grid suffers rolling outages. Prior to the NDP's coal phase-out, electricity costs were about 3 and a half cents a kilowatt hour, but that was not acceptable for the NDP, so they rushed to shut down coal power in Alberta. The speed of this decision did not give industry enough time to backfill the system with reliable and sustainable baseload electricity like natural gas, for instance. This left the market, all of us who consume power, without enough baseload electricity, and renewable substitutes the NDP prefer are not the same. They only provide power some of the time.

The NDP's mismanagement of the electricity system led to an increase in prices for Albertans, around 32 cents a kilowatt hour this past summer. Despite paying more, the system is not as reliable as it was before. I know that some members opposite like to say that the Harper government was onboard with closing down coal. What they fail to mention is that Mr. Harper said that phase-out would be at the end of life for the coal plants. The NDP accelerated the early retirement of the six youngest coal units in Alberta.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker; this boondoggle is an NDP legacy project that has created a less reliable, more expensive electricity system for Albertans. The NDP scream and shout: you've had five years; just fix it. Well, that's exactly what we're doing. What we are not doing is rushing a coal phase-out and costing Albertans \$2 billion, like the NDP. We are not breaking contracts, defaming and suing companies, and burdening Albertans with tens of millions of dollars of legal costs, like the NDP, and we are not allowing renewables to build irresponsibly, leaving rural Albertans with astronomical transmission and distribution fees, like the NDP.

On this side of the House we are taking steps to improve Alberta's energy grid, lower costs for consumers, and ensure that

we don't have rolling blackouts on cold winter nights. On that side of the House they should just apologize.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Education Funding

Ms Hayter: Some of my fondest memories as a child are of my mother reading me the Laura Ingalls Wilder *Little House on the Prairie* series of children's books. It was a fantasyland for me. My mother even made me a prairie dress with a bonnet. Even then, I was glad much had changed from the days of one-room schoolhouses, freezing in the winter and sweltering in the summer, and children having to trek outside to use an outhouse. My school was modern, and it was comfortable.

After touring some schools in my beautiful riding of Calgary-Edgemont, I wondered if the children were starting to identify more with the experience of these children in the storybooks than with my own. One school had children crammed into a portable, freezing in the winter and boiling the rest of the time. Like the kids of the past, they have to trek across the field to use the washroom regardless of the weather. Even in the schools themselves classrooms are overcrowded, and teachers are often alone, teaching a wide range of learning levels. I saw staff rooms, theatre stages, learning commons, all converted into classrooms. Why is the government refusing to invest in our kids, in our province's next generation of our leaders, our builders, our doctors, and our teachers? The possibilities for them should be endless, but this government is holding them back, restricting their growth instead of helping them to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, it's heartbreaking that Alberta students are being funded at the lowest level in Canada. These children are our future, and they deserve so much better from their provincial government.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, the Official Opposition House Leader, has question 1.

Access to Information on Coal Development Policies

Ms Gray: "We will abide by the decision of the court . . . and we will make whatever documents available that the court requires": Mr. Speaker, that was what the Premier promised last week in this House, except now she's broken that promise. Her government is now appealing the decision to finally share the truth and the records about the UCP's plot to strip-mine the Rocky Mountains. To the Premier: the Privacy Commissioner, the courts, and even the Premier herself have said that the documents should be released, so why is your government still fighting so very hard to hide them from Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Trust me; we are more than happy to release the documents, because it's way more damning for the folks across the aisle than it is for our government, and I think people will see that that is the case. What had happened in the process of the FOIP request is that there were too many documents that were redacted. The court then said: release everything without going through and making sure that you're not releasing confidential information. We're doing a second pass through to make sure that there isn't private information, isn't anything that will move markets,

isn't anything that is cabinet advice, and when that is done, all the documents will be released as the court requires.

Ms Gray: When this government took office, they could hardly wait to scrap the Rocky Mountain protections the NDP government had brought in so that they could start their backroom scheming to mine the eastern slopes for coal. Albertans have spoken out. The UCP claimed they stopped, but they have not stopped secretly scheming on this issue. The UCP have been told over and over again. It is time to come clean. Mr. Speaker, I understand that these documents have been held for months at this point. Why will the government not release them? Why are they continuing to appeal court decisions to keep this information from Albertans?

The Speaker: Just prior to the Premier – and I'm happy to have the Minister of Justice or the Premier comment or otherwise – the question that you're asking is specifically about an appeal that is before the courts. There is the principle of sub judice, that the Assembly should adhere to. Of course, the Speaker never wants to be the barrier to the Premier or anyone answering a question, but I'll defer to the Minister of Justice or the Premier with respect to the process that's currently under way in the courts.

That's fine. The hon. the Premier, then.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Look, we went through the court process. They've identified a number of documents that we have to do a second look at to make sure that we are not violating any secrecy or cabinet secrecy or any of the oath of office that we took or anything that falls within the FOIP legislation. As we go through that process, we'll be releasing documents. A large number will be released in the next couple of days. Another group will be released in the next couple of weeks, and then the Minister of Justice is going to appeal a very small number of documents.

Ms Gray: The campaign against the UCP's plan to coal mine near sensitive headwaters has been opposed by rural and urban voters, country music stars, but now it's local ranchers who have been fighting for these documents, and the ranchers should be focused on calving and preparing for another dry season. Instead, they have been distracted by this government breaking their word, dragging them back through a legal fight, redacting random amounts of information, and taking extremely long times to do it. Will you do the right thing and release all the documents?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will release all the documents that the court requires. We have to go through and do our due diligence. But it's pretty rich that the members opposite are trying to pretend that they didn't start this whole process. We're continuing to clean up based on decisions they made in 2016 to invite coal companies in. It's right in their documents. It's right in letters from their former ministers. They should be the ones apologizing to the ranchers for starting this process. We are trying to find the right balance, and we're going to continue, going forward, to do that.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity is next.

Health Care User Fees

Dr. Metz: Albertans deserve high-quality, free health care always, but right now there are at least 40 clinics in Alberta charging membership fees for vital health services. This has to stop. Not only is it gatekeeping health care in a time of crisis from lower income Albertans; members-only medicine violates the Canada Health Act.

The Premier knows about these practices, so how much longer will Albertans have to wait for decisive action to be taken against all clinics charging membership fees? What are the timelines?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, we've answered this numerous times, but I'm happy to answer it again. With the Marda Loop clinic last year, they were actually going to charge membership fees to have people circumvent, jump the queue, for insured purposes. That is simply not allowed. We will not allow that. I can't be any more clear on that. The audit that we're doing is to ensure that there are no other clinics that are in fact doing that. We will make sure that membership fees are charged for uninsured products.

Dr. Metz: When some clinics charge membership fees, the whole system suffers as a result. Alberta lost over \$20 million in federal health transfers because of some essential health care services being privately delivered. If the UCP had put a stop to members-only medicine, perhaps that money would be flowing into Alberta right now, or perhaps it will affect next year. To the Premier: what are the impacts of this considerable loss of funding, and how much longer will Alberta's health care system need to be blocked from federal transfers because the Premier . . .

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify and correct the member opposite. I directed my department to investigate clinics that have a membership component to their services to confirm that they are not in violation of the rules and to verify that no clinics were charging for insured services.

Those health transfers: yes, in March 2023 there was \$13,781,000 that was clawed back, but, Mr. Speaker, as of this year, already we've received \$20,450,000 . . .

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

Dr. Metz: Albertans need family doctors, and they need these services free of charge. There was a time when this Premier looked Albertans in the eyes and promised she would never make them pay to see a doctor, but this government turned their back on Albertans because they wilfully allowed 40 clinics to charge Albertans to see a doctor. Have they been closed, or has this been rectified? Today the Premier has a chance to right these wrongs. Will she end, once and for all, members-only medicine in Alberta? Will this prevent further health transfers from being withheld?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, again the member opposite is misrepresenting what is actually going on.

Ms Gray: Point of order.

Member LaGrange: The department so far identified over 40 clinics in the province that charge a membership fee for uninsured services while offering insured services covered under the Alberta health care plan at no cost to patients, so they are following the rules. We are not saying that we are aware of any wrongdoing, but we are auditing to make sure that those clinics are in fact not charging for insured purposes, Mr. Speaker. We're going to ensure that Albertans have the health care they deserve.

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

Wildfire Evacuations in Peace River

Mr. Sabir: The risk of wildfire is high across the province, including the Peace River region. Yesterday 174 inmates were evacuated from

the Peace River Correctional Centre due to wildfire. Local reports are that flames were metres from the facility, and the RCMP had to make a plan. The RCMP got buses from the local school division to transfer inmates to detachments in surrounding communities until transfer to other remand centres could occur. To the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services: what standard practices and procedures are in place to evacuate correctional facilities in case of emergency?

Mr. Ellis: Well, Mr. Speaker, what the member is saying is simply not accurate. First of all, I want to thank the sheriffs, the sheriffs working in conjunction, of course, with our correctional facilities. It was a very dynamic situation that they were facing in the Peace River area, I can tell you right now. And, yes, they had to rely upon the RCMP in order to assist them, no different than if the situation occurred in Calgary, in Edmonton, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat. They utilized the supports of the local jurisdiction in order to get these prisoners into a safe area, and that's precisely what they did, Mr. Speaker. So thank you to everybody.

2:00

The Speaker: My apologies, hon. members, and for the benefit of *Hansard* a point of order was noted at 1:58.

Mr. Sabir: Inmates at remand centres are there to serve less than two years. The province is in charge of their safety and security, and they should not be left in harm's way till the last minute. Their families have rights, too, such as the right to know that their loved ones are not metres away from a fire with no plan in place. To the minister: when were inmates' families notified of the evacuation? Are they informed of their whereabouts, and are they able to contact them? If not, why not?

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if they understand this, but fires are very dynamic situations. They have winds, sometimes gusts, and they change direction. I can tell you that the decision was made by the incident commander to evacuate that area, and that's precisely what happened. We utilized the sheriffs; they do prisoner transport. We utilized the support of the local area police to make sure that we got everybody into a safe area. And now, when it's safe to do so, we're bringing people back in, and everybody is being taken care of.

Mr. Sabir: The government is pretending as if nothing happened. Asking a school division to transport inmates is unusual. Asking school bus drivers to transport inmates from a wildfire scenario is even more so. It is not clear whether communities had been notified that they would receive these inmates. To the same minister: why was this left to the last minute, when emergency response should have had a plan, and what steps will you take to ensure this never happens again?

Mr. Ellis: Again, Mr. Speaker, it is a little perplexing here to understand – first of all, I just want to thank the sheriffs. I want to thank the correctional officers. I want to thank the RCMP. I want to thank all first responders that helped to make sure that these prisoners got to a safe location. I can tell you that these are dynamic situations. You know what? Our first responders, our Alberta emergency management, our corrections facilities, our sheriffs, and our RCMP responded appropriately to make sure these prisoners were taken to a safe area, and they're going to be returned safely as well. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Bill 18

Mr. Ellingson: Mr. Speaker, the government claims that postsecondary institutions will receive more federal funding

with the passage of Bill 18. This bill is based on legislation from Quebec in the 1960s. I did some digging. It appears that in 1962 McGill University did see additional funds from the federal government after Quebec and Ottawa agreed that funding would be funnelled through the province, but this was because the province had previously requested that federal funding to postsecondaries be withheld. That is not the current case in Alberta. To the minister: what evidence is there to suggest federal funding will increase with the passage of Bill 18?

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, engagement with postsecondary institutes is a central component of implementing the Provincial Priorities Act. This week I sat down with the vice-president of research and innovation at the University of Calgary to discuss shared priorities. We agreed that Bill 18 can be used to leverage funding for the priorities of Albertans, including the Canadian net-zero energy solutions, or CANZES, great research being done at the University of Alberta. This includes research on hydrogen, CCUS, critical minerals, and more. This is an example of a provincial priority that Bill 18 will help identify.

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

Mr. Ellingson: Yes. Research is conducted in the areas of health, natural sciences, engineering, social sciences, and more, and this research has and continues to lead advancements in core sectors of Alberta's economy, including oil and gas and agriculture. Research conducted by the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary contributes over \$16 billion annually to Alberta's economy. Did the minister conduct a risk assessment to understand if Bill 18 ran the risk of losing key researchers, resulting in Alberta missing out on future economic opportunity, and would she table that if that does exist?

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that Bill 18 will result in us getting more of our fair share of these kinds of research grants. In my meeting with the U of A's VP of research and innovation we discussed the challenges facing our province. I think it's really important to talk about the amazing research being done. Achieving net-zero energy solutions requires a highly skilled workforce to implement new technologies, and that's exactly what our government has made investments in. We invested in over 3,000 apprenticeship seats across the province, which is going to support the work that is a result of this research, and we invested \$225 million in targeted enrolment expansion.

Mr. Ellingson: The University of Calgary, SAIT, and Mount Royal University each have aerospace programs key to landing the De Havilland investment, and Innovate Calgary received federal funding but no provincial funding to launch the Aerospace Innovation Hub, focused on aerospace research and start-up development. Will the minister stand today and state categorically that there is absolutely no risk to federal funding to our postsecondaries for aerospace research and start-ups, and more, if that is the case, will she acknowledge that putting any federal research funding at risk is a risk to our economy?

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, again, Bill 18 is going to give us the opportunity to actually uncover more information about the research done at our postsecondaries. The more we know, the more we can identify opportunities to partner with the postsecondaries. Again, there is tremendous research being done, and we will sit down with the postsecondaries to understand what they require, what their priorities are, and find ways to make sure that we're investing appropriately to make sure we're meeting that workforce development challenge that we're facing today.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Beddington is next.

School Construction in Calgary

Ms Chapman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One in four CBE schools is operating at 100 per cent utilization or higher. That means that 1 in 4 CBE schools have lost their library or their art room or their music room or their staff room. Those spaces have been converted to classrooms, and overflowing classrooms are not the Alberta advantage this government seems to think they are. Over 7,000 new students chose CBE this year. Why is the minister starving this system of resources?

Mr. Nicolaides: Mr. Speaker, we're not doing that at all. We are moving forward with a number of construction projects in all corners of the province. It's imperative that we continue to build schools in our growing communities, and we'll be doing precisely that. With respect to the Calgary metropolitan region we have 18 projects in the pipeline. Collectively, these projects will add about 16,000 spaces to help accommodate some of the incredible growth that we're seeing. Of course, I know the members opposite, when they were in government, didn't have to contend with growth because they were driving people out of the province.

Ms Chapman: CBE requested six new schools to provide 5,700 student spaces and only received construction funding for one new school, 600 student spaces. Only 12 modular classrooms were approved when 68 were requested, and we have no guarantees those 12 will arrive by September. Since this minister isn't building the schools that are needed for Alberta's largest school board, what is his plan for accommodating students? In case this government hasn't realized, students can't learn in a design drawing.

Mr. Nicolaides: As it relates to the Calgary board of education, our plan is to move a number of projects forward specifically for that school division. In Budget '24 we provided construction funding for a new K to 4 school in Evanston. In addition, we've provided additional design funding for a new high school in Cornerstone, for an elementary school in Redstone, and for the modernization of the Annie Gale school and, as well, planning funding to ensure the development of a new junior high school in Saddle Ridge. These projects that I've just mentioned are all priority projects for the Calgary board of education, and we are moving them forward.

Ms Chapman: In September last year CBE had 25 schools in overflow; by March they were at 33 schools in overflow. Enrolment in CBE has grown by over 15,000 students over the last three years. Even if every single school on CBE's three-year capital request is built – not just planned; built – CBE's system utilization will still be at 97 per cent in just four years. What is this minister's plan to provide immediate classroom space for the thousands of Calgary families who are choosing public education?

Mr. Nicolaides: Mr. Speaker, our plan, very simply, is to move forward quickly on building additional schools in growing communities across the province. Budget '24 moves 19 projects to full construction. It's the highest level in over the last seven years. I know the members opposite are quite frustrated. They didn't have to experience these challenges. When they were in government, they drove investment out of the province. They told people to move to B.C. They drove people away from Alberta. Under our government people are flocking here once again, and we'll get them the schools they need.

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

2:10 Agriprocessing Investment Tax Credit

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week Alberta's government announced that Imperial Oil has qualified for Alberta's agriprocessing investment tax credit program by building Canada's largest renewable diesel facility at its Strathcona refinery. This tax credit program is designed to attract large-scale investment in value-added manufacturing, including cutting-edge bioprocessing projects. Can the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation please tell us how the government of Alberta's support for Imperial's facility will benefit Albertans, our producers, and our province?

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

Mr. Sigurdson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for this great question. This truly is a cutting-edge project. When production begins next year, Imperial's new facility will utilize blue hydrogen to convert biofeedstocks like Alberta canola into renewable diesel, producing 20,000 barrels per day with 75 per cent of the feedstock coming from right here in Alberta. This project is creating about 600 local construction jobs and hundreds more through investments by business partners. This facility is the first of its kind in Alberta, the largest in the country, and proves that Alberta is a global leader in ag and . . .

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

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for that answer. Given that the agriprocessing tax credit was released last spring with a goal of attracting large-scale investment to the province and given that the program builds on other competitive tax advantages that encourage corporations like Imperial to invest in our province, creating jobs and making an economic impact, can the same minister give Albertans an update on how successful the program has been?

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

Mr. Sigurdson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the government launched our agriprocessing investment tax credit, we've already received 11 applications. So far we've announced two qualifying companies, The Little Potato Company and Imperial, with more to come soon. The tax credit is ensuring that we maintain a competitive edge over other jurisdictions, and we continue to attract investment through that. The bottom line is that we're driving innovation and growth in the province's agrifood processing and bioprocessing industries, growing our economy, creating jobs, and providing new markets for Albertans here.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again to the minister for that answer. Given that Alberta is known as a global leader of innovation for value-added products in the agricultural sector and given that the opportunities in our agriprocessing industries are endless, can the same minister tell the House how companies can benefit from participating in this program?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sigurdson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is the preferred destination for large-scale agriprocessing investments. We have the lowest corporate tax rate in Canada at 8 per cent, and this program is building on Alberta's economic advantage, offering a 12 per cent credit on capital investments of \$10 million or more. Our investment team here in Alberta also helps firms in setting up

operations, providing connections to supply chain partners and programs, and providing regulatory guidance. If you're planning on building or expanding, I would say the time is now, and I encourage you to go to alberta.ca to find out more.

Recovery Centre for LGBTQ2S-plus Albertans

Member Eremenko: A few months ago I and several of my NDP colleagues attended an event to raise money for Stonewall Recovery. When it reaches its campaign target, Mr. Speaker, Stonewall will be the first addiction treatment centre in Canada dedicated to serving members of the 2SLGBTQIA-plus community. I was stunned to learn that nowhere in Canada does a place like Stonewall exist, so what better place for the first to be built than here in Alberta? My question is to the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction. Will he support Stonewall Recovery with the supports it needs to achieve their goal?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, every single Albertan deserves an opportunity at recovery, no matter who they are, where they come from, and we are going to continue to support all recovery programs that take people out of the deadly disease of addiction and bring them into recovery. We have an accreditation process. If Stonewall is a part of that, we're happy to fund any bed that meets that criteria.

Member Eremenko: Given that there are significantly better outcomes when there is a dedicated space for 2SLGBTQIA-plus folks and given that there is a real and documented lack of physical and psychological safety for members of this community in nonspecialized facilities and given that a 2020 National Institute on Drug Abuse report shows that the rate of substance use disorders of alcohol, opioids, and marijuana among LGBTQ individuals is twice that of the overall population, why do sexual minority groups get zero mention in the Alberta recovery model, any recent annual report by this ministry, and/or the 2024-25 business plan?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, no matter who you are, we want to make sure you get access to supports, so the support that we put through our business plan that we fund beds is for every Albertan. There are numerous beds and locations across the province for access to people of every community. We fund Simon House at over \$2 million. That's specifically treatment for people from different communities. We know that we need to be an inclusive and open place when it comes to treatment, so we will continue to support, no matter who you are or where you come from, the path to recovery. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Member Eremenko: Given that Stonewall Recovery has been around for more than two years and given that the government will pay in excess of \$500 million in capital output to build 11 of their new recovery communities with an operating budget of \$3 million or more each year for each community and given that this government has proclaimed itself to be the national – nay, international – leader in the delivery of recovery-oriented systems of care, Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is this: when will Alberta open Canada's first 2SLGBTQIA-plus treatment centre? If not now, then when? If not here, then where? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, the 11 recovery communities we're building do not belong to this government in any important sense. They belong to Albertans and the families and those individuals

who struggle with addiction. Without access to those spaces, there would be Albertans that would die otherwise because of their addiction. We're building in partnership with First Nations, making sure it's culturally appropriate. We're building in partnership with communities to make sure no matter who you are or where you come from, if you're somebody from that community that needs access, these 11 recovery communities belong to you as well as every other Albertan who is struggling. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Teachers' Pensions

Member Irwin: I'm a proud social studies teacher, and I think it's time for a quick history lesson on this UCP government's attacks on teachers and their pensions. In 2019, with no mandate and no consultation, the UCP forced over 80,000 current and retired teachers to move their pensions from the highly regarded Alberta teachers' retirement fund to AIMCo. Despite a lot of push-back from Albertans, the UCP stormed ahead, and now, in 2024, teachers are experiencing exactly what they feared. AIMCo is dropping the ball and falling short of its benchmarks. Alberta teachers deserve so much better. What does the Premier have to say to them?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further than the truth. As I already answered this week, it is true that AIMCo was beneath their benchmark. They were at 6.9 per cent over the past year. The benchmark was 8.7 for the total fund return. The challenge is with the commercial real estate portion of the portfolio. Challenges are happening across the country. I would point to the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, that had a 1.9 per cent return in 2023. AIMCo is doing a good job. They have seen their contribution rates decrease since AIMCo took over.

Member Irwin: As teachers watched their well-earned pension funds with worry, the UCP doubled down on their support of AIMCo's mismanagement, with the former MLA for Grande Prairie-Wapiti just last year sharing his support for AIMCo and saying that we were fearmongering, and the MLA for Taber-Warner just last month shared that he was inundated by calls from teachers and constituents who were, quote, very, very angry and upset about his government's attacks on their pensions. Will anyone on that side of the House stand up and apologize to hard-working Alberta teachers for putting their retirement security at risk?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, the opposition should apologize for the information that they're spewing in this House. Absolutely ridiculous. Alberta's teachers, that we care about greatly, have fully defined benefit pensions. They're not at risk. They're fully funded. I don't know why we would want to put down and cause Albertans concern over AIMCo generally. We should all want them to do better. They're accountable to us in this Chamber. They're accountable to me. We strive to be better. They're doing a good job.

Member Irwin: Given that, like all Albertans, teachers are dealing with inflation, out-of-control utility and food costs, skyrocketing mortgages and rents, and now not only do they have to stress about their teachers' pensions, they're also incredibly worried about the UCP's plans to take Alberta out of the Canada pension plan. The data shows that CPP has consistently earned better returns than AIMCo, so why would the UCP even go down this risky path? They need to scrap their plan and listen to the many Albertans who are saying loudly to the UCP: hands off our CPP. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

2:20

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, the theatre in here is pretty impressive. I would just say that we're committed to having an idea out in the public sphere, that came to us from the Fair Deal Panel, I would remind this House, that we should go forward and see if there's a benefit for all Albertans . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Mr. Horner: . . . to see if this idea could benefit all Albertans, working Albertans and those that are currently receiving CPP. That's why we brought forward the Alberta Pension Protection Act in the fall, to ensure that all Albertans knew that any government, ours or a future government, would need a referendum to move forward with the idea.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Skilled Trades Labour Supply

Mrs. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Manufacturing is an important part of Alberta's economy and is heavily dependent on machinists and computer numerical controllers, or CNC operators. They're essential to all of Alberta's rural primary-sector industries, including agriculture, forestry, mining, and oil and gas. Given that Alberta's budget allocates \$100 million for apprenticeship programs to fill this need, to the Minister of Advanced Education: how many machinist programs do we have in Alberta, and how many students are we graduating every year?

Mrs. Sawhney: Thank you to the hon. member for the great question. Under the Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act machinist is a designated trade with apprenticeship programs currently offered at SAIT and NAIT. In 2023 there were 254 apprentices enrolled in machinist classroom instruction, and 57 graduates were issued machinist journeyman certificates, an increase of 21 per cent from 2022.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mrs. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the shortage of machinists is really hitting home in local constituencies across rural Alberta like Lacombe-Ponoka and given that the manufacturer near Clive, Alberta, Rodono Industries, has had an opening for a machinist position for over six months and given that machinist programs are currently being taught out of Calgary and Edmonton when such programs could easily be expanded to smaller cities located closer to the employers they serve, to the same minister: is the government moving to expand machinist certification to more rural postsecondary institutions?

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, we recognize that students pursuing education often face unique challenges. That's why we're investing an additional \$24 million per year over three years to create more apprenticeship seats at postsecondary institutions across the province, including those located in rural communities, helping more students learn closer to home. Advanced Education works closely with all of our partners to forecast demands within different regions of Alberta, and we will continue to implement the processes we have in place for institutions that wish to introduce new apprenticeship programming.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mrs. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and through you to the minister. Given that one such business currently is requiring a

machinist and has been waiting six months already yet received 50 applications for a welding position in one week and given that machinist positions are not the only ones in demand in the trades industry and given that the Business Council of Alberta reports that over the past five years the growth in job postings in the trades is far outpacing our record population growth, to the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Trade: how are we meeting the growing need for machinists in our trades industry?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Trade.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the hon. member for the question. As the Minister of Advanced Education just highlighted, we're making record investments into seats in the skilled trades, and we're going to do more than that. We're going to esteem the trades in the K to 12 system. We're going to launch a national advertising campaign to attract even more people to our province so that there are more journeymen for more apprentices to meet the growing demand for jobs in the trades.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Accessibility Initiatives

Ms Renaud: In the spring we wear ribbons and buttons to mark brain injury, epilepsy, autism, and cerebral palsy awareness months. In the fall we wear T-shirts to highlight national accessibility, disability employment, Down syndrome, and spinal cord awareness months. Disabled Albertans and their allies are not looking for awareness; they're looking for action. Alberta does not have accessibility legislation, so we have not begun our journey to barrier free. When will this government make accessibility legislation a priority?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, helping Albertans who face disabilities is a top priority for this government. That's why we invest almost \$3 billion across all of our disability programs a year through my department. We're going to continue to do that important work. In regard to disability legislation, as I told the hon. member during estimates, I have instructed the department to begin a consultation process of what legislation may look like. We'll go out and have a conversation across the province, and then we'll come back and we'll make some determinations going forward, and I do anticipate that we'll see legislation then come forward inside this House once we've done that work.

Ms Renaud: Given that accessibility legislation is the framework we need to be able to identify, remove, and prevent barriers, it's alarming that the only mention was buried in a disability advocate business plan. We saw nothing in the recent budget, nothing in the minister's annual report, no goals, no plans, no investment. Given that accessibility legislation applies to the built environment, information and communication technology, procurement, design, and the delivery of programs as well as transportation, would the minister please share more detailed plans that this government has for creating and introducing accessibility legislation?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said, we'll be working with those who face disabilities across our province, the industry that works with them. Recently the Premier and I met with Mr. Rick Hansen, for example, to have a conversation about what accessibility legislation could look like in our province. Again, I've instructed the department to begin a broad consultation process to make sure that we get that right. We will see what comes back. I hope that the hon. member participates in that process. We'll take that information, and then we'll have more to say to the House once we receive it.

Ms Renaud: I would love to participate.

Given that the government's own advice-giving bodies, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, the disability advocate, have been clear for years that provincial accessibility legislation is needed and given that without this legislation and framework we as a province will continue to make investments into things like housing, education, even apprenticeship opportunities without any plans for people with disabilities or metrics to know if we're actually removing any barriers, to the minister: without accessibility legislation right now, how is it that you report on the progress of creating equity for disabled Albertans?

Mr. Nixon: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, we have many other programs already where we work with the disabled across our province, spending almost \$3 billion, actually, of Alberta's taxpayer money on this important issue through my department each and every year. We will continue to do that. We also, of course, work with the disability advocate. I know I have made sure that the disability advocate has made themselves available to that member, for example, to be able to talk about some of the work that we're doing. We are working on accessibility legislation. We are starting with consultation to make sure that we get it right. I will see what comes back. I will take that advice, and I will provide some advice to cabinet once it comes.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South has risen.

Recall and Citizen Initiative Legislation

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some do not want the mayor of Calgary. There was a petition to remove her, but Alberta's Recall Act has a very bad loophole. The number of signatures required under this law was over half a million Calgarians. That is silly. That is more than the total number of Calgarians who voted in the whole election. To the minister: what will be done to fix this very bad loophole?

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for his advocacy on this matter. As publicly elected officials we are absolutely accountable to Albertans, and we know that on this side of the House. We passed the Recall Act to ensure that Albertans could hold public officials accountable, not just during elections but at any time throughout the course of the four years between when they vote. Albertans have told us time and time again that they want a greater say in what is happening and not just once during the polls every four years. I stand before this Assembly to once again assure Albertans that we are listening, and we will look into this along with the Municipal Affairs minister.

Mr. Stephan: Given that the Citizen Initiative Act also has a very bad loophole, given that it is good to listen to Albertans for a new law or to amend an existing law – we want that in Alberta – given that this referendum law has silly thresholds and timelines that make it virtually impossible to ever have a vote on a citizen's initiative, to the minister: what will be done to fix this very bad loophole in this other law?

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, Alberta's government recognizes the need to improve the Citizen Initiative Act to make sure that Albertans all across this province have a meaningful and effective platform to voice their concerns. The Citizen Initiative Act is just one way that Albertans can participate in the legislative process, and we want to ensure that the act is achieving what it is intended to do. We're currently reviewing legislation and exploring options

to streamline the process and increase the effectiveness of the Citizen Initiative Act to better serve all Albertans.

Mr. Stephan: Given that Albertans do not like laws that pretend to provide checks and balances and then have loopholes which result in the law being a pretend law, given that this makes Albertans cynical – it hurts trust – given that we want checks and balances. Accountability is very good, Mr. Speaker; it builds trust. To the minister: how will fixing recall and referendum loopholes build trust in checks and balances?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. As the member rightly noted, things like the Emergencies Act, for example, are just one example of how the NDP-Liberal coalition continues to support unconstitutional practices. There are many instances of intrusion into our provincial jurisdiction . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. The hon. minister is entitled to answer the question, and I should be able to hear it.

Mr. Amery: . . . where this ministry has been working hard to push against Ottawa and push them back, and we've indeed been winning left, right, and centre. While the bosses of the NDP continue to play fast and loose with the Constitution, on this side of the House we stand for and with Albertans.

Electric Power Prices

Member Loyola: After five years of UCP government their legacy is clear: brownouts, blackouts, grid alerts, and the highest electricity bills in the country. Under the Minister of Affordability and Utilities Albertans are still paying more than double what they were under the NDP government in 2018. Will the minister admit that his government's partisan rhetoric has done nothing but mean that Albertans are still paying more to turn on the lights, and the government can't even keep the lights on?

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

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're doing the work that the NDP failed to do when they got off coal. They didn't design a market that could handle renewables, and that's why we have the brownouts and the problems that we have today. We're doing the most transformational work within our electricity grid that's been seen in over 25 years. We're doing the work. We start inquiries; we're working with all of our stakeholders. We are getting endorsements from the Rural Municipalities association, the Alberta Municipalities association, and all stakeholders because of the work that we're doing to get it right.

Member Loyola: Given that this government is full of excuses when it comes to its failures that resulted in unaffordability, brownouts, blackouts, and grid alerts, given that 40,000 Albertans experienced a blackout on one of the lowest demand days of the year, with the temperature in the 20s, and given that one of those excuses came from the Premier, who claimed that the sun doesn't shine when it's cold, will the minister apologize to the 40,000 Albertans his government left in the dark? People can't light their houses with UCP excuses.

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

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're going to fix what the NDP broke. They put in a system that made it as volatile as the weather, so when the wind didn't show up on that day – and it didn't – we were 900 megawatts short. That's what caused those brownouts. We're thankful that we have dispatchable baseload power that came online and got people back to their normal course of work. We are working to fix the market. We are working to fix supply. We are fixing all the mess that the NDP left and Albertans are still paying for. Over \$2 billion, the cost of the NDP: we're paying that \$100 million a year and more.

Member Loyola: Given that the UCP refused to act on these unaffordable bills for years, with the minister of service Alberta proclaiming that he wanted to do nothing about climbing utility bills and given any change comes way too late for Albertans who, after years of paying for the consequences of UCP mismanagement, are falling further behind and given that many have told us about how they gave up meals or medication just to be able to pay to heat and light their homes, will the minister apologize to these Albertans for the consequences that half a decade of UCP policy had and commit to doing better?

Mr. Neudorf: I think every Albertan would agree with me that we're sorry that the NDP ever won back in 2015. They created a horrible mess. We are still paying for that, but we are correcting the system now. We're very thankful that we have more dispatchable natural gas generation coming on this year. We will be back to a surplus situation. That is why prices are down below 10 cents a kilowatt hour, but that's not only where we're stopping. We are correcting local access fees. We are correcting the RRO. We are correcting our market, and we are going to make the system better, more reliable, and more affordable for all Albertans.

Measles Vaccine Availability

Member Boparai: Mr. Speaker, AHS has reported that there is now at least one case of measles identified in the province as a result of travel. This government should be ensuring that access to vaccinations is easy, accessible, and well advertised and that Albertans are reassured from everyone in this government that vaccines are safe. Public health clinics take too long, and pharmacies can only distribute private supplies, which are often limited in number, and clients have to pay for them. With the current outbreak, what is the minister doing to get Albertans the vaccines they need to protect themselves and their children?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health has the call.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a very important question that's been asked. In fact, we do know that there is one child that has measles currently, who was exposed and contracted it as a result of international travel outside of the country. Through public health AHS is making sure that if anyone has been exposed, they are able to in fact have access to the care that they need. We are making sure that Albertans have access to vaccines . . .

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

Member Boparai: Given that many Albertans cannot book an appointment to get vaccinated in a timely manner and given that the government interfered in public health's job to inform Albertans and ordered our public health experts to remove scientifically sound information about safe and effective vaccines from public health campaigns and given that vaccines are the most proactive way to prevent long-term, costly health care nightmares, what is the

minister doing to properly react to this and any other outbreaks that require vaccines?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, nothing could be further from the truth because, in fact, we are getting the information out to the public as well as to parents to inform them, particularly if they are travelling, to make sure that the immunization for their children is up to date. Parents and children who have not yet received the MMR vaccine should do so. They can go to their physician, they can go to a clinic, they can also go to a pharmacy. Again, we've also increased the amount of effort that's going into this through a measles task force.

Member Boparai: Given that this government will prioritize anything over giving Albertans the information that they need and deserve concerning their health, vaccinations, and its benefits and given that the Premier has been skeptical about certain life-saving vaccinations in the past, will this government admit that their scare tactics around vaccines have hurt Albertans instead of doing their job to promote vaccines that save lives, especially of children?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, again, nothing could be more further from the truth. In fact, as a result of this case, an immunization clinic, an additional one, has been stood up in Edmonton to provide the MMR vaccine, that anyone can access. That information on immunization continues to be available. We have spent more this year than we have previously on making sure that information gets out to the public, including making sure that we have caught up students through our school programs. We continue to prioritize this with Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

CERAWeek Energy Conference

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just last month the hon. Premier and the Minister of Energy and Minerals had the incredible opportunity of visiting Houston, Texas, in order to attend the renowned CERAWeek energy conference. While there, they met with international energy leaders and promoted Alberta's key role in ensuring North American energy security. Could the Minister of Energy and Minerals please tell the House how we are planning to leverage Alberta's position as an international energy powerhouse to enrich the strong partnerships we have with the energy industry in Texas?

Mr. Jean: Well, it's true, Mr. Speaker, we did travel down to the United States to Houston, Texas, had a great opportunity to meet world leaders, to meet people right across the entire spectrum of oil and gas, and it's exciting because we have so many opportunities. We know that North American energy security is more important than ever before. We know that Alberta has the natural resources to share with the world to solve the issues of energy security and energy poverty that are happening around the world. Together with partnerships in Texas and other jurisdictions around the world, we can provide our energy at low cost – affordable – and make sure we create thousands upon thousands of jobs for . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta's government is working with national and international partners to bolster our energy interests globally and further given that this trip to Texas brought together both business leaders and government officials who work with the energy sector to advance energy security,

could the Minister of Energy and Minerals please outline some of the key takeaways from his trip to Texas, one of our strongest energy trade partners, which could benefit everyday Albertans?

2:40

Mr. Jean: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that we're in a very good, competitive position to offer our energy to the United States, just being next door and having all those opportunities to have pipelines going back and forth. We know that transitional fuels like LNG can actually solve the world's problems. We can move away from coal. We can move away from what the NDP in Alberta and B.C. and nationally like to think of as the solution. That's coal, by the way. We can move to LNG, and we can make a better life for people, and we can do so in a more environmentally conscious way.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mr. Dyck: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Alberta government's involvement with CERAWeek showcased our province's massive potential in the global energy sector, attracting international partnerships and driving interest to the great province of Alberta and further given that the continued advancement of Alberta's energy security was a top priority for this visit, could the Minister of Energy and Minerals please outline how this trip helped our government's efforts to support and expand Alberta's vibrant energy economy?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, we do recognize the reality of energy and what's happening in the world. We know that we can do better with a diverse energy mix that includes oil, gas, carbon capture, utilization, and storage, and even SMRs. We have a Premier and a government that is on the cusp of greatness in the world compared to other jurisdictions. We are a leader in energy, and we can provide our energy to the world and remove the issues of energy poverty from those people that are so disadvantaged. We can do it if we work together with other jurisdictions.

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.

Members' Statements

(continued)

CKUA Radio

Member Ceci: CKUA isn't just another radio station. It's an indispensable lifeline, particularly for rural Albertans who make up a significant one-third of its dedicated audience. It's important to acknowledge that keeping CKUA operational isn't cheap. It demands substantial funding. Yet what does this government offer? A mere \$57,000 a year. While they may boast about contributions made over a decade ago by a different political party, they conveniently ignore the stark reality: CKUA's future is at stake. They'd rather play politics, jeopardizing the very essence of Alberta's cultural landscape, especially for rural Albertans who, just like their urban counterparts, rely on CKUA for more than just entertainment. It's their connection to the wider world. Its presence reverberates throughout Alberta and isn't just background noise but a trusted companion in people's daily lives. Listeners know the hosts by name and voice, laughing at the inside jokes, celebrating those who get new opportunities, mourning the loss when someone passes away. Bill, John, Monica, David: we miss you.

Many people grew up listening to CKUA as children, tuning in until they had kids of their own, who are also being raised on local Alberta talent and music through CKUA. It builds a community

right across the province. One listener told me that CKUA was always on throughout her childhood, keeping her company as she moved out of the parents' house, even connecting her to home once she moved out of the province, and when she couldn't stop missing our beloved Alberta, *Wide Cut Country's* Allison Brock made her cry and laugh and feel just a little less homesick. We simply cannot afford to sit idly by while CKUA's future hangs in the balance. It's time for this government to step up and ensure CKUA remains a steadfast pillar in our community and cultural identity.

Thank you.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Bill 20

Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024

Mr. Schow: Indeed, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for recognizing me as I rise on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I request leave to introduce Bill 20, the Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024.

This legislation seeks to modify two key pieces of legislation for Alberta municipalities, the Municipal Government Act and the Local Authorities Election Act. In addition to making some changes that will help to have more homes built in Alberta, these amendments increase the transparency and accountability of both local governments and local elections. They will also modify provincial oversight of municipalities to strengthen cabinet's ability, if absolutely necessary, to address situations where municipal decisions are not aligning with the public interest. Finally, there are also several administrative amendments that eliminate redundancies and clarify the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities are key partners in growing Alberta. We believe these changes will improve how municipalities operate, how elections are run, and how we can build Alberta together.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I hereby move first reading of Bill 20, the Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024.

[Motion carried; Bill 20 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has a tabling or two.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In debate yesterday I mentioned information contained in a Town and Country article chronicling Danny Hooper, who set an example of Alberta business integrity by refusing to seek bankruptcy, opting instead to pay back his creditors in whole, and I invited Greg Christenson to follow Danny's proud example of entrepreneurship, something we expect in Alberta.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I table five copies of an op-ed this morning in the *Edmonton Journal*. It was by Fionnuala Braun, and it is titled Alberta's Bill 18 Spells the End of Academic Freedom.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with three tablings today. I rise to table the five requisite copies of the Milch cow cartoon from December 15, 1915, showcasing eastern Canada's history of driving their ambition over Albertans and our industry, as mentioned in my Bill 18 speech yesterday.

Second is a *National Post* article showcasing that half of Canadians have negative thoughts and feelings on the federal budget.

Third is a *Prairie Post* article on empowering Alberta's youth with dual-credit opportunities, targeting high school students into the trades.

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

Dr. Metz: Thank you. I rise today with three tablings. I have five copies showing that the Marda Loop clinic is still charging patients for insured services.

Along with that, I have five copies of the CPSA standard of practice for longitudinal care and five copies of the Alberta health care insurance plan fee code for one of the items that is listed as an uninsured service but is not.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that brings us to points of order, and at 1:58 the Official Opposition House Leader rose on a point of order.

Point of Order

Parliamentary Language

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At approximately that time the MLA for Calgary-Varsity was in question period asking the Minister of Health about the fact that there are at least 40 clinics in Alberta charging membership fees for vital health services. Alberta has lost over \$20 million in federal health transfers because of this members-only medicine. In response, the Minister of Health said – and I believe my quote is accurate, but I do not have the benefit of the Blues – that “the member opposite is misrepresenting.” That is absolutely not the case. Not only is that not true; it is, in fact, unparliamentary to make an accusation of that nature under 23(h), (i), and (j) but also in previous rulings of this House, including on December 13, 2022. I believe this is a point of order, and I would ask that the Minister of Health apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and oppose this. I do not agree that this is a point of order. I think that this is a matter of debate. I was listening quite intently to the question being posed by the Member for Calgary-Varsity, and my unofficial records say that the member said the following: “This government turned their back on Albertans . . . they wilfully allowed 40 clinics to charge Albertans to see a doctor.” Now, that Member for Calgary-Varsity is, in fact, a physician, as I understand it. I'd be curious to know: in the tablings on the Marda Loop clinic or any other clinics that are claimed to be the 40 that are wilfully being allowed, is there any record of the Minister of Health herself going into those clinics and allowing them to charge patients? Are there records of that? I don't believe so.

2:50

To suggest that the minister or the government is wilfully allowing this to happen is completely ridiculous. The member, being a doctor, knows full well that the minister doesn't go into clinics and wilfully allow that. There are many pieces and people in between the minister and physicians themselves, who are charging the government as they see patients and do a fantastic job, I might add, serving Albertans, and I suspect that the Member for Calgary-Varsity was doing a great job herself as a physician, and I appreciate her time as a practising doctor.

But, Mr. Speaker, this comment, to suggest that we are wilfully allowing 40 clinics to charge Albertans to see a doctor, is ridiculous. The minister's comment in response was, again unofficially: “again the member opposite is misrepresenting what is . . . going on.” That

is the full quote. The Opposition House Leader neglected to mention that last bit: what is going on.

This is clearly a matter of debate. There have been many instances where the opposition have said that the Premier is attacking postsecondary institutions. That was ruled not a point of order. That would be clearly misrepresenting what is going on. Mr. Speaker, I don't see how this is a point of order. The minister saying that the member is lying: that's a point of order. But this is not, and I'd ask you to rule in that way.

The Speaker: Are there others wishing to add any submissions to the point of order?

If not, I am prepared to rule, and I do have the benefit of the Blues. Hon. members, prior to reading the Blues, I might just suggest or let the members know that, quite rightly, as the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods has identified, there has been an occasion where such a statement or a similar statement has been ruled a point of order, but I also have a number of, at least two, other occasions where it hasn't been ruled a point of order. I think that there is some level of discretion with respect to whether or not this is, in fact, a point of order.

I think the Government House Leader makes a reasonable submission when he identifies that the minister is talking more broadly about misrepresenting what's going on. It's not as though she said that the hon. member is misrepresenting the facts or as if she has indicated a definitive statement but more a broad suggestion around what may or may not be happening. Of course, that ventures into the language of debate.

What I would say to the hon. minister, as she did earlier in the week when she apologized and withdrew: when we make these sorts of statements directed specifically at members, it can from time to time create disorder. On this occasion I provide a caution to the hon. minister. This is not a point of order. The matter is dealt with and concluded.

Prior to me calling Orders of the Day, I would just encourage all members to have a very safe and productive constituency week. Ensure that you take some time with people that love you or people that you love. As we come back in what will be a significant period of time as we head to the end of session, it's important that all members take care of themselves, have some relaxation, and be refreshed as we return to the Assembly to do the people's business in a way that they can all be proud of.

Hon. members, we are at Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 17

Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act

[Adjourned debate April 18: Mrs. Petrovic]

The Speaker: The hon. member has 11 minutes remaining should she choose to use it.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Calgary-Acadia.

Member Batten: Thank you. I rise today in opposition to Bill 17, the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act. One in 5 Albertans dies from opioid use every day in Alberta. Mr. Speaker, 1 in 5. To put that into perspective for us, if this Chamber were representative, of the 87 members, that would equate to more than 17 of us dying every . . . [interjection] Sorry. Five people a day. Yeah; not 20 per cent. These are horrific realities for so many Albertans, so absolutely

we need to do something different, because what we are doing is simply not enough.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

But we also need to provide what is needed and not just provide something. If you were bleeding and I handed you a pen, well, not only is that not going to help you, but you'll probably be a little annoyed with me. We need to meet folks where they are and not where we hope they would be.

I'd like to share a quote from one of my constituents in Calgary-Acadia, who's really worried about their fellow Albertans and this proposed path moving forward with the UCP. "They are either not making [it] to the point where they are ready to begin treatment or they don't make it long enough for treatment to be[come] available." Of course, Madam Speaker, this quote is referring to folks who use drugs, to fellow Albertans who we as members of this House are here to support.

This is the reality, and this is what is happening. I'm not a physician, but I have personally provided care for patients detoxing from a number of different substances. Some of these patients were adults, but most of them were babies, babies who were exposed intrauterinely. These babies, barely hours old, were going through withdrawal. Some showed withdrawal very quickly while others took a little bit more time. What do we do for these babies? Well, we follow best practice, of course. We provide the interventions, which are evidence based and have the best interests of that baby in mind.

Most times, Madam Speaker, we would wean the babies from whatever substance they might have been exposed to. Now, not all substances are offered in the NICU. Then we use the evidence-based interventions and provide them what is needed. For instance, we might provide a blood pressure medication to help with nicotine withdrawal because that is what the evidence tells us to do. We might then add in skin to skin with a parent because evidence also shows that will help both mom or dad and baby.

Now, if we didn't follow the current evidence, we might have completely unintentionally harmed these children, caused pain and suffering, more so than they were already experiencing, simply because we did not do our due diligence and we did not follow evidence as presented from our peers.

Bill 17 provides a ridiculous amount of power to the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction. The Minister of Mental Health and Addiction has clearly stated a number of times here in this House that there are only two paths for addicts. Now, I'm not going to repeat them because they are incorrect. Can you imagine if as a registered nurse I decided to follow whatever my personal ideologies and my personal opinion and my personal experience to provide care for my patients? Can you imagine if health care workers could choose which patient they provided care to or, worse, if health care workers based the care they provided on outdated methods and outdated ideologies? That would be awful, Madam Speaker. So many patients would go unserved, and so many patients would suffer.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful that our health care workers' interventions and care are based on the most recent evidence. I am grateful to know that the care I have provided to my patients was the correct intervention and that I helped and did not harm my patients.

Bill 17, the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act, appears to follow the minister's misguided ideologies, focused only on research that reinforces the minister's bias. This is not how research is done. Recovery is absolutely part of some folks' journey – and this is really important – however, not everyone is or will ever

be ready for recovery. We need to accept that, and we need to meet these folks where they are and provide them the care they need.

Madam Speaker, have you ever witnessed someone withdrawing from alcohol? When detoxing from alcohol, if not all care is done correctly, that person can die. So, yes, you bet there are situations where we need to provide round-the-clock, careful weaning, and sometimes we have to give medications to prevent side effects of withdrawal, side effects such as seizures. This is one of my many issues with Bill 17. Every Albertan and every person's journey will be different. This proposes only one solution. This will cause Albertans to suffer needlessly and simply because this government isn't following the current evidence-based research because this government feels that they know best. Well, Madam Speaker, they do not know best, and they do not know better than the experts.

3:00

Now, I'm sure the House is aware by now that a disproportional number of Indigenous children and youth have died while in care of this government or within two years of care from the government, many from opioid use. What I do not see in Bill 17 is any consultation with Indigenous leaders. Where is the specified capacity to focus on how best to serve Indigenous people? How are we honouring their culture, their needs, or meeting them where they're at? Will there be quantitative research to capture the verbal history of our Indigenous people? Will there be representation on the board? Madam Speaker, this is strongly concerning, a complete disservice for Indigenous people.

Moving back to research, the Premier inside this House read off the Google definition of a scientific process, which is great to know that the UCP has at least heard of it, but, Madam Speaker, what the Premier failed to mention, or maybe is not aware of, is that a huge part of the scientific process is the identification and elimination, if possible, of bias introduced into the experiment. This UCP government is highly, reflexively opposed to, well, a lot of things, and we all know this UCP government has a complicated relationship with the federal government. Albertans only need to look at the UCP's recent track record on their knee-jerk, "Go away, Ottawa" reactions to the proposal even just initially to pharmacare, dental, and housing support.

Now, don't get me wrong. I expect my government to represent Albertans' needs. However, I also expect my government to behave professionally and seek expert opinion, especially if they're making decisions that directly impact Albertans and their well-being. Yeah. Madam Speaker, I'm not sure what Albertans should expect from this government given their back-and-forth and broken promises.

Another thing Bill 17 does not address is the upstream or root causes of addiction. Absolutely, supporting those who require drug poisoning supports right now is very important, but what about stopping, well, everyone from having to make the choice in the first place? Where are the supports for everyday Albertans to keep them healthy, to keep them housed, to keep them fed? Madam Speaker, did you know that a sense of community and a feeling of acceptance are seen as factors that impact whether or not you make difficult decisions given your coping strategies available? Community. At the end of the day, no one wants to become an addict. No one chooses to become an addict. No one.

Madam Speaker, you know that the UCP government could be better spending Alberta's tax money. We could be funding health care that is appropriate to our patients where they're at, education so that we can – oh, I don't know – upstream avoid some of these complications we're now dealing with. We could be building infrastructure that actually supports Albertans for what they want, to name a few.

Madam Speaker, if you're looking for more than a Band-Aid, short-term solution, then it needs to come with wraparound services to support successful long-term success, things like housing, food, counselling, mental health supports, and community. I encourage all members to vote against Bill 17 and do better for the Albertans we represent.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others to join the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Ms Wright: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to share some perspective on Bill 17. Alberta certainly does need urgent action to save lives during a drug poisoning crisis. In 2023 we know that at least 1,706 people lost their lives, five people a day, as my colleague mentioned earlier. To put that into perspective, three people have already died today, and before we go to bed tonight, we will have lost two more neighbours, family members, and friends.

In talking with community members, it is hard to find someone who hasn't been affected by this crisis. Certainly, in my riding of Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview it's a very real, daily crisis. From our community members to our business leaders to our first responders, they all, each of them, have stories of those they've lost and those who continue to suffer from the poisoned drug supply. Now, my constituency office is in the heart of a residential community. As a result of that and as a result of what we know is around us, we have naloxone shots. My staff are trained to administer shots and spray because we know this is happening all over, and we could very easily have someone walk into our office who simply needs our support at that moment. We need to be prepared to respond in a compassionate way. I share this because saving lives must be and needs to be the focus of this House.

I'm thinking of those two precious lives we're going to lose tonight, who will not live long enough to see recovery. This Alberta recovery-only model will have failed them. What would you have me say to their families and friends who cared about them? How would you explain to them how Bill 17, the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act, is going to help – really help – the next person suffering from addictions or someone who is enduring a mental health crisis? How can we make decisions collectively about caring for folks if we're not willing to ask tough questions and consider the views of those affected by and working with this community?

What I believe, to begin with, is that the bill has massive, massive gaps. I have many, many concerns, and one of the first concerns is that it seems not to have a holistic approach to end this crisis. I wonder how we're going to treat addiction so folks live long enough to recover. And where exactly does mental health research treatment and ongoing support live? Where will that live in this new Crown corporation?

When I look at this act, I look in the preamble, to begin with, and one of the whereas mentions that

the Government of Alberta has gained international recognition for the work done to improve access to treatment and recovery supports for mental health and addiction issues as part of transforming Alberta's mental health and addiction system to the Alberta Recovery Model.

Now, that's something that sounds absolutely lovely, but I'm wondering how exactly it's going to be actualized given what appears, to me, to be an emphasis only on recovery-only communities and not perhaps a broader definition of what recovery actually means.

The next clause states that

the Alberta Recovery Model, which adopts a recovery-oriented approach to mental health and addiction issues, by developing evidence-based practices, conducting research and program evaluations and informing the creation of evidence-based policies.

I'm wondering again about this and how that might be actualized. What exactly in terms of this act is referred to as evidence-based practices? One of my concerns is that it won't truly be evidence-based practices; it will be evidence-based practices but only one tiny little perspective of evidence instead of the whole of evidence, all of that research that's come before us, all of that research that we know about today.

Further, when you look at page 4 of the bill itself, there's a whole list of definitions, but in those definitions I don't see a definition of recovery. So I'm wondering: for the purposes of this act, what exactly does recovery mean? Is recovery just this one size fits all? Does it only refer to the process, or is it a continuum upon which people journey? Under the mandate and activities it talks to how it will be "conducting and supporting research, evaluations and innovations related to mental health and addiction issues" and then will provide "advice, information, reports and the results of [that] research and evaluations to the Minister."

While I certainly appreciate the fact that it speaks to supporting research, evaluation, and innovation and, as a result, will provide that advice to the minister, I'm wondering where and exactly how this research will come from. Will it come from current Canadian research entities or initiatives? Will it come from universities or academic institutions? Will it come from elsewhere?

When it talks about "supporting the provision of services to individuals in Alberta with mental health and addiction issues," I wonder again exactly what that will entail because my read of this is that it's more about a one-size-fits-all approach to recovery and less about mental health overall, less about the protection of folks, less about prevention of mental health initiatives, less about what happens when someone is engaged in a mental health crisis.

3:10

When I look further down on page 5 of the bill, it talks about "monitoring and analyzing information and evidence related to mental health and addiction issues." Again, it talks about "conducting and facilitating research and evaluations with respect to" a whole bunch of things, but, again, given the focus that seems to be prevalent in a whole bunch of places, in statements made by the minister, in the refocusing initiative of Alberta Health, given the focus on only inpatient recovery beds, I'm concerned that this won't lead to a greater appreciation of what recovery actually means and the treatment options that should indeed be offered to folks. I worry that limitations will simply be the norm. When I couple that with Bill 18 and what's coming in Bill 18, I really do suspect this is more about finding evidence that meets a particular bias rather than finding evidence that's actually evidence based.

One of the interesting things in my research about Bill 17, Madam Speaker, was that I came upon a couple of interesting documents, one from the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction and the other from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which I will of course table the week after next. Both of these documents talk about principles of drug addiction treatment, a research-based guide. They also talk about best practices.

I just want to touch on some of those best practices for a moment. I found them quite, quite interesting, and certainly they reminded me very much of what it meant to teach in a very diverse classroom, because it talked about – this first one, from the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, talks about, in fact, a continuum of care for someone going through that process of addictions. One of the first things it notes is that everyone's – each person's – pathway through this continuum of care is necessarily different, and it's different because of the context of their life. You must start with screening, followed by assessment, followed by brief interventions, rapid-access clinics,

community outreach, withdrawal management, pharmacological interventions, psychosocial interventions, then, finally, recovery, sustaining wellness, and ongoing care.

What they also note, Madam Speaker, is that that continuum can happen in any order because it's supposed to be based upon that particular individual. What they note is that there are "fundamental principles and best practices" that should inform care that's given and, in fact, should inform this bill, but I don't see that informing having taken place in the development of this bill. It talks about that it must be a customized treatment plan to meet that particular individual's needs and goals. It must be something that's continually assessed so that you can really look at that individual "person's well being for any issues that [might] prevent [some] successful outcomes" at any stage in that process.

It talks about providing services that are "culturally competent and safe" for that particular individual and those around them. It ensures that you must "provide services that are trauma and gender informed," and it also talks about how "all efforts should be made to reduce stigma, which is a major barrier to seeking treatment and maintaining recovery." There should be "peer-engaged and led services" because those indeed can help "establish trust and help people sustain [those] positive changes in their substance use." Recovery is "the focus of [all] policies and practices." And then it goes into a great amount of detail about how you actually make sure that those key findings, best practices are included at every step of the continuum of care, Madam Speaker.

Based upon the information from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which really, simply – it's not a widely based one. It isn't just about recovery. It really speaks primarily to principles of drug addiction treatment. It is, however, a research-based, evidence-based guide for folks who are involved in the process of supporting and helping people. They have a list of 13 principles of effective treatment. Again, I don't see any sort of evidence that we can trust that some of these evidence-based principles of effective treatment will actually be something that CORE will actually be researching as part of its mandate.

It talks about the fact that addiction, of course, is complex but can be treatable and that it indeed "affects brain function and behavior," that "no single treatment is [effective or] appropriate for everyone." "Treatment needs to be readily available," and effective treatment must attend to the "multiple needs of [that] individual, not just his or her drug abuse." In other words, we need to have a wide variety of wraparound services available for that person going through treatment. That person needs to remain in treatment for an adequate and appropriate period of time, and many behavioural therapies, which perhaps would be provided by a psychologist or a psychiatrist or a mental health counsellor or drug addictions counsellor, need to be available. But those behavioural therapies are important in concert with things like medication therapy, which can of course be something that many folks benefit from.

Again, it comes down to the individual's treatment. It isn't, again, just a one step fits all. One step doesn't work for everybody, so this is very much focused on that individual. It's very much focused on options, which, quite frankly, is the way we need to go. I very much worry that this particular bill doesn't provide those options. In fact, this particular bill provides just one sort of model, and everything that it's going to do, everything that it's going to research will simply point us in the direction of that one particular model, which in essence is in-patient recovery.

Certainly, my experience of being a teacher over the last number of years – again, I talk to this one-size-fits-all aspect of things. When you have 28 children in a classroom and they're all coming to you at a different stage in their life – some are reading at grade level. Some are reading above grade level. Some are reading below

grade level. Some come to you with a great amount of trauma in the classroom. For some the classroom itself, in fact, could be a traumatic place because of things that may have happened to them. Some kids may be coming to you with a disability. Some kids may be coded; some kids may be not. Some kids might have some behavioural issues. Some kids may simply be a little bit quieter than others. You cannot simply stand at the front of the classroom and teach in the same way to everyone and hope that you're actually doing a good job there as a teacher.

A teacher in that instance, Madam Speaker, needs to differentiate whatever that lesson happens to be. That means you need to be paying attention to who those kids are at that moment. You need to be looking at that kid who's a newcomer and figuring out a way, first of all, to immerse them in English that's going to be meaningful to them. For that child who may have anxiety, perhaps they need headphones to kind of dull the noise in the classroom; perhaps they need a quieter place to live. For that kid who has a little bit more of a complex thing going on mental healthwise, it may mean reaching out to parents, to guardians, to social workers, mental health experts, to psychologists to see if you can kind of parse through things and then provide an individual plan that works for that one individual.

What I do worry about, again, about Bill 17 is that it's really focused on that one-size-fits-all approach, that it isn't really about long-term recovery. It's about a process that simply is called recovery, but it isn't really about recovery. It isn't about wellness. It isn't about prevention. It isn't about working with folks. It isn't about consulting widely. It isn't about all of those sorts of things.

I do wonder about consultations, and I know I've talked about this at great length. I wonder what that consultative process was, Madam Speaker. I wonder about how long that process went on. Is it still going on? Will it go on further? I know I've heard that if the bill is passed, then there will be some consultations in the summer, but, again, if there were consultations in the past, consultations going on now, and consultations in the future, where are the documents that tell us what we learned from all those consultations, from all of the folks, from all of the experts?

Certainly, I am not a scientist, I am not a doctor, but I do listen when scientists and doctors talk about confirmation bias, which, I guess, is really the point of what I'm trying to get to with my concerns about Bill 17. I am concerned that Bill 17 sets up a situation where there is the potential for an echo chamber of self-proclaimed experts, perhaps not the kind of experts that might come from an academic, peer-reviewed setting but perhaps those experts that simply confirm preconceived notions of this government instead of looking at all of the evidence and all of the robust, scientific, peer-reviewed research which exists right now and which is out there.

I'm concerned that this is a system where, again, much of the decision-making power seems to rest with the minister. The minister appoints the board and reserves the right to green-light all of those public funds.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others that wish to join in this debate? The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Ellingson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak against Bill 17, Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act. We have already heard some excellent arguments earlier from my colleagues about some of the challenges with Bill 17.

3:20

We absolutely know that there needs to be a focus on the addictions crisis right here in Alberta. We have heard already stated a couple of times today and many days in this Chamber that five

people a day are dying from the crisis in Alberta. The truth is that the number of people dying from the opioid crisis here in Alberta has been rapidly rising over the past five years.

Bill 17 gives the minister incredible power in appointing board members and green-lighting projects and research projects. If this government was interested in transparency, why would we be placing so much power in the hands of the minister alone to make these decisions on who those board members would be? Wouldn't we be instead engaging in a consultative process, perhaps establishing committees and drawing from stakeholders and understanding who those board members should be? Shouldn't we be public in saying what qualities we're looking for in our board members? What expertise should those board members have? What experiences should they have? Should we be stating that board members maybe are coming from lived experience in understanding the pathways to recovery, knowing that there's more than one pathway to recovery for people suffering from addictions? There are so many questions about what qualifications we would be looking for for board members.

Madam Speaker, I'd also like to talk about how the Premier has made clear her intentions in prioritizing conservative researchers in our postsecondary education system. Will these intentions influence who the board members are and who the staffpeople are for this research institute?

It is worth reminding Albertans that in the fall this government passed Bill 5, the Public Sector Employers Amendment Act, 2023. Bill 5 removed salary constraints on boards and commissions. We raised the concerns then of who was being appointed to these boards and commissions, who had the influence over appointing people to these boards and commissions, and that there should be more transparency for Albertans in who is being appointed and what salaries they are receiving. Now here we are mere months later creating a brand new institute under the direct control of the minister.

I will say, Madam Speaker, that Albertans will be watching to see who is appointed to this board. Albertans will be watching to see who is appointed to the staff for this agency. Albertans will be watching to see what salaries these people will be receiving.

Albertans have so many other priorities over the creation of this agency. As I said, that is not to say that Albertans aren't concerned with mental health and addictions; they are. I think there's probably not a family in this province that has not in some way been affected by the crisis in Alberta. There is not a family that doesn't have a friend or an extended family member that has suffered. The residents of Calgary-Foothills feel this, too. We are not standing here and saying that research isn't important, that recovery isn't important, that treatment isn't important. That's not what we're saying.

But we are also saying, Madam Speaker, that the residents of Calgary-Foothills are concerned about so many other things also for their children: schools, teachers, educational facilities. The residents of Calgary-Foothills have waited for years for schools to be built in their neighbourhood. For years the residents of Calgary-Foothills have been putting their children on buses to be sent to the far-flung corners of Calgary for kindergarten and grade 1, spending hours a day driving their kids to school before they go to work, after they leave work.

Madam Speaker, we need to think about, you know, children in crowded classrooms, the time and the challenges and the stress that is placed on families with respect to schools and education. We're already talking about anxiety within these families. We're creating situations where issues with mental health can arise. We're creating situations for kids in crowded classrooms with complex needs, where they're not getting the supports that they need, and we're already creating a situation where mental health challenges can arise.

We've heard my colleagues talk about the root causes of mental health and addictions, and we need to seriously consider the other decisions that are being made not just around this research centre. What else are we doing in our society to put pressure and anxiety and put people, children, and families in situations where mental health issues can arise, where addictive issues can arise? I don't think we see any of these considerations in this legislation in understanding the root causes of mental health and addictions. I don't think we really saw that language in this legislation. There's so much evidence that strong communities, strong foundations for youth, including schools and education, provide youth with the tools that they need to be healthy and successful later in life.

Madam Speaker, we have also heard from this government, from the Premier, suggesting policies that may come forward in the future, for teachers to be outing transgendered and nonbinary children to their parents, for teachers to be outing queer kids to their parents. I stand here and say to you as a member of the queer community that we are causing real harm to these children. We are setting these children up for psychological disorders. We are setting them up to struggle through their lives by not supporting them in their youth and supporting them in the needs that they have. These kinds of policies are going to push some children potentially into drug-addicted lives. We need to understand that.

The Premier had also proposed that sex education would be shifted to opt-in versus opt-out. Will any lessons that are combining sexual health with mental health and addictions also become opt-in, and are we setting children up to miss out on vital information that can set them up for a safe and healthy future? We already have so much information about what we need to do for youth for them to have safe and healthy futures. My concern, Madam Speaker, is that we're not following through on the evidence and the understanding that we already have to work on the root causes of mental health and addictions. Instead, we're being distracted by creating this centre of recovery excellence potentially to replace, supplant research that we already know is there, research that we already know we can use to move forward successfully.

In fact, Alberta Health Services already maintains the addiction and mental health research hub. The purposes of this hub are to:

- Serve Albertans to ensure that services supporting mental health, substance use, and addiction are evidence-informed, innovative, and at the leading edge of science.
- Create a strong, integrated research-to-practice enterprise in Alberta.
- Increase Addiction & Mental Health related research capacity, with a system-driven and patient-centred focus, while supporting research, data access, knowledge [transition], and funding.
- Provide a centralized point for researchers to access research support, knowledge translation resources, and data.
- Facilitate partnerships and networking among stakeholders.

Madam Speaker, I have to ask: why is the government funding an additional research agency when we already have an agency within Alberta Health Services to address the research that they're looking at?

3:30

Madam Speaker, I have to ask: is the research being conducted by the agency run by AHS acknowledged and respected? This government has already moved to create recovery Alberta. Is the existing research agency run by AHS going to be transferred to recovery Alberta, or is the government's plan to shut down the addiction and mental health research hub? How will these two be working together?

The University of Calgary has the Addictive Behaviours Lab researching, among other things, substance addictions. Further, the University of Calgary researches and instructs on mental health and

addictions in the faculties of Medicine and Social Work. The University of Alberta conducts research into mental health and addictions through the Neuroscience and Mental Health Institute.

Research conducted at our academic institutions follows strict ethics obligations and methodologies, keeping participants safe: understanding how their data will be stored; understanding how the research will be used; knowing that their studies, their data will be anonymous; understanding that through these methodologies participants are informed of the research and consent to the research that is going to take place. These rigorous processes: I understand a little bit about these rigorous processes, having been involved in crafting academic research on my own through my master's program.

Does the government plan on replacing this valuable research from our postsecondaries with research conducted from the centre of recovery excellence? How is the research from these different parties – from AHS, from academic institutes, from the centre of recovery excellence – going to come together to have a full-bodied understanding of mental health and addictions here in Alberta? Madam Speaker, I don't see this in the legislation.

Why does the government feel that the centre of recovery excellence is necessary when we already have a wealth of research being conducted right here in Alberta? There's so much richness in our research, and are we really taking availability – is the government really looking at what is already there to inform our decisions and the legislation that is being put forward? How can we be assured that the research conducted by the centre is going to follow the same ethical and methodological rigour that we find in academic studies?

With the introduction of Bill 18 is there a risk that federal funding for mental health and addictions to our academic institutions will not be approved, instead prioritizing funding and research to the centre of recovery excellence?

Madam Speaker, there are so many questions arising on the transparency and the efficacy of this centre that is proposed in this legislation. While the bill states that the board will provide recommendations for the chief science officer and chief executive officer, we've learned that these people have already been named, yet we don't have the board members in place. How is that possible?

We have not seen in this legislation how we're going to approach different communities, how we're going to work with Indigenous communities, how we're going to work with queer communities in this research. We know that both Indigenous and queer communities are disproportionately impacted by mental health and addictions, and we don't see this in the legislation. Just earlier today in question period we had questions around Stonewall Recovery and how we would be supporting the queer community, and we really didn't hear a response from the minister that there would be any provisions for the queer community in the recovery services provided by the government. I think we have the same questions around this Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act.

Madam Speaker, I cannot support this act, and I urge all . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others to join the debate?

Member Irwin: I'm getting up extra slow, Madam Speaker, because I was hoping that members opposite would be, you know, wanting to maybe weigh in on their bill if they're so very passionate about it. Alas, it appears they're all just chilling out on this Thursday afternoon.

Thank you to my colleague for his comments. Those were fantastic. It is always an honour to rise in this House. Not enthralled, I might note, to speak to Bill 17. I've got a lot of thoughts on it, just like my colleagues do. I want to start my remarks, just as I did throughout the pandemic, as I feel it's quite fitting, by giving a shout-out to front-line workers, in this case, you know, on the streets, the front-line workers who are working in harm reduction and in mental health and addictions

and in health care broadly. I'm hearing from a lot of health care workers right now who are struggling and who are incredibly worried about this government's plans to blow up health care and, relevant to this bill, particularly this government's plans for mental health and addictions and harm reduction.

I'm grateful for the work of our caucus on this and particularly our critic the Member for Calgary-Currie, who's taken on this file. It's a file that she knows I'm incredibly passionate about, and I think she's doing an amazing job at it.

Let's take a look at this bill. I want to start on Bill 17 by noting what the government says about it. They say the following:

Bill 17, the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act, 2024, would be the next step to strengthen Alberta's mental health and addiction system and support the Alberta Recovery Model.

If passed, Bill 17 will establish the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence (CoRE) as a new crown corporation to provide leadership in building a recovery-oriented system of care for people struggling with addiction and mental health challenges.

They go on to say that

CoRE would support government and help advance the Alberta Recovery Model by . . .

And here's the important part.

- providing data-driven and evidence-based recommendations
- conducting research and program evaluation
- advancing evidence-based policies and global best practices

In Alberta and across Canada more scientific evidence is needed to understand and help those impacted by mental health and addiction within our society. CoRE will generate new and expanded evidence-based best practices to most effectively help people pursue and maintain recovery.

Well, you know what? That truly does sound great on the surface. A layperson might read that and say: darn, that sounds like a really good approach from this government. The multiple mentions of "evidence-based" are particularly interesting, in my opinion. This from a government that repeatedly rejects evidence. I mean, we could look at a few examples on that: curriculum, of course, harm reduction. [interjection] If the Member for Wood Buffalo – might have got his riding wrong – would like to join debate, I'd be happy for him to intervene or to share his own thoughts. Investments in permanent supportive housing, something I've talked a lot about in this House: we know the evidence is quite clear that it saves money and it saves lives. I could go on. I really could.

I'd actually like to quote Chris Gallaway, who's the executive director of Friends of Medicare, who notes that while the UCP – if you know, you know –

purportedly reiterated the importance of data and evidence, in reality, this government's track record shows a repeated refusal to follow the best evidence, and a continued unwillingness to make treatment data available to Albertans.

He goes on to say:

"The Premier and the Minister continue to tout the success of their so-called Alberta Recovery Model, yet still refuse calls to release any data or information that would validate their claims . . . Now they're setting up a brand-new government-controlled entity to do research designed to validate their approach and ideology. We don't need another propaganda 'war room', Albertans need evidence-based solutions to the drug poisoning crisis."

We agree, and I'd like to pick up on the one part, the war room part. You know, it's hard to believe, given this government's record, that this war room will present any sort of unbiased information. Perhaps some of us in this room remember Bigfoot and the nonsense that the so-called oil and gas war room put out. I remember that quite well, and I remember the disaster that the

war room has been. The Canadian Energy Centre? Anyway, they had a fancy title for it.

3:40

To quote the prolific David Climenhaga in *The Tyee*, he notes that

it defies credulity that the centre will ever produce credible information about how best to deal with the drug addiction crisis afflicting all jurisdictions in Canada.

This is why it's fair to compare the Crown corporation to that other misleadingly titled "Canadian" war room established by the UCP to boost oilsands development and attack environmentalists identified by former premier Jason Kenney as enemies of the people, the so-called Canadian Energy Centre.

I also can't imagine that this new war room is the best use of money, especially, again, given this government's track record. You know, we said then, and I'll continue to say, that we should be funding classrooms and not war rooms. I think I can add to that. We should be funding hospital rooms, too, or – I don't know – maybe that money could go to helping babies in NICUs. I look at the Member for Calgary-Acadia, who has great experience being a nurse in the NICU. Just a thought. Again, governing is about priorities, and this is a UCP government that's choosing to prioritize things like war rooms over the health and well-being of their constituents. I digress.

In addition to significant concerns, I'm worried about what I've noted around evidence in other areas. I'm also very worried about consultation on this bill or the lack thereof. I also raised concerns about the inclusion of multiple perspectives, which actually sounds a lot like the concerns I raised around the government's new curriculum as well. So we're seeing a bit of a pattern with this UCP government.

I've got specific questions around Indigenous representation on Bill 17. You know, every member of this Legislature knows the impact that mental health and addictions has had on Indigenous communities. We know that Indigenous people are disproportionately impacted by the drug poisoning crisis, yet this Bill 17 makes no specific mention of Indigenous-led research, supporting Indigenous-led research around addictions.

To the consultation piece and inclusion piece, you know, this bill also does not provide specific board seats to Indigenous representatives. There's no mention in the mandate how this CORE will work with Indigenous communities as a good partner. How will the UCP plan to work with Indigenous peoples and communities when they're not even including them in key decision-making roles?

It's pretty clear to us that Indigenous perspectives have been excluded from this bill. In fact, you know, a perusal of Bill 17 – I've read it and I also did a scan on my computer just to make sure I wasn't wrong. There's not even a mention of the word "Indigenous" in this bill.

This is incredibly alarming, too, when we reflect on the research side of this bill. Let's talk about that piece, and I know my colleagues have highlighted these concerns quite well. An alarming piece of Bill 17 is that it will give the minister maximum power and control over CORE. He will appoint the board and sign off on projects. What's concerning about this is that CORE will use public funds to conduct research that only the minister will green-light. Not only is this a gross misuse of public dollars; the centre is now going to be providing maximum opportunity for confirmation bias. There's no indication that Albertans can trust any of this work to be done objectively. A better and more transparent approach would be to nest this work in an existing arm's-length institution. We've been having these conversations a whole lot lately, actually talking about arm's-length institutions. We've been having these conversations around Bill 18.

Now, you know, another example of concerning overreach and manipulation of research processes: we've heard from countless stakeholders, academics, folks working in research institutes, folks at postsecondaries who are just extremely alarmed about Bill 18. Again, we're seeing some parallels here in Bill 17.

Let's go back to this evidence piece once more. If the focus of CORE is to be, quote, research and advice on recovery-oriented systems of care, then it should be ensuring that all of that research is sound and is free of bias. But as physician Jon Meddings, former dean of the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine pointed out on Twitter, X – I still call it Twitter; I refuse to call it anything else – "Now we have a government that wants to fund 'research', [yet] no mention (at least yet) of how proposals would be evaluated. Expert assessment or ideological bias? If the latter it would be the worst use of money yet by our [government]." Those are his words.

An Hon. Member: Ouch.

Member Irwin: Yeah. Ouch is correct.

Listen, I want to be absolutely clear. We're in support of recovery, but we're also in support of a range of options for people who use drugs. We've said many times in this House that it's about meeting people where they're at. It's about honouring their life experiences, their trauma, all they've lived through, and as so many advocates, folks on the front lines have said far better than I ever will: dead people can't recover. At a time when, you know, deaths are higher than ever before, as my colleagues in the Chamber have pointed out, this presents such an opportunity for this minister and this government to be truly transformational in their work, but they're choosing not to.

Let's look at the numbers. I must always point out that any loss of life: it's more than a number. It's a person. It's somebody who was loved, who had a story, who had family members and friends and community that mourned them. Last year more Albertans died from drug poisoning than any year on record. In the first 11 months of 2023 alone there were 1,841 drug poisoning deaths, 1,700 of which were connected to opioid use. I've said it many times in this Chamber. I see the impacts of the drug poisoning crisis daily in the neighbourhoods that I represent, and I've asked the minister, actually, multiple times, and previous iterations of the minister to join me in my riding and to talk to people and to hear their stories.

You know, we've been sounding the alarm on this absolute crisis for years. I know I've shared it in this Chamber before, but it was in June of '21 that actually the Member for Edmonton-Riverview and I stood with representatives – June of 2021 – from Moms Stop the Harm and from others calling for an evidence-based – there's that word again, evidence-based – emergency plan, which talked about expanding supervised consumption services and taking real action on the drug poisoning crisis.

At that time four Albertans were dying a day. It was a mind-blowing number then, and we urged the government to act. We urged them to take this crisis seriously, and we warned them that deaths would only increase, and we were right. Now, we're at over five people a day dying.

It's not too late. It's not too late to change course. It's not too late to take this crisis seriously, and the type of rhetoric that we hear from this minister shows that he's not serious about taking real action, using phrases like "harm production." I could go on about the inflammatory commentary that we've heard from this side of the House.

Mr. Schow: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Schow: Under 23(h), (i), and (j), the member opposite is clearly imputing false motives that the member is not serious about recovery in this province. That is an absurd claim. We are clearly taking this seriously, recognizing that those stuck in the cycle of addiction need help, Madam Speaker. They need recovery. That's right; the member opposite was correct: dead people don't recover. There are two ends to this, recovery or death. The minister has clearly said that, and I defend that minister wholeheartedly knowing full well that his heart is in the right place, and he is here to help people get out of the cycle of addiction. But to insinuate that the member doesn't take it seriously is offensive, causes disruption in this Chamber . . . [interjections]

I'm not sure why the member opposite is still talking. I have the floor of the point of order. It's my right to stand up as the Government House Leader and defend my caucus, Madam Speaker. Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j). Point of order. It's ridiculous.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The Government House Leader is obviously quite upset on this final debate afternoon, but this is not a point of order. This is absolutely a matter of debate. We all know that on issues of this serious nature there has been a strong difference of opinion between the government caucus, the government minister, and what our caucus has advocated for.

The member was talking very specifically about harm reduction, something that the minister has called "harm production," and in reviewing the estimates that that minister just hosted showed complete derision towards in many parts of his estimates. But this is a matter of debate. We are not accusing any personal individual of anything untoward or anything unparliamentary, but we are debating this government's policies and attitudes in a really important way on an issue that is life or death for Albertans.

3:50

I will also just say that as part of this matter of debate, as evidenced in the minister's estimates or even in some of the minister's comments as he moved second reading for this bill, the government wants to mischaracterize our caucus's position on many of these issues. We do not call angry points of order each and every time because it is a matter of debate. So I hope that you will find this not to be a point of order because the member who was speaking was entirely on the subject of the bill and was talking about the valuable importance of harm reduction sesconv and the attitude that we've seen from this government.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: While I would agree this is not a point of order, I would also agree this is probably not helpful language in the Chamber. We're so close to being done on this lovely Thursday afternoon. I know the hon. member knows this. She has one minute and 15 seconds remaining. I'll ask that you continue with a good debate.

Debate Continued

Member Irwin: No. I will wrap up, Madam Speaker. I promise you I wasn't planning to get a point of order. I would have made it much more dramatic had I been. No; I was truly just quoting the minister's words and making my point once more, that if we're, you know, truly going to take the drug poisoning crisis seriously, we need a government that's willing to truly listen to the evidence, heed the

evidence, listen to the experts, listen to the folks on the front lines, listen to those with lived experience.

With that, Madam Speaker, I'd like to end my remarks. Thank you.

Mr. Dach: Devin Alan Walter Mckee: I say his name in this House again to emphasize that recovery is not a panacea, Madam Speaker. Devin was the first-born child of my sister and her only son, the son of an RCMP constable of 25 years. He was my nephew. I knew him for 31 years. Born in 1988, he died in 2019 at the age of 31 after graduating from the University of Lethbridge with distinction on a business degree. Our family didn't recognize the self-medication that he was going through with alcohol as he attended university in Lethbridge. Over the course of eight years – I know my time is short; he deserves more, but of course it will be interrupted by a flippant point of order, and the story is going to be shorter than it is.

But I will say that Devin relapsed numerous times, Madam Speaker. If indeed recovery was the panacea that the government wishes it to be or thinks it is by bringing forward Bill 17, then perhaps Devin would be alive today, but in fact many, many of the individuals who suffer from mental health and addictions relapse repeatedly. Recovery is a lifelong treatment; it's not a one-time, six-week event and all of a sudden – bing – you're into the course of life again and everything's sweetness and light. It doesn't happen that way. Some people will have a lifelong recovery, but more and more we are realizing in this province and around the world that recovery is not a period of time. It's a process.

I'm proud to repeat Devin Alan Walter Mckee's name in this House as many times as is necessary to get the government to realize, as others have said, that family members of everybody in this Chamber and every Albertan are affected by mental health and addiction issues and recovery. This bill only addresses one element of it, and it's an ideologically flawed piece of legislation which doesn't recognize a spectrum of treatment and recognition and prevention, that others have spoken about so eloquently on my side of the House, that needs to be implemented in the treatment and recovery of mental health and addiction patients in Alberta.

Poison drug supply may have been what killed Devin. It may have been an overdose. We're not sure. He hated it every time he relapsed. He worked for me for a summer as an assistant in my real estate office. I, unfortunately, noticed things, but I couldn't reach him. Nobody could. His family tried over and over again. They suffered the relapses that he went through. Ultimately, after eight years, one relapse took his life at the age of 31.

It is very, very disappointing to see the members opposite supporting and bringing forward this piece of legislation, which does not recognize the full depth of the problem. I'll have more to say about this. I believe we need to stop at the moment and reflect upon each family member who we may have seen involved in the events of mental illness and addictions, who still suffers or has lost their life to the affliction that we're attempting to rectify in this province. This bill doesn't come close to doing that. In fact, it damages the approach.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others to join in the debate on Bill 17?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 17 read a second time]

Bill 16

Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2024

[Adjourned debate April 24: Mr. Sabir]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Member Eremenko: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Boy, what a quick pivot we have to make here. The dignity with which my colleague has spoken to the story of a loved one, that I know is shared by so many, many people – I wish that there was more time. I wish there was more time with our loved ones that we have lost. I wish that there was more time to debate this issue in these Chambers, an issue of such incredible gravity. Clearly, this is a side of the Chamber that has much to say about Bill 17.

But onwards. I'm here to talk about Bill 16, the Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2024. There's a lot to talk about in this. It is certainly an omnibus bill of sorts. Though this is not the primary subject of the conversation today that I would like to raise, I do want to start off right at the top to go over the portion of Bill 16, right at the beginning, that amends the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act. It addresses minors being able to access licensed facilities in Alberta. Clearly, this was a piece of legislation that needed some updating, so I am pleased, truthfully, to see that this is going to be addressed and strengthened from a legislative perspective in terms of how licensed facilities are better able to address the presence of underage people in their spaces.

[Mr. Wiebe in the chair]

We just heard from a number of my colleagues about the centre of recovery excellence. Unfortunately, yet justifiably, Mr. Speaker, the attention of this government on the subject of recovery, we do say, is in regard to mental health and addiction generally. But when we look at the actual investments and we look at the specific allocations, it really has been eclipsed by opioids and addiction and, in response, has been around in-patient treatment services. But if we're talking about mental health and addiction much more broadly, there is a real current that I think deserves all of our attention in this province when it comes to gambling and gambling addiction. Certainly, alcohol use disorders, eating disorders, gambling: these, too, are issues related to mental health and addiction, and they absolutely qualify within the purview of this ministry when it comes to talking about a very serious issue. It is not exclusively about opioid addiction. It needs to also address the significant normalization, I should add, around alcohol-use disorders and gambling. And if it makes me sound like a teetotaler, that is not my intent here, but if we're actually going to make sure that this is a ministry whose mandate is being fulfilled, then we have to make sure that we are talking about more things than, certainly, the absolute crisis that is upon us.

4:00

I get it. When you're in government, gosh, in any capacity, there are only so many resources to expend in the day, but we have to make sure that in our role as opposition, when we're holding government to account, we are ensuring that the conversation is as holistic as possible.

In regard to Bill 16 I am pleased to see that there will be stronger prohibition on minors in gaming. However, the amendment in Bill 16, section 37.11, reads, "No person may permit a minor to engage in a gaming activity or provincial lottery activity in a licensed facility." I have a genuine question for the minister of red tape reduction. Will that include online gaming? The AGLC has facilitated the provision of and access to online gaming in a way that is really happening in kind of western markets around the world. Does this include measures, will there be measures in the regulations forthcoming to address the issues of online gaming?

Billions of dollars are spent in Canada every year on sports betting and on online gaming, and I would like to know whether or not Bill 16, in fact, talks about ways that we are going to prevent minors from accessing those services, that are more available than ever before on the Internet. "Were you born after said year? Yes?

Great. The world is your gambling oyster." Madam Speaker, we have got to do better by our kids and by our communities.

Furthermore – again, I will get to what I actually wanted to talk about, but this is another big one that I think is important to note – this government has mused just recently, certainly since the last election, about increasing the availability of liquor sales, talking about and musing about increasing the availability of liquor stores in a market – let's be honest – that is already very available, certainly the most accessible in the country, talking about whether liquor sales belong in grocery stores and convenience stores. How will this legislation respond to that change should the government bring that to pass? Again, alcohol-use disorders and alcohol addiction are nothing new, and it continues to absolutely do significant harm and damage in our communities.

If this government is looking at increasing the sales in currently nonlicensed facilities, what do minors do in that case? How are we going to be equipping the people who are actually working in those spaces to ensure that all of the rules are being followed under what I think would be very challenging circumstances. My office has already heard from a number of private liquor sale operators who are very concerned about what this means for the market and about what it means for the consumer.

Now, on to a subject that I can speak at length about, which is the Association of Counselling Therapy of Alberta. Bill 16, the Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, offers to repeal section 122 of the Health Statutes Amendment Act of 2020, that is an amendment to another piece of legislation, that was unanimously supported back in 2018, to create the Association of Counselling Therapy of Alberta as a precursor to the college. I will remind everyone in the Chamber and all the people watching at home that currently in Alberta counselling therapists are not regulated. Anybody can hang their sign out in front of the house and call themselves a counselling therapist, charge fees for those services, and have no degree of oversight in the quality of the care that they provide. This is a threat to Albertans' safety. It undermines the value of their hard-earned dollars that they are paying a professional for service delivered that we would all expect to be of a minimum standard, and Alberta has no standards.

Madam Speaker, the Mental Health Services Protection Act of 2018, further amended by the Health Statutes Amendment Act of 2020, would have allowed for the provision of the college of counselling therapy in Alberta. This government wants to repeal that legislation wholesale.

Now, for some reason it took five years of dilly-dallying to actually proclaim that piece of legislation into being rather than just carrying it over the finish line. After five years the government decided and announced in March of this year that, in fact, they would have a change in direction, that the counselling therapists of Alberta would now fall under the College of Alberta Psychologists.

I want to make really clear that though the announcement came as quite a surprise to the kind of critical stakeholder groups that are most impacted by this decision, it is not necessarily unwelcome. I have here a couple of documents – one from ACTA, ACTA being the abbreviated Association of Counselling Therapy of Alberta, and the other being from CAP – that say that they are both eager to move forward with this regulatory process that would bring counselling therapists under the umbrella of the College of Alberta Psychologists.

It's not that they are not happy with the move away from forming their own college. In fact, there are probably efficiencies and some processes that can be ameliorated as a result of going under some college that has been around for quite some time. But the challenge is that the repeal of this legislation is terribly premature, Madam Speaker.

CAP, the College of Alberta Psychologists, in their FAQ online says that they are in the preliminary stages of the preassessment phase of bringing counselling therapists into the fold. There is a lot of work to be done, and I want to take this opportunity to tip my hat to those professionals who are working in this space to ensure that Albertans can in fact count on the quality of service that is being delivered to them by people who are providing mental health supports, counselling, all kinds of different therapies, oftentimes to people who are particularly vulnerable or just at a time when they're particularly vulnerable in their lives.

So five years of delay from the UCP, and we see the announcement March 1, 2024, that ACTA is now going to be not creating their own college but falling under the College of Alberta Psychologists. But in the FAQ, my goodness, the College of Alberta Psychologists lays out that there is significant work to be done, and unfortunately none of that work thus far has had a dollar allocated to it by this government.

We see the March announcement with great fanfare that, hooray, after five years of delay we are now moving forward. The timeline in the press release, if I may – this is a press release from March 1 from the government of Alberta on moving forward with regulation of Alberta counsellors – says that “it is anticipated that these regulations will be put in place in 2025.” Madam Speaker, there's no way. There's no way.

I appreciate the government's ambition on this particular front, but we also have to make sure that we are aligning fact with fiction, or, rather, that fiction does not eclipse fact and that 2025 is not possible. It is not possible. The repeal of the legislation that is provided in Bill 16 is, in fact, an important step to achieve this in the long term, but to suggest that, come the spring of next year, this will be completed is simply not feasible, especially when the work of the College of Alberta Psychologists has not even been resourced. This is not an endeavour to be taken side of desk. Albertans deserve better than that. It is not a quick process, as I have already mentioned.

The preliminary phase of the preassessment stage: they will be resourced. They are excited to begin to lay out the pathway for regulation per CAP's publication and their online materials. That is not, “We are excited to regulate, and off we go” but “we are excited to begin the process of laying out the pathway to form regulations so that counselling therapists can then be included.”

4:10

I want to further add that, unfortunately, Bill 16, the Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, highlights a significant gap in this government's process when it comes to regulating counselling therapists, and that is that they have explicitly excluded addiction counsellors from the regulation. I'd like to refer to a story that I reckon we all saw here in Alberta, a story from the *Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune*. The *GP Daily Herald-Tribune* wrote on January 25 of this year:

A former Grande Prairie family physician found guilty of sexually abusing her opioid-dependent patient by entering into a sexual relationship, has changed her business name and is now offering an addiction-focused counselling service – there's no provincial regulatory college to prevent it from happening and as such the Bill 21: An Act to Protect Patients isn't applied.

We just spent an hour talking about the centre of recovery excellence to provide world-leading care for people with addictions, and an individual such as this, with a proven track record of having abused her power in this relationship, is allowed to proceed *carte blanche*. Why would this government, with the kinds of investments that they have made in recovery, a process that is, like, founded on a critical clinical and therapeutic relationship, be okay with anybody being allowed to refer to themselves as an addiction counsellor? I just don't get it, Madam Speaker. I welcome any member opposite to tell us why.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others to join the debate? The hon. Member for Calgary-North East.

Member Brar: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This government talks about cutting red tape, yet they have doubled the size of the red tape reduction bill. It's clear that they are more about hitting quotas than governing efficiently. This government is also not very worried about consulting with people who are involved. They barely go out to people to discuss the issues that matter to them, whether it is the Canada pension plan – they do not want to talk to Albertans whose pensions will be deeply impacted with their pension scheme that they are bringing forward. So they don't talk to Albertans about that issue. They don't talk to Albertans about the rising cost of living, about the lowest wage growth compared to other provinces in the entirety of Canada. They barely talk to Albertans about the lowest funding for education per student in the entire country. They barely talk about the issues that matter to Albertans, and that's exactly what they are doing here in this bill.

You know, we have seen that the bill is less about red tape reduction and more about fixing the UCP acts that they have created. They are repealing the ACTA regulation, that they failed to proclaim for over five years, to finally regulate mental health professionals. They create the mess, and then they try to fix it. Then they try to pat their own back, and they try to applaud for the amazing things that they have done. This is not the first time that they are doing this. They have done this in the past. They cut AISH in 2019, when Premier Kenney came in, and then they tried to fix it. Then they tried to pat their back, and then they tried to get credit for that.

This is not the first time. I mean, they hate anything, they don't like anything that has got the word “public” in it. They don't like public health care; they don't like public education; they don't like postsecondary institutions; they don't like public parks. They have had problems with all of these in the past. They love to privatize and give that to their insiders.

Let me start with education. What they have done is that there are no schools in the northeast. Same in Foothills. Same in Beddington. They have fired educational assistants during the pandemic. The enrolment that Alberta is expecting is phenomenal, but there is not enough funding by this UCP government to cover that.

Same thing with health care. The Premier has openly advocated for privatizing health care and not providing enough support for people impacted with mental health issues. Those vulnerable Albertans are suffering, are deeply impacted by the UCP's policies, but unfortunately the UCP is delaying and delaying to bring forward the bills and the laws that will help them. This bill also is in the right direction for some stances, but it doesn't go far enough to help those people.

Mr. Dach: Thank you for the opportunity to intervene, Member. I note that, of course, you are the critic for small business with the Official Opposition. Of course, I participated in small business as well. I wanted to ask you briefly if you could reflect a little bit upon how this piece of legislation would affect small-business people, from your experience in the past.

Member Brar: Thank you, Member, for your intervention and for highlighting the important issue. The thing is that any bill that is impacting small businesses must be consulted on before it is introduced in this Legislature. The unfortunate part is that there are so many small businesses who are involved in various industries that this bill will be impacting. The UCP has not consulted with any of those small businesses. The UCP has not gone to them to discuss about the issues that might impact them. At this point we'll have to

see how this bill will impact in the future, but so far we have seen that no consultation has been done.

Had they consistently supported the people, Albertans, they would not have allowed such a glaring issue to slip past their attention. This proposed legislation wants the College of Alberta Psychologists to regulate counsellors, but there has been zero consultation or planning, as I just mentioned. CAP right now lacks the resources that are needed, and they were expecting that this government would support them in Budget 2024. The unfortunate part is that Budget 2024 does not address this lack of resources. Budget 2024 will not provide any additional resources to CAP so that they can address what this bill is proposing. The government needs to step up and support CAP; they can't just wash their hands of Albertans' safety. Safety is super important to all Albertans. Albertans must feel safe when they visit all the facilities that this bill is impacting.

They are trying to solve the symptoms of the problems that they have created. This UCP government creates problems, and then they try to solve them, as I have mentioned, whether it was AISH, whether it was about the Alberta Health Services problem. The Premier claimed that she would fix the problems of Alberta Health Services within six months. Unfortunately, we haven't seen that since now.

The problems continue to deepen, and at that point they defund Alberta Health Services. Then Albertans feel frustrated, and the solution that this Conservative government came up with is to privatize health care. That's why they have appointed Tom Olsen, who tried to privatize health care before and who is again pushing forward for his right-wing, privatization-of-health-care ideas.

The UCP has also overburdened our court and justice system. Although digitizing services is a step in the right direction, it is not nearly enough. This government tries to pick a fight with the federal government when they try to fix some problems that this UCP government has created. They tried to give some funding for courts that this UCP government denied and didn't want to accept those, and we have seen the UCP's track record with anything health related. They delay, they underfund, they defund, and then they try to shrug it under the rug, and this cannot happen again.

4:20

So my request to the UCP and my request to all Albertans is to hold this government to account by writing e-mails to their respective MLAs, to their representatives, and asking them to advocate for issues that matter to them. This government does not like to discuss the issues with Albertans. Rather, they are ideologically driven, and their ideology derives from Margaret Thatcher from the U.K., from Ronald Reagan from the U.S., and many other right-wing leaders that have pushed forward their agendas and ideas of privatizing everything, whether it was privatizing the British railways by Margaret Thatcher. She did the same thing. She defunded British railroads, and then people got upset. The solution she came up with was privatizing those railways. That's what this government is doing, and that's what this government continues to do.

I request all the members to vote against this bill. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: Yes. In the few minutes that are remaining, I just wanted to stand up and speak in objection to what's before us, Bill 16. The part that particularly is problematic for me – and I think my

colleague from Calgary-Currie did an excellent job of talking about it – is the leaving out of the red tape reduction bill the regulation of addictions counsellors. I don't understand why addictions counsellors are being left aside to do what they want, essentially. As a former social worker I was regulated, so if there were problems in the treatment that I provided to my clients, there was somewhere people could go to say: this person is not following the proper protocol, practice and needs to be reviewed, needs to be investigated. That's not going to happen with addiction counsellors.

We know from listening to the government day after day after day that they are proud of the work they're doing in the whole area of addictions, but none of those workers, none of those employees, Madam Speaker, have a regulatory body that will say: this is proper treatment, and this is not proper treatment. So if a family member, a parent, sees something go awry with their child or loved one and they want to complain, they can't go to a regulatory authority and say: you need to look into the way this person is practising and figure out if they are harming their patients or what they're doing.

And for some reason we're looking at this bill. It talks about regulating psychotherapists. All well and good. It talks about making sure that there is an organization that will look into their practice. All well and good. But then you look further into this bill, and it says that people such as addictions counsellors and child and youth care counsellors are not included. Who decided that and for what reason? We're not given a reason. We're told that there was a delay under the previous Minister of Health. It wasn't a priority for the previous Minister of Health. Now it's a priority, but there's a glaring omission.

My colleague from Calgary-Currie talked about, in January of this year, a physician getting into trouble under I guess it was the Alberta Medical Association. They said: "Well, forget them. I'm going to put my own shingle up, and nobody is going to be able to tell me to stop what I'm doing." And that person was found glaringly taking advantage of a patient under her power. That's not correct.

What's happening before us is not correct. There's no explanation from the other side around why those counsellors, addiction counsellors and child and youth care counsellors, are being omitted. This government is going to risk its reputation on this centre of recovery excellence if it doesn't change its course, if it doesn't bring addictions counsellors under some sort of control beyond the agency they work for.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to vote against this. I think it's wrong, and we should all vote against it.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others to join the debate?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 16 read a second time]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate everyone's hard work this week. I think our business of the day is concluded. I wish everybody a safe constituency break as you interact with those who voted for you and those who you represent and those who didn't vote for you.

With that, I move that the Assembly be adjourned until Monday, May 6, at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:27 p.m. to Monday, May 6, at 1:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 31th Legislature - 1st Session (2023-2024)

Activity to Thursday, April 25, 2024

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*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c6]

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*)
Committee of the Whole — 522-30 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft.*), 552-59 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)
Third Reading — 565 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 583-90 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 cA-29.5]

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*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c10]

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*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2023 c13]

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*), 519-22 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., recommitted*), 559-62, 563-64 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed with amendments on division*)
Third Reading — 515 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., recommitted to Committee of the Whole*), 564-55 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 575-83 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2023 c12]

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*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c11]

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*)

Third Reading — 514-15 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c7]

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*)

Committee of the Whole — 515-18 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft.*), 546-52 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 564 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 569-75 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2023 c8]

Bill 9 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (Schow)

First Reading — 478 (*Dec. 4, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 513-14 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 546 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 590-92 (*Dec. 7, 2023 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c9]

Bill 10 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 673 (*Mar. 12, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 705-16 (*Mar. 14, 2024 aft.*), 868-73 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft.*), 904-05 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft.*), 899-901 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft.*), 970-75 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft.*), 1003-05 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1005-09 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1040-43 (*Apr. 11, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 11 — Public Safety Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Ellis)

First Reading — 685 (*Mar. 13, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 976-90 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft.*), 1009-15 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft.*), 1091-96 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1217-20 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 12* — Consumer Protection (Life Leases) Amendment Act, 2024 (Nally)

First Reading — 727 (*Mar. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1015-22 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft.*), 1043-46 (*Apr. 11, 2024 aft.*), 1096-102 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft.*), 1135-40 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1220 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft.*), 1239-48 (*Apr. 24, 2024 aft., passed with amendments*)

Bill 13 — Real Property Governance Act (Guthrie)

First Reading — 779 (*Mar. 21, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1102-09 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft.*), 1132-35 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft.*), 1161-63 (*Apr. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1220-28 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 14 — Appropriation Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 791 (*Mar. 21, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 855-63 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 887-93 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., adjourned*), (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 920-24 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on March 28, 2024; SA 2024 c1]

Bill 15 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 841 (*Mar. 25, 2024 eve., passed*)

Second Reading — 863-68 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 893-99 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., adjourned*), 901-04 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 924 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed*), 920 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft.*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on March 28, 2024; SA 2024 c2]

Bill 16 — Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Nally)

First Reading — 935-36 (*Apr. 8, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1127-32 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft.*), 1248-53 (*Apr. 24, 2024 aft.*), 1279-82 (*Apr. 25, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 17 — Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act (Williams)

First Reading — 959 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1156-61 (*Apr. 18, 2024 aft.*), 1272-79 (*Apr. 25, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 18 — Provincial Priorities Act (Smith)

First Reading — 993 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1122-27 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft.*), 1209-17 (*Apr. 23, 2024 aft.*), 1253-60 (*Apr. 24, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 19 — Utilities Affordability Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Neudorf)

First Reading — 1177 (*Apr. 22, 2024 aft., passed*)

Bill 20 — Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (McIver)

First Reading — (*Apr. 25, 2024 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.*), 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.*), 479-86 (*Dec. 4, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 730-43 (*Mar. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 805-12 (*Mar. 25, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on June 28, 2024; SA 2024 cF-16.5]

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

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

Second Reading — 486-92 (*Dec. 4, 2023 aft.*), 649-58 (*Mar. 11, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 812-17 (*Mar. 25, 2024 aft.*), 938-48 (*Apr. 8, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Third Reading — 1059-66 (*Apr. 15, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 205 — Housing Statutes (Housing Security) Amendment Act, 2023 (Irwin)

First Reading — 510 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 658-62 (*Mar. 11, 2024 aft.*), 948-50 (*Apr. 8, 2024 aft.*), 1066-71 (*Apr. 15, 2024 aft.*), 1178-81 (*Apr. 22, 2024 aft., defeated on division; not proceeded with*)

Bill 206 — Child and Youth Advocate (Parent and Guardian Advisor) Amendment Act, 2024 (Cyr)

First Reading — 917-18 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1181-90 (*Apr. 22, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 207 — Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education (Valuing Skilled Workers) Amendment Act, 2024 (Hoyle)

First Reading — 1152-53 (*Apr. 18, 2024 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*)

Committee of the Whole — 515 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 530 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c14]

Bill Pr2 — Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta Amendment Act, 2024 (Justin Wright)

First Reading — 918 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills*)

Bill Pr3 — Providence Renewal Centre Amendment Act, 2024 (Calahoo Stonehouse)

First Reading — 918 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills*)

Bill Pr4 — Rosebud School of the Arts Amendment Act, 2024 (Petrovic)

First Reading — 918 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills*)

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