



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, May 23, 2024

Day 56

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

First Session

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Party standings:

United Conservative: 28

New Democrat: 38

Independent: 1

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Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Dyck
Eggen
Hunter
McDougall
Sinclair
Sweet

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 23, 2024

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

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 Ms Nicole Williams.

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: Hon. members, as a former municipal councillor I have a deep appreciation for the hard work of our local officials, so it's my great pleasure to introduce a special visitor joining us in the Speaker's gallery today. Mayor Gerald Aalbers, the mayor of Lloydminster, is in Edmonton today visiting members here in the Assembly, including the hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright. I invite him to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, prior to moving to school groups, you may notice that there are a few pages in the gallery today. I intend to introduce them at a later point, which will be making a statement with respect to retiring pages. We will do that in a number of moments.

The hon. the Minister of Tourism and Sport has a school group to introduce.

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and introduce to you and through you the students from Calvin Christian School in my constituency. They're here having a day visiting the Legislature and seeing a little bit about what we do. I ask them to rise in the gallery and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. the minister of environment.

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I rise to introduce a constituent of mine, Darren Moroz. Darren is currently a teacher with Calgary Catholic school division. He's been teaching for 35 years. He's very passionate and does exceptional advocacy for education here in our province. He is a proud husband, father, and currently the Calgary district rep of the ATA. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities: Dominic Shaw, who's our chair; Heath Birkholz; Shino Nakane; Jacob McGregor; Katie Suvanto; and Earl Thiessen. I ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Sinclair: Mr. Speaker, it's game day in oil country. I rise today to introduce to you and through you Jon, Gary, Colin, and Ella, all contributors to our energy and oil industry. Colin is the CEO of TerraPro, Gary is a VP of Michels Pipeline, and I'm super happy that they're all Oilers fans as well. PS: Oilers in six. Please rise and accept the warm welcome.

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

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A society is as strong as its seniors, and I'm glad to rise today and introduce to you and through you a strong group of seniors representing Mill Woods Seniors Association. I would request them to rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of the House.

Member Loyola: Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly it's an honour to introduce 50 members and volunteers of the seniors group of the Pakistan Canada Association of Edmonton, so many wonderful people. The primary organizer is Arshed Mahmood, who's also the president of Jaza Relief Canada, a charity serving Canada and Pakistan. I ask them all to rise. Please give them the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-South West.

Mr. Ip: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you a dedicated and fantastic member of my constituency team, Jakob Moffitt. Jakob is sadly going back to school shortly, but his service to Edmonton-South West is so appreciated. I'm also pleased to welcome his partner, Taylor Moffitt, as well as their littlest one, Eleanor Millie Moffitt, who's only three and a half months old. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: I hope throughout question period we can conduct ourselves in a manner that won't wake the baby.
The hon. Member for Camrose.

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to rise today and introduce to you and through you Bharti and Dr. Rajesh, who are visiting their daughter Deesha, who moved from Melbourne to call Edmonton home. Please rise to receive the warm welcome of this Chamber.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-North East.

Member Brar: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you Mr. Parminderjit Singh, an excellent team organizer and a dear friend, who worked hard to get me here. He is also joined by his cousin Tajinder Singh, who is visiting Alberta from England, U.K. I ask Parminder and Tajinder to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Prior to moving to Members' Statements, I would like to take the opportunity to invite those retiring pages who are here in the Chamber or perhaps in the back, if there's any of them,

if they want to come join me at the dais. If you're a retiring page, please join me here. I have a statement to read.

Statement by the Speaker

Page Recognition

The Speaker: As hon. members will know, at the conclusion or nearing the conclusion of each legislative session a number of pages move on to other important work beyond the confines of this Chamber, and each year the pages take the opportunity to write a letter to members of the Assembly and to the Speaker, which I will now read to you.

Mr. Speaker,

It is with a somewhat melancholy sense of accomplishment that we, the retiring Pages, look towards the end of Session and our departure from the Page Program. As we reflect upon our time in the Program, we are filled with gratitude for the opportunities we have been granted in serving the Alberta Legislative Assembly as the proverbial "hands and feet" of democracy.

In particular, [we'd] like to thank Monique Hamelin and the . . . Sergeant-at-arms [office] for their care in overseeing the Page Program; the Bills and Journals Clerks for their guidance and depth of procedural knowledge; and the Legislative Assembly Security Services for their work in keeping us all safe and unquestionably entertained.

Additionally, [we'd] like to extend our thanks to you, Mr. Speaker, as well as to all the Table Officers, for your role in facilitating the democratic process of our beautiful province – and, of course, to the Members of the Legislative Assembly for their commitment to Albertans and their dedication in representing their constituents.

The memories we have made during our service in the Legislative Assembly are unforgettable, and the experience we have gained is invaluable. Rest assured that all of you have inspired us immensely, whether or not we intend to pursue a political career! And so, to each and every one of you – and without a doubt to our fellow Pages – thank you. Thank you for considering us to be "note" worthy individuals.

Sincerely,

and signed by the retiring or departing pages,

Andrew Cornelis Veldkamp – Head Page, Natalia Hatko – Team Lead, Andrew Ogle – Team Lead, Veronika Urda, Maryam Baig, Haohan Cheng, Annika Chrapko, Hannah Faulan, Grace Mfou-Eboa, Taylor Plican, Parker Hillman, Nabeeha Irfan, [and] Niles Maj-Pfleger.

Please rise and receive the thank you of the Assembly. [Standing ovation]

1:40

Members' Statements

Hospital Discharge Policies

Ms Sigurdson: The UCP government has demonstrated they feel entitled to power but not to do the work to govern. Nowhere else is that more obvious than with the cases of motel medicine. You'll recall that the Premier herself called for this policy. In her leadership race the Premier mused about discharging health care patients into motels rather than getting them the appropriate levels of care that they need. Well, she got her wish. This spring this government discharged medical patients and some of our province's most vulnerable residents to a motel down the highway in Leduc. It may be a fine motel, but it certainly wasn't a place for a patient in a wheelchair to be left by himself without proper care, nutrition, or medical treatment. It was bad enough this happened to one individual who needed proper medical care, but the agency

involved left 27 Albertans without the supports they need in that motel.

So what did the government do about it? Well, they tried to be saviours after, sweeping in after the fact. But this week a freedom of information request revealed the UCP ministers have known all along about this crisis. The request also reveals they knew about substandard care but didn't do anything about it. When the Health minister was notified of serious neglect with the agency, Contentment Social Services, she passed the buck. When the seniors minister got involved, he threw up his hands and told this Albertan they weren't going to do anything and recommended they call 211 for help.

Motel medicine came along because this government feels entitled to power but doesn't feel they have any responsibility to actually use that power to make the lives of Albertans better. Mr. Speaker, Albertans and our loved ones deserve so much better.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Camrose has a statement.

Continuing Care Funding

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today marks a significant milestone for Alberta's aging population as our government announced a groundbreaking funding agreement with the federal government under the banner of Aging with Dignity. This collaboration signifies a concerted effort to strengthen Alberta's health care system, ensuring that our seniors receive the highest quality care as they journey through their later years.

Our government's commitment of \$1 billion over three years underscores our dedication to transforming continuing care in our province. This substantive agreement will facilitate a shift towards community-based care, enhance workforce capacity, foster innovation, and elevate the overall quality of care within the sector.

The newly inked five-year, \$627 million bilateral funding agreement with the federal government is a testament to our shared vision of supporting aging Albertans. These funds will be allocated towards vital home care and assisted living initiatives and enriched services, enhancing access to palliative and end-of-life care, bolstering caregiving support, and expanding nonmedical assistance.

Our province has also earmarked \$654 million over three years for the continuing care capital program, aimed at accessing enhanced care for spaces. This initiative will not only alleviate pressure on hospital beds but also ensure that Albertans receive tailored support in suitable environments, which will reduce emergency department wait times.

As demographics shift and our population ages, the demand for senior care increases. By 2046 1 in 5 Albertans will be 65 years of age or older, necessitating proactive measures to meet this growing need. Our ongoing transformation efforts encompass a multifaceted approach, encompassing regulatory enhancements, expanded support networks for caregivers, and empowering individuals with choice through client-directed care.

In closing, I'd like to thank the minister and all stakeholders involved in spearheading this work and reform.

Member for Edmonton-Glenora's Health Care Plan

Ms Hoffman: A day and a half after I was sworn in as Health minister, I hopped in my beat-up red, old Honda Fit hatchback, got on the QE II, and drove straight to the Peter Lougheed hospital in Calgary. The management there didn't know what to expect from the new minister, so they had three spots coned off, waiting for my entourage and me, and I got out by myself, closed the door, shook

the hands of all these men wearing suits and white coats and said: show me around the place. That was the day we started building the Calgary cancer hospital. I will argue that that is the most NDP thing we could have possibly done, build a public hospital that was desperately needed in the province of Alberta.

Now we have to decide what we're going to do next. I'm proposing that we hire 1,000 family doctors. B.C.'s NDP government recruited 500 family doctors in their first year. I know we can do 1,000 here. I've been working with the leaders to make sure it'll happen. I'm also proposing 3,000 nurse practitioners and physician assistants, that we expand long-term care by 1,500 public long-term care spaces in the province of Alberta and that we expand home care, that we make sure that we have staffing ratios in continuing care centres so that we don't continue to ask staff to do more when it's just physically not possible, and that we ensure that the residents of those places have a dignified place to age and receive their care. I am also proposing that those staff get a living wage, that they be able to work in one centre, getting full-time hours and benefits, which is better for patient care and is certainly better for those staff as well.

I also want us to expand our emergency room operating hours in public centres. We don't need to keep building more private, for-profit surgical centres when we have emergency rooms that often shut down at 4 o'clock or 6 o'clock. We can expand those hours during the day and into the evening, and we can also make sure that they're open on the weekends. We can treat staff and patients with care and respect. We can have the world-class public health care system we all deserve.

Please visit my plan. It is unapologetically NDP, just like me.

Thank you.

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

March for Life

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 9 was a good day at the Alberta Legislature. I attended the March for Life. There were many friends there, including some UCP MLAs. That is good. Alberta is a land that loves freedom of conscience. The march was also very good. It was packed. There are many Albertans sharing pro-life values. Now, there were some opposing the march, not acting in respectful ways, but the march organizers gave them no heed. They came to celebrate the sacred gift of children, not to contend. I loved attending. Families are sacred. Children are a blessing. We love them. We love our families.

One of the speakers at the march was a mother with her beautiful daughter. She was about eight. She had Down syndrome, Mr. Speaker. With her daughter standing with her, the mother shared her story. Her doctor encouraged her to abort her daughter. That is very sad. Every man and woman is a beloved child of God. All are of great worth. This beautiful mother shared her joy in making the decision to choose the sacred role of mother to this beautiful young woman, how her beautiful daughter was a blessing from God. It is true. A correct understanding of truth produces eternal perspective, not choosing abortion, recognizing the divine worth of all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Indigenous Children in Care

Dr. Elmeligi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In late April I got a call from a proud Tsuut'ina mother, kokum, and community member. When her son's best friend died, she immediately jumped at the opportunity to foster his three children. On April 5 child and family

services conducted a home safety check and approved my constituent to foster the baby of the three children. Four days later child and family services came and took the baby from her without explanation. While my constituent, her daughter, and the baby cried, the staffperson laughed and said that the baby would be okay. All three children are now living with non-Indigenous families in the city. In my constituent's words: while my ancestors and my child felt the pain and realization this is what my great-grandparents and grandparents and parents felt as the residential schools ripped away children and never brought them back.

And it's still happening. In December 2022 74 per cent of youth in care were Indigenous even though they only make up 10 per cent of the population. Between 2012 and 2022 634 children in care died or were seriously injured, and two-thirds of those were Indigenous. Alberta has the lowest percentage of Indigenous children in the care of at least one Indigenous foster parent. This is unacceptable. We know that removing children from their communities and culture is at the heart of the intergenerational trauma sustained by Indigenous people that has led to the poverty, addiction, lack of self-worth or identity, and depression that many Indigenous people experience.

1:50

The UCP does not currently have a specific plan to provide mental health and addiction support for Indigenous people in Alberta, yet they're still contributing to the principal root cause by removing Indigenous children from their communities. I like to think that residential schools, the '60s scoop, the millennial scoop are part of our history, but they're part of our present, too. We know better. On this side of the House we believe that truth and reconciliation is about taking action, and that starts with ensuring Indigenous children live in their community with their kin and families.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition has question 1.

Support for Wildfire Evacuees

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, when folks in Fort McMurray got the order to evacuate, they knew from experience not to question it, but they never expected, when they returned home, to learn their government thought their evacuation was just too short to warrant financial support. It's a sharp contrast from what they received in 2016. To the Premier: will she ensure that all evacuees from Fort McMurray receive financial support for the expenses they incurred while they were forced to leave their homes even if it was for less than seven days?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier has risen.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is the policy of the government that after seven days of being evacuated from home, residents will receive a payment of \$1,250 for an adult and \$500 for a child. Part of the reason for that policy is that we offer a great deal of support that is paid for directly by government. We offer hotel vouchers. We offer food. We give other emergency assistance as needed. The notion behind the policy is that once somebody has been beyond seven days outside their home, that's when it becomes far more financially difficult. That's part of the reason why we have the balance. We are giving people the support that they need. We're very pleased that Fort McMurray residents were able to return home.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, a recent poll found that more than half of Albertans find it hard to cover their monthly bills at the best of

times. An unplanned trip down the highway with kids and pets to overfilled motels is not something they have room for in their budget, and it's not something they got fully compensated for. It doesn't matter how many days it was. To the Premier. This was no vacation. Why has she not taken immediate action to get these folks the financial support they very clearly describe needing?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the same policy the members opposite had when they were in government. The difference in 2016: it was very clear very early on that that was going to be an extended time that individuals were going to be outside the community. What our role is: to make sure that we fight the fire, get the conditions safe to return as quickly as possible, work in a unified command with the local firefighting team, and ensure that people are able to get back home. People want to be able to get back home, get their lives back in order, and make sure that their community is safe, and we're very pleased that they were able to do this this past weekend.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a Premier who has the capacity to change the policy as she sees fit. I mean, for heaven's sake, she rushed to change the laws to increase the size of gifts that she could get as Premier. Recently, while these families were worrying over their evacuation costs, she was sitting in a fancy box at an NHL playoff game in B.C. To the Premier: how can she justify rushing to change the policy for her own posh perks but dragging her feet to help evacuated Alberta families get to the end of the month?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We established evacuation centres. We had vouchers that were given for hotels. There were vouchers that were given for food. There's an additional program for those who have additional hardship, that they can apply for through Seniors, Community and Social Services. We want to make sure that people are supported when they leave and also that they are returned home as quickly as they possibly can be. We're very pleased in this situation that very few people have had to be outside of their home for more than a few days, and I hope that that will continue throughout the rest of the fire season.

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

Bill 20

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, leaders and municipalities, large and small, have been speaking out against this Premier's authoritarian Bill 20, with broad agreement that the bill is so antidemocratic that it needs to be scrapped. Of course, this Premier has been ignoring every voice but her own. It's been three weeks, the House is now winding down, and we've yet to see amendments tabled. To the Premier: why won't she admit that this bill is bad to the core and should just be abandoned?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier has risen.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think there are 20 different provisions that are in this bill that change and clarify rules in the Local Authorities Election Act as well as change and clarify some supports that we're prepared to offer to make it easier to build affordable housing. It's true that there were two clauses that we heard loud and clear from municipalities that they would like us to

provide more clarity around: the circumstances under which a council member might face a recall vote as well as the circumstances under which a bylaw might be overridden. The members opposite will see those amendments in the coming day.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, the amendments haven't been tabled yet, but based on how unpopular and poorly drafted Bill 20 is with key stakeholders, it's quite reasonable to assume those amendments are going to need a lot of work. To the Premier: will she commit that the current plan to limit debate on the amendments will be abandoned and that the government will withdraw it and that debate and consultation and amendments will continue until the majority of municipal stakeholders are actually in support of what is now an incredibly draconian piece of legislation?

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

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Minister of Municipal Affairs has reached out to the heads of the municipal associations to get their feedback on how to amend a couple of the clauses that their members had expressed concern about. Those amendments will come forward this afternoon. We will have fulsome debate. We have early indication that the approach that we're taking is one that will be widely accepted by the municipalities, so I look forward to seeing the debate this afternoon.

Ms Notley: It appears as though the plan to limit remains in place.

Irony is not dead, Mr. Speaker. This Premier is blocking debate more times in this sitting than ever, and with Bill 20 she's not just shutting down debate here; she's shutting down Albertans' ability to speak in town halls all across the province. To the Premier: has she grown allergic to the grassroots? Does she not see that her top-down, heavy-handed, my-voice-is-the-only-one-that-counts approach goes against absolutely everything she claimed to be about in the last election?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I was in opposition, I took pride in supporting the government on about 75 per cent of their bills. We didn't obstruct absolutely everything that came forward, unlike the members opposite. When we put forward a bill, we have a number of different means to make sure that we are going in the right direction. We have social media, we have people calling our offices, we have meetings, we take time between the different readings . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: . . . and when we identify a problem or something that needs clarity, we bring forward amendments. That's how the process works, and the members opposite will see the amendments to Bill 20 this afternoon.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore has a question.

Alberta Energy Regulator Board Appointment

Ms Al-Guneid: The Premier's friend David Yager got a sole-source contract to review the Alberta Energy Regulator. After his short – a few pages – \$70,000 report, this Premier appointed him to the AER board. One of the report's findings was to review board compensation. So let me get this straight. We have a UCP insider paid to review the AER who then recommends that board members

should be paid more, and the government appoints him to that board. Does the minister really think that after the AER scandals and failures, the board deserves higher pay?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, the NDP bringing up this question time and again only reminds Albertans of how they let a scam go on during the Alberta Energy Regulator when they were government, a scam, a criminal scam, that was trying to take money from the hard-working people of Alberta for their own personal gain.

Now, that's the kind of management that those folks hire, Mr. Speaker. We hire people that are experts in the field. For instance, what they did during their time in tenure also – and I should point out that when they held and hired people under sole-source contracts, they hired non-Albertans. When we hire experts, as most governments do, we hire Albertans. That's a big difference right there.

Ms Al-Guneid: It is wildly inappropriate, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to this review, the UCP paid their buddy David Yager another \$136,000 sole-source contract for professional services. The AER, which is supposed to be arm's length, has a board member who's getting paid directly by the government. So much for independence. Sounds like entitlement to me. The AER should be independent from the Premier's office. Will the minister promise that their pal David Yager won't get more paycheques from the government while he's appointed to the AER?

2:00

Mr. Jean: Well, it's true. Mr. Yager did receive compensation from the government. I believe the number the member is referring to is over a two-year period, though, Mr. Speaker. It's also true that Mr. Yager in the private sector could be paid a lot more money, but he's actually very focused on the AER because he knows how important the Alberta Energy Regulator is not just to Alberta, not just to Albertans but to the world. It's very important. I would think that those members opposite, when they have a chance to fix the issues with energy security and energy poverty in the world with Albertans' resources, would take us up on that and use the best people possible to make that . . .

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

Ms Al-Guneid: David Yager's \$70,000 thirty-something-page review found that the UCP undermined the AER with a 20 per cent staff reduction that resulted in, quote, the loss of highly skilled and experienced staff, with no significant internal measures to pass on or preserve their knowledge of the organization, which resulted in failures, from consulting, reporting, dealing with Indigenous communities, and failing to deal with the growing liability of abandoned wells. Can the minister explain how the Premier's friend receiving over \$130,000 while being a board member will fix this? It is wildly inappropriate.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Yager is one of Alberta's most experienced and respected analysts and commentators on energy. He has led significant oil service companies in Alberta. He has worked as an industry consultant for independent major accounting firms. He has been the chair of PSAC. For those people that don't know, that's the Petroleum Services Association of Canada. David Yager ran HSE, one of Alberta's largest oil field safety companies. He wrote miracle to menace, and they should read it. It should be mandatory reading for all people that want to understand the oil and gas industry in Canada. David Yager chaired the Alberta's energy future panel. He's the best person . . .

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

Wage Growth and Cost of Living

Member Kayande: Mr. Speaker, too many Albertans are finding the cost-of-living crisis to be too much to handle because this government has taken no actions to make life more affordable. In Calgary food bank usage has skyrocketed. CEO Melissa From said that no matter how hard folks work, Alberta's high inflation is making things worse. Calgary has the highest inflation of any major city in Canada, but this government cancelled the promised tax reductions, hiked fuel taxes, and even introduced a homebuying tax in their budget. Why is this government doing nothing for Albertans falling further and further behind?

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

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is proud to stand up for Albertans and do an enormous amount of work making sure that we are providing the services they need all across the board. Every single ministry is doing the work to make sure that life becomes more affordable and more predictable for all Albertans. We are doing the work that we can do. The number one attribute that is contributing to the cost of inflation and the rise of costs in Alberta is the federal carbon tax, which the members opposite and their party in Ottawa continue to support. We ask them to stand up for Albertans and help us do the right thing.

Member Kayande: Mr. Speaker, polling data released today said that the majority of Albertans are finding it hard to meet their monthly expenses. Visible minorities, young people, and people with kids at home are finding it more and more difficult to pay for the high cost of living. But instead of growing the economy for everyone, wage growth is the lowest in Canada. People's salaries aren't keeping up. The minimum wage is the third-lowest in Canada, and unemployment is at some of the highest levels across all provinces. Why won't this government focus on wage growth for Albertans who are increasingly finding it harder than ever to make ends meet?

Mr. Jones: Mr. Speaker, cost of living is a concern across Canada. Can Alberta do better? That's a question Albertans asked from 2015 to 2019, and they knew the answer was yes, which is why they replaced the former NDP government with a Conservative government. Instead of having 13 consecutive months of people leaving Alberta for opportunity, we are now at 24 months of Canadians coming to Alberta because it has the best combination of opportunity and cost of living in Canada.

Member Kayande: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are losing ground to inflation every single month, and there's nothing to brag about in that. What's driving those numbers are low wage growth and the higher than ever costs of housing. Rent prices are skyrocketing, but this government takes no action, and even getting into the housing market is increasingly more and more out of reach. Parents are looking at a future where their children will never own a home. This government has done nothing to make life more affordable. Why has this government focused on their own entitlements to power and their attacks on democracy rather than getting the fundamentals of good quality of life and affordable cost of living?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right. When they were in power, they built no houses and created a housing crisis in our province. Under 1,500 houses, Mr. Speaker. This

government announced more than that this month alone. [interjections]

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

Mr. Nixon: They really don't like it when I point out their record, Mr. Speaker, so how about I point out our record? We have the fastest growing housing starts anywhere in the country, up 67 per cent, when the rest of the country is down 10 per cent, up 64 per cent in the city that we're in right now . . . [interjections]

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

Mr. Nixon: . . . above 50 per cent in the city of Calgary. We are going to continue to take action, build more homes, and make sure Albertans have a place to live, and we're not going to do these socialist ideas that are destroying this province.

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted by the hon. the Government House Leader at 2:06.

Continuing Care Standards

Ms Pancholi: This year Albertans have witnessed a stunning lack of respect by the UCP for seniors and those needing care. They eliminated the minimum hours of care for seniors in continuing care, and they continue to support Greg Christenson, a bad actor who is withholding millions of dollars owed to Alberta seniors. Now this week we learned that – you guessed it – Christenson companies is laying off all the health care aides in the Devonshire care centre in my riding and slashing their hours. This will absolutely impact the care these seniors need. Is this what the Minister of Health considers respect for Alberta seniors?

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

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, nothing can be further from the truth. The members opposite continue to misrepresent what is an actual fact. Under the new continuing care legislation we actually have more than doubled the amount of time that seniors are getting; we're funding over 3.9 hours, I believe it is. So the member opposite needs to get her facts straight.

Ms Pancholi: Well, given that the facts are that the seniors in my riding are going to be getting less care, given that any Albertan who has ever had relatives in continuing care centres or knows someone who works in one understands the importance of appropriate and quality care and given that reducing staffing levels and hours of care will obviously seriously impact these seniors and given that Devonshire care centre is doing this right now, eliminating full-time health care aides, directly affecting the seniors in my riding, will the minister acknowledge that under her watch care for seniors is getting worse?

Member LaGrange: I will acknowledge no such thing because it is not true, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we brought in continuing care legislation, which actually took effect as of April 1. It modernized continuing care. We've added a billion dollars over three years to transform the continuing care legislation. We've added permanent increases by \$2 an hour for health care aides. We are going to continue to make sure that our seniors, who actually have built this province, get the respect that they deserve and the care that they deserve.

Ms Pancholi: Well, given that the health care aides that work in the centre in my riding are now getting fewer hours and are getting laid off, so any increases in pay are going to be affected by the fact that they're not working as much, and given that these workers make barely \$20 an hour, they often have to work two jobs to support their families, and they are rallying outside of the Devonshire care centre in my riding as we speak, perhaps the minister would like to explain to them why as of April 1, as an effect of the legislation she brought in, they are going to have less money in their pockets and provide a lower level of care to the seniors in my riding?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the member opposite continues to create fear within the community. Over a billion dollars: we announced the aging with dignity . . . [interjections]

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

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the members opposite don't really like to listen to the answers that we give, but we have many initiatives that we are continuing to provide, including building more continuing care spaces across this province, over \$658 million in capital infrastructure, more dollars going to operational expenses as well. We'll continue to look after our seniors.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti has a question.

2:10

Skilled Trades Promotion

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's economy and population are booming thanks to this government's focus on growth, diversification, and affordability. While we are proud to welcome ambitious newcomers and job creators, growth does bring some challenges. To grow our infrastructure, meet the needs and demands for housing, and fill the vacancies in our workforce, we need more skilled trades workers. To the Minister of Advanced Education: how is Alberta's government encouraging young people to consider a career in skilled trades?

Mrs. Sawhney: Thank you to the hon. member for that question. Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely proud to share that Advanced Education has appointed an advisory council of Skilled Trades Youth Ambassadors. The 12 ambassadors are forward-thinking young Albertans actively engaged in the skilled trades. Each has been nominated by their postsecondary institution based on performance excellence on their apprenticeship path. They will support our work to champion the trades by providing recommendations to improve awareness for young Albertans about the opportunities in the trades. I'm very grateful for the wealth of talent and passion that they bring to this important project.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for her response. It sounds like an innovation strategy that every member should be proud to support.

Given that education in the trades is just as valuable as a university degree and further given the tremendous opportunities available to students in the skilled trades, with unique experiences that lead students to pursue an apprenticeship, Mr. Speaker, has the Minister of Advanced Education had the opportunity to meet with students in the trades and gather feedback and hear their stories?

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, at Red Deer Polytechnic I had the opportunity to meet Ben Rainforth, a 2023 Skills Canada gold medalist in welding. Ben was raised in Lacombe, where his father, also a welder, fixed everything himself on the farm. Through his high school shop classes and attending the 2009 WorldSkills competition in Calgary, Ben decided his future was in welding. Now Ben will be representing Canada and Alberta at the 2023 WorldSkills competition in Lyon, France. From a farm in Lacombe to competing on the international stage in France, opportunities in the trades unlock doors to the future.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. That's an inspiring story, and I hope more Albertans have the chance to hear it.

Given that Alberta's government is committed to supporting opportunities for students along with the needs of job creators and given that the trades offer students a pathway to an affordable education in high-demand fields and given the important role that trades play in supporting affordability and a strong economy, how else is the Minister of Advanced Education supporting the trades in Alberta?

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, Budget 2024 invests \$24 million per year over the next three years to create 3,200 apprenticeship seats at 11 postsecondary institutions across the province. We signed a historic agreement with the International Union of Operating Engineers local 955 to deliver crane operator apprenticeship training. The Minister of Jobs, Economy and Trade announced a third phase of the Alberta Is Calling campaign, with a \$5,000 refundable tax credit to attract more skilled workers. Next week we will have more good news to share with our friends at NAIT.

Bill 18

Mr. Ellingson: Mr. Speaker, we have heard from the Minister of Technology and Innovation that now is the best time for a technology company in Alberta, but last year venture capital firms hit the pause button on Alberta with investments flatlining. Now with their antidemocratic, entitled agenda the UCP is putting even more at risk. With uncertainty in the venture capital markets why is the Minister of Technology and Innovation still supporting Bill 18, the gatekeeper act, that will impact the number of investable start-up companies in Alberta?

Mr. Glubish: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that even just today I was meeting with some venture capital investors, and you know what they said to me? They said that Alberta is the place to watch; it's the place to be. We're not going to listen to the nonsense from the other side because we know what it actually takes to build a strong tech sector that is growing and thriving. When they were in government, they saw \$30 million a year of investment into venture deals. We're seeing over \$700 million a year over the last two years, all at a time when the Canadian market was on the decline. I am confident that we are on the right track, that our government is laying the foundation for a strong tech future for all Albertans.

Mr. Ellingson: Given that our province has the proven ability to generate research, translate research into innovations, and commercialize those innovations into new products and companies, given that the companies borne out of Canadian Institutes of Health Research include companies like 48Hour Discovery from right here in Edmonton and the University of Alberta and given that these companies are raising capital rounds, generating revenue, hiring

people, and growing our economy and given that the UCP is now rushing to limit debate on Bill 18, why is the Minister of Technology and Innovation willing to put future opportunities like this at risk by supporting Bill 18?

Mr. Glubish: Mr. Speaker, like I said, we know a thing or two about building a strong tech sector. We've got a government that has laid the foundation to see record levels of increase in tech investment. You know what? I'm bringing all of the experience and all of my past networks as a former venture investor myself to this government to make sure we are taking the right steps forward, and I'm confident we're on the right track. Of course research from our postsecondaries is important, because that's where a lot of spinoff companies come from, and of course we will work closely with our postsecondary partners. I speak with the presidents of our major universities all the time, and I can tell you that we are on the right track, and we will not be blocking any important technology investment required.

Mr. Ellingson: Given that Edmonton has placed considerable focus on developing the health and life sciences sector, including support to health city, given that BioAlberta and API are working to advance health and life sciences here in Alberta, given that companies like A-BaVi Protec have spun out of the University of Alberta in growing the health tech ecosystem, after the founder received funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, will the minister agree with the concerns being raised about Bill 18, or is he along with this government so entitled that they will continue to push it forward?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Glubish: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite clearly does not know his history of what's happened in Canada. The fact is that in Quebec they have very similar legislation, and they have found a way to make it work.

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

Mr. Glubish: Mr. Speaker, we will also find a way to make this work so that we can ensure that Alberta's priorities are protected, ensure that we are getting fair funding from Ottawa towards our research priorities, but also ensuring that we are able to attract venture investments into the important spinoff companies that come out of our postsecondary institutions. The NDP are all about: we can't do anything. Over here we are a can-do government, we are a can-do province, and we are going to get the job done. That is what we can promise to Albertans. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

The hon. the Government House Leader called a point of order at 2:17.

Kananaskis Conservation Pass

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, after nearly 50 years of free access for Albertans the UCP decided that Kananaskis needed a toll booth, pulling more than \$15 million from Albertans' pockets, just to access this beautiful landscape. During an affordability crisis they decided to add yet another strain on family budgets. Albertans aren't thrilled. One such Albertan called the scheme totally ridiculous. That Albertan was our very own Premier. It's been two years since she condemned the K pass. When will she finally cancel this cash grab, or is this just another broken promise?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Forestry and Parks.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for the question. We know that Kananaskis is a busy place. About 4 million people a year go to Kananaskis, enjoy the beauty there, and we know that with the K pass that money goes directly back into Kananaskis to help fund the important things that people need to do and want to do there. We are expanding trails. We have partners that work with trail management and trail improvements there. In fact, this year we gave, I think, \$940,000 worth of grants to people in that area. We use that money for enforcement, to make sure that people are following the rules and make sure that we're protecting our great spaces there in the Kananaskis Country.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that the Premier declared that Kananaskis was always supposed to be that open access place for Albertans and charging a \$90 park pass to access our own backyard is completely irrational and unreasonable and given that she's on record agreeing with the Leader of the Opposition that these fees are a heavy burden on families, especially with the cost of everything else skyrocketing, and given that here we are still paying \$90 for a park pass and \$43 a night for an unreserved camping site when – let's be honest – Albertans need lower living costs, more campsites, and fewer fees, not more red tape, will the Premier finally honour her campaign promise and axe the pass?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Forestry and Parks.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the member for the question. When it comes to the money that we spend in Kananaskis, the K pass does not cover the amount of money that we put into Kananaskis. We know it's important. The NDP, of course, didn't maintain the parks. They didn't maintain the trails. They didn't do the good work that we're doing. We're spending that money in the areas to make sure that the people of Alberta and the people that come to visit Alberta have a place to go and something great to do when they get there so that they can go home and tell other people, and more people will come to visit our great areas here in Alberta.

2:20

Mr. Schmidt: Given that the Premier tells Albertans that she agrees with them and she agrees with the Leader of the Opposition that the K pass is completely bogus and given that she has realized that the cost of living for Albertans is soaring under her government while she's been busy catering to her far-right supporters and given that, according to her, the idea that somehow we're going to improve things and improve access by charging Albertans more money is a solution that is simply foolish, will the Premier for once do what she knows is right and axe the pass, or are we stuck with this absurd fee while we wait for her to catch up with her whole . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Forestry and Parks.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think it's pretty rich to have the NDP talking about the expenses of Albertans and the cost of living when they and their supporters supported the carbon tax. They brought in a carbon tax. They didn't campaign on it, and now they're talking about cost of living and inflation.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the K pass and we look at the money that it generates and the money that goes back into Kananaskis to support the good things the people of Alberta want to do when they go out on the long weekend in May and other times around the year, again, we're not taking any lessons from the NDP when it comes to affordability. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Grande Prairie is next.

Federal Zero Plastic Waste Initiative

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's no surprise that the federal government is continuing with their series of punitive, ideologically driven, out-of-touch, and ill-advised policies and regulations, ones that damage Alberta and Canada as a whole. Their track record of not caring and not understanding the repercussions of their decisions continues with the federal government's zero plastic waste initiative. With this initiative impacting agricultural plastics and food manufacturers, to the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation: what concerns does our Alberta government have with the zero plastic waste initiative? [interjections]

Mr. Williams: Point of order.

The Speaker: Order. A point of order is noted at 2:22.

The hon. the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation.

Mr. Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for this question. As Albertans and Canadians continue to battle with high food prices, you'd think it would be obvious that the federal government should be supporting the ag industry, the people who produce that food, yet the feds are doing the exact opposite with their zero plastic waste initiative. The Minister of Environment and Protected Areas and I have already sent a letter to the federal minister making it clear that this federal initiative will burden producers and food manufacturers, destabilize food security, drive out investment, and increase food prices for all Canadians.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mr. Dyck: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that in 2023 the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation announced the agri-processing investment tax credit to attract large-scale investment in value-added agriculture manufacturing and further given that the federal government's proposed recycling content requirement for plastic packaging, recyclability labelling rules, and the plastic reporting registry will increase costs and red tape, to the minister of agriculture: what effect would this federal zero plastic waste initiative have on Alberta's manufacturers and our growing agricultural processing investment?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is absolutely correct. This initiative will negatively affect the growth in value-added agricultural processing we're seeing right now in the province. It will mean Alberta food manufacturers providing the same product for large retailers in the United States and in Canada: they will be forced to carry two types of packaging to satisfy the requirements in each country. Alternatives are also either not available or incredibly costly. Ultimately, this will decrease their competitive advantage. This will drive away investment all across our value-added agriprocessing industry.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that farmers and ranchers will face additional financial burdens through this initiative and given that Alberta's farmers and ranchers are already leaders in sustainability and recycling agricultural plastics and further given that increased costs at the production level often get passed down to consumers and when production costs go up the price at the store goes up, affecting affordability for all Albertans across our province, to the minister of agriculture: can you tell the

House how the federal zero plastic waste initiative will impact farmers, ranchers, and consumers in Alberta and Canada?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member for the question. We know that any increased costs from this initiative will ultimately be passed on to consumers. The recent hike to the federal carbon tax is already burdening farmers and ranchers, which means increased costs for both producers and consumers, and this initiative will only add to that. Hopefully, the members opposite can phone the mother ship, the Trudeau Liberal alliance in the federal government, and maybe ask their bosses to reconsider that this policy will continue to drive up food prices to Canadian . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation Funding

Member Boparai: Mr. Speaker, in Calgary-Falconridge families are facing the high cost of living under the UCP. So many Albertans are worried about the state of their finances and about their abilities to make ends meet. The high cost of living is forcing families to make tough choices about paying rent or buying food, paying the utility bill or paying the car insurance. What this means for many families is that the extracurricular events, like sports and other activities, for kids are lost. What is the government doing to support the families of Calgary-Falconridge and all Albertans in ensuring that their children access all the activities they need?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Tourism and Sport and Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the member opposite for asking this very important question. The government and we believe, and I think all members of this Chamber believe, how important recreation and sport is for children and Albertans of all ages. That is why we feel strongly in supporting the every kid can play grant, which is an \$8 million grant which has increased from the \$4 million return to play grant coming out of COVID, making sure that youth can have the access to recreation, have their registration fees covered so no one is left out on the sidelines.

Member Boparai: Given that families in my community are having to give up getting their children vital exercise due to cost, given that there has been a lack of investment in sporting facilities, community groups, and local infrastructure in the entire northeast Calgary, given that we know that sports for young Albertans are a great source of physical and mental health and that we need places for youth to exercise, play sports, and grow, will the minister commit to providing the funding that the northeast needs so that the families have more opportunities for their kids in sports?

Mr. Schow: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is definitely pushing on an open door. On this side of the House we feel very strongly about making sure that kids and Albertans of all ages have a place to recreate. We also know that the recreation facilities in the province aren't just a place for sports; they're also a place for getting together and building community. That is why we've introduced the active communities initiative, a \$30 million grant program that allows nonprofits, community organizations, Métis settlements, Indigenous communities to apply for grants up to \$1.5 million, that are matching, to make sure we're investing in new and refurbished infrastructure for sports and recreation.

Member Boparai: Given that the NDP was ready to invest millions into important sport funding and community centres through the hometown Alberta grant that would invest in needed recreational infrastructure, hockey rinks, field hockey grounds, soccer fields, and cricket pitches, given that we know the importance of practising sport to grow and invest into our communities for the future and given that the UCP are not building the schools and other critical infrastructure that my constituents and all northeast Calgarians need, what will it take for the UCP to stop ignoring northeast Calgary and start delivering for them?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schow: I will thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again to that member for the question. He clearly cares very deeply about his constituents and their ability to recreate and get out and build community. That is exactly why we have introduced the active communities grant, which is available to all nonprofits, community societies, Métis settlements, and Indigenous communities around the entire province. It's certainly not exclusive to one region of the province or another; everyone is open to this grant, to apply for it. Actually, the early interest application deadline is June 1, so I encourage anyone watching that is interested in applying for this grant to make sure they get that in before the deadline.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Camrose.

Career Opportunities in Alberta

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's graduation season, which means I have the opportunity to attend many graduation ceremonies across the Camrose constituency. The bright and energetic students at these events reinforce my faith in the future of our province. However, many of these graduates have shared uncertainty they feel regarding their futures. Some are planning to take gap years so they have more time to find their vocation and choose the right career for them. Could the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Trade highlight some of the growing sectors which could offer exciting opportunities for some of these students?

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

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have great news for those graduating students. There are opportunities in many exciting fields thanks to our growing and diversifying economy. We have a huge need in the skilled trades due to massive investments from companies like Dow Chemical and their \$11 billion Path2Zero facility, and we need to build infrastructure, schools, and housing to meet the needs of our growing population. By 2033 we are expecting an additional 40,000 openings in the skilled trades. Alberta has also seen significant investment in aviation and aerospace with the likes of De Havilland selecting Wheatland county for their new facility and WestJet centring their operations in Calgary. We are forecasting 4,500 openings for pilots, flight engineers, mechanics, and aircraft inspectors.

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Camrose.

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that vocational training is a proven way to give students hands-on job experience and given that I hear from students in my constituency about the opportunities presented by vocational training like the registered apprenticeship program and further given the impending shortage of skilled trades workers in key industries, a problem which more apprentices could help address, could the Minister of Education advise how the

government is working to increase the availability of vocational training in Alberta for students?

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, Mr. Speaker, creating and expanding opportunities for vocational trades and just generally experiential learning opportunities for our students is a top priority of our government, primarily because we firmly believe that a trade certificate has the same value, merit, and worth as a university degree. We're doing a number of things to help expand these opportunities. We are investing approximately \$12 million over the next three years to expand career and technology studies programs as well as dual-credit programs. We're also providing funding to Careers: the Next Generation to help expand the registered apprenticeship program, and more activities will be coming in the future as well.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Camrose.

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that pursuing a postsecondary education is one of the most common paths students take before entering the workforce and given that through open houses, presentations postsecondary institutions themselves often inform students about the programs available for them to pursue and further given the need to ensure these students are entering the postsecondary programs with the prospect of future employment, could the Minister of Education explain how he is working with postsecondary institutions so students receive the best program advice for the job market?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we work very closely with our amazing postsecondary institutions to ensure that students are aware of the breadth of career opportunities that are available to them. It's something that the government wants to work on facilitating as well. My mandate letter, of course, calls upon the government to work at expanding career fairs and creating more opportunities for students to be exposed to different career options that may be out there. Of course, guidance counsellors and other professionals in our schools also provide guidance, as do partnerships with our postsecondary institutions.

Wait-lists for Disability Programs

Member Batten: Mr. Speaker, we know that early intervention programming is essential for children with developmental disabilities, and we know that the demand has grown exponentially in the last three years. The minister of community and social services admitted in an e-mail, and I quote, that since 2020 the volume of applications has increased by 96 per cent. End quote. Knowing that and knowing that families are struggling, why is this government not significantly increasing resources to support Albertan families and better resource FSCD?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, we continue to fund FSCD to the tune of about a quarter billion dollars a year. It is a program that is widely popular. It's actually run by families in partnership with Seniors, Community and Social Services. We had round-tables over the last six or seven months with those families, who have indicated to us that they like the program. In fact, their number one piece of advice was not to mess with the program, so we won't be doing that. But as we continue to see population growth and different other things that take place, we have to continue to put in measures to be able to help deal with wait-lists. We've invested in that way

in Calgary, which I'll talk about in the next moment, in the next question.

Member Batten: Mr. Speaker, given that families are waiting more than six months to receive FSCD after being approved – what they say is that it's due to staff turnover and limited resources – and given the amount of stress that this is adding to these families, what is the minister's plan to increase staff recruitment and retention and to ensure adequate resource allocation for services to children with disabilities, and why has he failed thus far?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, this government was the first government to actually increase wages for those who work with the disabled, something that this government has been widely congratulated and thanked for going forward. We've also invested significantly in technology. Part of the challenge that we've seen with our wait-lists for our large programs was a lack of technology. We went through that process. Calgary, that had the largest waiting list when it came to children with disabilities: we put in a new computer system, new staffing programs, and I'm happy to report that we reduced that wait-list as a result of those efforts.

Member Batten: Given that there are hundreds of children on the wait-list for FSCD funding and that it can take months to apply for and receive AISH funding, given that families need to apply years in advance to have PDD in place by the time their child turns 18, and given the need for more funding to ensure these families can get the supports they need, will the minister take action today to better resource Albertans with disabilities and show that they understand that the lives and well-being of Albertans matter?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, this government is investing more in PDD than any government in history. In fact, this budget just increased by I think around \$40 million, now up to about \$1.6 billion that we're spending on PDD going forward. We're going to continue to do that.

The Premier has put into my mandate letter also to look at that issue of transitioning from childhood to adulthood. We are going to be coming forward with a plan on how we're going to make that work within the system. We're actually working with my colleague in Technology and Information to be able to make sure that we can utilize technology to help individuals that are using our disability programs as they transition from youth to adulthood.

Retiree's Benefit Payment

Mr. Dach: Mr. Speaker, my constituent Troy MacInnes is a veteran who retired from the Alberta correctional service more than three years ago. He recently received a letter from service Alberta demanding repayment of \$441.04 resulting from a, quote, payroll system configuration error, unquote, just before his retirement. This matter has triggered Mr. MacInnes's severe PTSD. He finds it nearly impossible to deal with the stress of this UCP bureaucratic malfunction. To the minister: for how long will this government hound a retired public servant, a veteran, for a small overpayment that was the government's fault in the first place?

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

Mr. Nally: Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. To the hon. member, please thank your constituent for his service; it's appreciated. I don't have any more details on the situation, but I would encourage you to pass that information on to my office. I'd be happy to have my officials look into it.

Mr. Dach: Given that on February 24 this year Mr. MacInnes received an e-mailed response letter from service Alberta to an inquiry e-mail made on his behalf by my constituency office and given that the letter ends with an offer to discuss, quote, time-to-pay options and that Mr. MacInnes is not in a position to take on another battle and given that he deserves a resolution beyond time-to-pay options – it has probably already cost the government of Alberta more than \$441 to badger Mr. MacInnes to recover the money they mistakenly overpaid him – what oversight is there to prevent this troubling situation from happening to other retirees out of government service?

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, I regret that the situation has happened, and I agree with the hon. member. The faster that we can resolve this, the better. In fact, I would encourage that member that the next time anything like this happens, don't wait for question period to bring it up; come on down to my office in 103. I'd be happy to help him out personally. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Mr. Dach: Mr. Speaker, I've already alluded to communications that have taken place between my office and the minister's office, and it hasn't been resolved. That's why we're here today asking questions.

Given that Mr. MacInnes feels he's not alone and that he wonders how many other retired provincial public servants are facing demands for payment to collection recovery systems to fix system reconfiguration errors that are turning their early retirement years into a frustrating battle with a big ball of sticky red tape, is there no statute of limitations on the UCP government's policy of chasing people for clawbacks and collecting retirement benefits?

The Speaker: The hon. the minister of service Alberta.

Mr. Nally: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure somewhere in there there was a reasonable question, but I missed it. Here's what I'll say to that member. We have thousands of retirees in this province, and they get paid on time every time. But I don't doubt that, with thousands that are retired, occasionally one falls through the cracks, and I would encourage that member: contact my office. I'm in 103, and I will personally make sure that this is looked into. I think that we want to recognize that individual's service to this province and take care of this as fast as possible.

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

Health Care Wait Times

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has committed to improving emergency and surgical wait times. Budget 2024 invested \$618 million in targeted spending to improve access to surgeries in acute-care facilities that perform surgeries. Budget 2024 also included \$313 million over three years for the Alberta surgical initiative capital program, which adds and expands operating rooms across the province. To the Minister of Health: how will the current initiative by our government help reduce wait times for emergency rooms and for surgeries in Alberta?

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to those targeted investments that the member highlighted, over the next three years \$3.6 billion has been committed to maintain or expand health care facilities across Alberta. Our government continues to

work closely with AHS to improve wait times by co-ordinating efforts to ensure Albertans are getting the right supports in the appropriate places. We'll continue to do that. We're taking action to improve patient flow through acute-care facilities. We're also expanding care outside of emergency departments through innovative approaches. We're going to keep doing that, and we're seeing results.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-East.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. Given that some of my constituents have expressed concerns regarding wait-lists for surgical operations like knee and hip replacements and given that this UCP government is committed to reducing wait times and further given that the latest data shows more Albertans are receiving these surgeries within clinically recommended times than at any other time since 2020, can the same minister speak to what the government of Alberta is currently doing to improve surgical wait times?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, our government is working hard to ensure every Albertan receives their required surgeries within clinically recommended wait times. Last year alone we completed over 300,000 surgeries. That's up over 10,000 more than the previous year. AHS also has recently entered into agreements with chartered surgical facilities in Edmonton and Calgary zones to complete up to 6,000 orthopaedic surgeries annually, and central zone will also increase its annual capacity to provide 800 more hip and knee replacements. We're going to keep working to get this done.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the minister. Given that our government has managed to implement significant improvements to our health care system and aims to continue improving it and further given the need to reduce wait times in pediatric emergency rooms and walk-in clinics, to the same minister: how will Bill 22, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, further improve our health care system and reduce these wait times in our province?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, Bill 22 was introduced to help support Alberta's health care system refocus, transitioning from a single regional health authority to a more unified health system that refocuses on four priority sectors: primary care, acute care, continuing care, and mental health and addiction. We are paving the way for better transparency, accountability, and organization. By enhancing government oversight, we can ensure the resources are directed to our front lines, supporting health care professionals, and improving patient care for all Albertans. This is enabling legislation which will get us to that next step.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this concludes the time allotted for Oral Question Period. In 30 seconds or less we'll continue with the remainder of Members' Statements.

Members' Statements

(continued)

Government Policies

Mr. Deol: The UCP governs for no one but themselves and their closest pals. Want proof? Just watch them. Health care is an

absolute disaster. Our students are literally under attack. There is an affordability crisis in every industry, and where are the government's priorities? They want to get their hands on Albertans' pensions through a new pension plan. No one asked for it. No one wanted it. They said that they wouldn't do it, but off they went.

They want to hold renewable energy down. The entire world is looking for ways to ensure our children and their children can live long, healthy lives on a planet that is sustainable and creating jobs in new sectors.

While the UCP turn their backs on what matters most to Albertans, the gravy train of goodies to their friends has finally choo-chooed its way right off the tracks. The Premier once decried the practice of governments feeding tax dollars to the begging mouths of their closest friends. Isn't it amazing what can be changed with the controls in one's hands?

Remember David Yager, the Premier's good buddy and former Wildrose president? Well, the UCP decided that he was worthy of a \$136,000 competition-free contract. Oh, and by the way, that was already his third such contract. They raised their gift limits, just what Albertans need. After all, what good are sole-source contracts if all they can get is a \$200 present in return?

The UCP has only one clear mission, which is to be entitled to their entitlements. We all deserve much better.

Thank you.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo has a bill to introduce.

Bill 211

Arts and Creative Economy Advisory Council Act

Member Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to rise and request leave to introduce Bill 211, the Arts and Creative Economy Advisory Council Act.

If passed, this bill would create an arts and creative economy advisory council with a mandate to collect provincial data and provide recommendations to the government on how to support and grow the arts and creative economy.

Mr. Speaker, the creative industries are essential for Alberta. They improve the quality of life, support the retention of workers, attract business investment, and contribute to the economic vitality of this great province. The new bill will bring a new perspective to the arts and culture in Alberta, and I hope members in this Legislature will support it.

Thank you, sir.

[Motion carried; Bill 211 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague from Lethbridge-West I'm tabling five copies of a letter from the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team wherein ASIRT determines "that there were reasonable grounds to believe that two officers had committed criminal offences by accessing [that member's] data in 2018."

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung, followed by Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this afternoon to table the requisite five copies of Don Braid's column, which appeared in the *Journal* and *Calgary Herald* this morning. It talks about Alberta legislation designed to turn Alberta into a "united little state" to fight Ottawa and stifle internal opposition.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you. I'd like to table five copies of the April 2024 Inflation Review from the city of Calgary, just hot off the presses. I would like to flag for all members that the report points out that "Calgary has experienced three of the top five highest rent inflations in Canada since 2000, all within the past five months."

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Mr. Kasawski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to table a news release from Alberta Municipalities today, in which they mentioned consultation from the minister. "It was too bad we couldn't sit down and discuss our concerns" about the controversial Bill 20.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Beddington, followed by Lacombe-Ponoka.

Ms Chapman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite number of copies of an article I referenced in bill debate yesterday from the Centre for Constitutional Studies, a nice little plain-language walk-through of co-operative federalism.

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

Mrs. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the five requisite copies of a research article from the *Election Law Journal* out of Princeton University titled *Ballot-Marking Devices Cannot Ensure the Will of the Voters*. I table these five copies in reference to an intervention I received yesterday about the hacking of electronic tabulators.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that brings us to points of order, and at 2:06 the Government House Leader rose on a point of order.

Mr. Schow: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did. I would like to withdraw that point of order and the third point of order but proceed immediately to the second point of order if it pleases the Speaker.

The Speaker: I consider both of those points of order dealt with, concluded, and withdrawn.

That brings us to the second point of order, where at 2:17 the hon. the Government House Leader rose on a point of order.

Point of Order

Imputing Motives

Mr. Schow: Yes, I did. I will try to be quick. At the time noted, the Member for – sorry, Mr. Speaker; I'll make sure my ducks are in a row here – Calgary-Foothills was asking a question. In the final line of his question he said, "Will the minister agree with the concerns being raised about Bill 18, or is he along with this government so entitled that they will continue to push it forward?" You cannot do indirectly what you cannot do directly. You cannot make an accusation against another member like that. I believe that would be imputing false motives, and under 23(h), (i), and (j) I think this is a point of order given that it is directed at a specific member of the Chamber.

2:50

The Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I disagree with the Government House Leader. This is not a point of order. The member is asking a question. The minister had multiple options. He does not need to be entitled along with the government, in this case. This type of framing of a question in question period is commonly used, and I do not think that this is a point of order. I look forward to your ruling.

The Speaker: Are there other submissions?

I do have the benefit of the Blues, and I am prepared to rule. I have the benefit of the Blues; however, they do not specifically speak to the hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills' statements in the Assembly and are primarily around while the minister was speaking or the point of order was called.

What I will say is that while I always encourage members to not make personal or direct accusations about individuals, I'm not sure that in this case it rises to the level of a point of order. But I will provide a caution to the hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills. When crafting his question, it's unlikely to create order if he is making a direct accusation of a minister of the government. But in this case it's not a point of order. I consider the matter dealt with and concluded.

That brings us to Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day Government Motions Evening Sittings

32. Mr. Schow moved:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) and for the duration of the 2024 spring sitting of the First Session of the 31st Legislature the Assembly shall meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings for consideration of government business unless the Government House Leader notifies the Assembly that there shall be no evening sitting that day by providing notice under Notices of Motions in the daily Routine or at any time prior to 6 p.m.

The Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) this is not a debatable motion.

[Government Motion 32 carried]

Committee Membership

38. Mr. Schow moved:

Be it resolved that the membership of the Select Special Ethics Commissioner and Chief Electoral Officer Search Committee be replaced as follows: that Mr. Getson replace Mr. Yao as chair, that Mr. Getson replace Mr. Yao, that Hon. Mr. Hunter replace Mr. Dyck, that Mr. Rowswell replace Ms Pitt, and that Mr. Wiebe replace Mr. Stephan.

The Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 18(1)(h) this is a debatable motion. Is there anyone wishing to speak?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call the question.

[Government Motion 38 carried]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Pitt in the chair]

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

Bill 20

Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024

The Chair: I see the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs rising to speak.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise today to continue the discussion on the Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, and as part of that I'd like to move the Committee of the Whole reading.

I'd like to take some time to address some of the comments and questions raised in second reading. Before I do that, I intend to propose some amendments to the legislation at the end of what I do here.

Since tabling Bill 20, I've had conversations with the Rural Municipalities of Alberta, Alberta Municipalities, the Mid-sized Cities Mayors' Caucus, and other municipalities across Alberta. Through these conversations they have indicated to me that more clarity is needed around specific parts of the legislation. This includes the ability of cabinet to dismiss a councillor and the ability of cabinet to require a municipality to amend or repeal a bylaw.

Madam Chair, while the province has always had the ability to remove a councillor through a ministerial process – so this is definitely not a new power – it was our intention to ensure that we were able to move more quickly in the exceedingly rare cases where a councillor needs to be removed due to public breach of trust and potential harm to the community. I recognize the concerns of our municipal partners, and I've listened, so today we are tabling an amendment which repeals the most expedited dismissal process for a councillor.

However, we will retain – and to be clear, Madam Chair, I may regret this, but in the spirit of working with our municipal partners, I've done this – the ability for cabinet to order a vote of the electors to remove a councillor. This is similar to the recall petition process that can be launched by a resident. We are also amending the draft bill to clarify that this is about councillors who are unwilling, unable, or refuse to do the job of a councillor. In addition, we're clarifying that as part of the decision we will consider illegal or unethical behaviour by that councillor. Ultimately, the decision rests with the voters of the municipality, which is a good place for it to be.

But, again, I will reiterate that the removal of a councillor is a power that the province already has and has had since the Constitution has been . . .

The Chair: Hon. minister, I hesitate to interrupt. I might suggest that we actually move the amendment so the members can have a copy while you are speaking to it.

Mr. McIver: Always at the service of you, Chair. I'll hand in the amendments now at your request, and I'll wait for your go-ahead to say more. How's that?

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A1. Please note that it is three pages.

Hon. minister, you may proceed.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Madam Chair, and I thank you for your guidance on how you'd like to see this proceed.

Again, I'll reiterate that the power to remove a councillor is a power that the province has had essentially since the Constitution has been in place, and the ministerial order process remains as it always has been. Bill 20 seeks to provide a process for cabinet to expedite that process should extreme circumstances occur. I feel

confident that our amendments continue to meet the objective by moving that decision to a vote of the electorate.

Now, with respect to the amendments that allow cabinet to repeal or amend any bylaw, municipalities have requested that we clarify under what circumstances cabinet would amend or repeal a bylaw. Madam Chair, we, again, listen to our stakeholders, so rather than adding that definition in the regulations through consultations, we're tabling amendments, as we just did, to the section that will provide guidance on when this authority would be used.

These amendments will clarify that this authority can be used in a few different circumstances: first, if a municipality passes a bylaw that exceeds the scope outlined in the Municipal Government Act; second, if a municipal bylaw exceeds the authority granted to a municipality either under the Municipal Government Act or any other statute; third, if a municipal bylaw contravenes the Constitution of Canada; fourth, if a municipal bylaw is in conflict with the Municipal Government Act or any other provincial statute; and fifth, if a municipal bylaw is contrary to provincial policy. Madam Chair, these amendments keep the intent of these sections while also responding to what our municipal stakeholders have told us.

These changes make it clearer when the province could use this authority, which, as I've said previously in the Assembly, I expect to be rare, but I'd also like to remind everyone that the ability of the cabinet to remove or repeal a bylaw is not a new power. For example, when the city of Edmonton kept their mask bylaw in place in 2022, at the time Alberta's government tabled Bill 4, the Municipal Government (Face Mask and Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination Bylaws) Amendment Act, 2022. That's a mouthful, but it was necessary because the city of Edmonton chose to act like the provincial Health department, and that could not be let to stand.

3:00

Let me say this also, Madam Chair, that most laws happen this way. You know, at some point in time speed limits were put on the highways, and you would think that people would obey the speed limits. But you know what happened? People went faster and in some cases put other people's lives at risk, so laws were put in place with penalties for that. This is kind of similar. We've always had the ability to remove councillors and to change bylaws, but due to examples where municipalities have gone, really, out of their lane and gone beyond their authority, it's kind of put us in the position where we need to strengthen the laws that are in place now to make sure that if these similar circumstances crop up in the future, we'll have the ability to more expediently deal with what's necessary.

Later that day and, interestingly enough, after we passed that, the Edmonton council voted in favour, 8-5, of repealing the mandatory mask bylaw. But there are plenty of other examples outside of Alberta as well as in Alberta where municipalities are making decisions that go upside of what municipalities are meant to do. There is a municipality in British Columbia, Nanaimo, that wants to ban natural gas heating in new homes. We would never, of course, let that stand in Alberta. We hope that we never have to stop it from happening, but that is one of the things that actually has happened in other municipalities. The city of Toronto is asking the province to decriminalize drug use, which is explicitly opposed by the province, and in fact the province actually has come to their senses and asked the federal government to take that away.

But, again, I want to be clear. We want municipalities to focus on doing the job that they are meant to do, and that is delivering critically important services to communities such as road maintenance, fire services, recreation services, and public libraries among others. We as the provincial government will continue to focus on the job that we have to do under Canada's Constitution. One of those things that we have to do under Canada's Constitution

is to regulate municipalities, a one hundred per cent constitutionally guaranteed power to the provinces and only to the provinces.

When it comes to these two parts of the legislation, I'm pleased that we can provide more clarity in the legislation, as municipalities, some of them at least, have asked for.

Before moving on, I want to provide one more set of changes in the amendments that I'm introducing, specifically with the request of the coming-into-force date of the legislation. Right now Bill 20 comes into force on royal assent. However, there are several by-elections currently under way in various communities across Alberta, and we want to ensure they occur as smoothly as possible. We will look to proclaim Bill 20 later in the summer, after those by-elections are complete, because I hope we can all agree that changing the rules in the middle of an election is, generally speaking, a bad idea. We want the rules to remain in place until the current by-elections are completed.

Now to move on to some comments raised by members of the Assembly. Members across have claimed that there was a lack of consultation. Well, I've already covered that, Madam Chair. I've tabled two consultations that were done last year, one on the Local Authorities Election Act and one on the Municipal Government Act. I tabled them in the House. They've been available on the Municipal Affairs website, the government website, for a long time, so that basically proves the consultation did take place. In fact, the amendments that we're putting in place today actually, really, indicate that the consultation hasn't ended, because comments that municipalities gave about the legislation – we're already listening and putting some amendments in place at their behest. So that kind of takes away the argument that the folks across have made that there was no consultation. It's just not true.

I also want to begin by saying that we engaged extensively on the changes to the Local Authorities Election Act and on the Municipal Government Act. Since Bill 20 was tabled, I've had conversations with municipal leaders in Alberta. I've spoken to the mayors of our two largest cities and many other municipalities across Alberta, and that's what led to the amendments I've introduced today. This summer we will, as we have confirmed, be consulting with municipalities on the regulations. We've said that we were going to do that right from the point where we introduced the legislation, and we will honour that commitment.

Engagement with our municipalities is important, and so is listening to Albertans. We also must take action in areas where they see there are issues, specifically where we see a lack of transparency and accountability in the election process. Trust in election results is critical, and protecting the perception of the fairness and transparency of local elections is important. Election processes must not only be fair but actually be seen to be fair. For example, I'm aware that some electors, some people in Alberta, don't trust tabulators. I'm not going to speculate on why they don't trust them.

But what's most important, Madam Chair, is that the day after the day after the election when municipal councillors, mayors, and Reeves are elected, they have very important work to do. They pass rules and bylaws that Albertans within those municipalities have to live by, and we need to make sure that those Albertans, whether they like who won the election or whether they don't like who won the election, must accept the fact that the people sitting in the council seats were actually the ones duly elected by the most legitimate voters within that municipality, and that should help to encourage respect for those duly elected municipal councillors, mayors, and Reeves and the decisions that they have to make and that people have to abide by. We don't want people saying that that is not the case.

It's also why we made changes to the local authorities act to strengthen the role of scrutineers. Our number one goal is, again, to

make sure Albertans have trust in the process, and I believe these changes will ensure Albertans can trust the election processes.

Albertans also want to know what the candidates on their ballots stand for, and they want the ability to make the decision about who to vote for with ease. For example, we have heard about municipal political parties. Madam Chair, we know there are partylike organizations that allegedly worked together in the last municipal election. In fact, we know this, and they did it without any rules. That is not right. That is not transparent. Should Bill 20 pass, there will be rules in place to make any kind of political organization at the municipal level more transparent than in the past.

As I've said many times through speeches at Alberta Municipalities and at Rural Municipalities of Alberta as well as in numerous individual conversations with local officials, this is not a new idea. I will say to this House, as I have said to municipalities since their initial consultation, that local elections will remain local, but they certainly can be more transparent, and they will always remain voluntary. Albertans will not see a municipal UCP or a municipal NDP or a municipal Liberal Party or any municipal party affiliated with any provincial or national party in Canada, because we want local elections to stay local, another thing that municipal leaders said they want, another example of us listening to those municipal leaders, doing that consultation, and putting things in place that they asked for. So there will be no direct connection with the federal or provincial parties, whether the same name or a different name, and we're limiting these parties to Calgary and Edmonton.

Again, we at one point considered putting these rules in place for all 300-plus municipalities, and after listening, after consulting, only two municipalities will have this in place, Madam Chair. The two big municipalities are the place where partylike political organization is most prevalent. There are already some solid rules within the proposed amendments regarding political parties, but there is also some broad regulation-making authority as well, and we will work with our municipal partners to further define how these parties will work at the local level.

At the same time, we'll also be working on other regulations, including a municipal election spending limit regulation. This regulation will also serve as a limit to fundraising for local campaigns. Again, we will work with our municipal partners on this regulation. We'll make sure that we set this limit so that money does not become the driving force in local politics but that local politicians can be elected based on their ideas and that incumbents do not have an unfair advantage, so, as my colleagues across the aisle like to say, taking the big money out of politics.

Madam Chair, banning corporate and union donations did not do that, as the NDP promised. The evidence is black and white, plain to see. We see some comparisons of corporations donating to third-party advertisers, and those associated individuals are often the same that donate to candidates. In fact, election financing got a whole lot less transparent after the NDP were in government. On average, candidates in Edmonton and Calgary were raising more in the 2021 campaign than in 2017, exactly the opposite of what the NDP promised. In 2021 one third-party advertiser raised a whopping \$1.7 million, primarily through union donations, in order to support a slate of candidates. Slate, party: sounds pretty much the same. If it walks like a duck and it talks like a duck, Madam Chair.

It doesn't sound like big money left local politics to me. The NDP's promise was not kept, but we are fixing that. We're providing transparency about financial backing for election candidates. It should be abundantly clear who is donating money and who they are donating to. If passed, Bill 20 will allow union and corporate donations within the established donation limits, and we will require incumbents or prospective candidates to report annually on the funds they have raised so that all donations will be

above board, publicly recorded, and curbed by expense regulations, exactly the opposite of what the NDP created.

3:10

Madam Chair, I can't think of anything more transparent than that, but there are so many more positive aspects to Bill 20 that I think I should take a minute to touch on, like how we are enabling municipalities – only if they want to, not requiring but enabling – to require a criminal record check for local candidates. I know a lot of municipalities will probably not want to do that because we know that many municipalities have a hard time already attracting enough candidates to run, so they won't want to do anything to make it harder, probably, but that will still be their choice. This part of the election will give Albertans that assurance.

We're also making orientation training for local councillors mandatory so that locally elected officials can perform their duties and understand the rules and requirements of their position. I heard from some municipal leaders that they thought they were going to have to take some university-level course before they could start their work. No, Madam Chair. It will be a basic municipal elected person 101 so that they actually know what legally they're required to do and what they're not allowed to do, just to keep everybody working in the same direction and so that we don't get to a place where residents are complaining about how their councillor is not following the rules of their office. They're good, practical amendments.

I also want to take a minute to address claims from members across that changes to the rules around vouching will make it harder for people to vote. Again, they are wrong. Madam Chair, again, that's not true. We want Albertans to have full confidence that only eligible voters are casting a ballot by permitting vouching for an elector's address only. But, with that, we're actually making it easier for anyone to cast a ballot through expanding the use of special ballots. Now it will be easier and simpler to vote by mail for every registered voter that wants to.

Not only that, but our government is making it easier for our most vulnerable population to get identification through methods like the Edmonton Navigation and Support Centre. We are going to work hard to make sure every Albertan that needs to vote can easily get identification. Albertans should be able to expect free and fair elections, and they expect it to be a simple process to vote. That is exactly what we're doing, Madam Chair.

Those are not all the positive changes we're making through Bill 20, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention the housing changes that are part of Bill 20. I was proud to speak more about this just recently with our Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services. These measures include fully exempting nonprofit subsidized affordable housing from municipal and education property taxes. Municipalities have told me that they want the ability to support affordable and attainable housing through taxation measures. We've listened again. We've consulted, we've listened again, and we've delivered this through Bill 20. This measure will directly help affordable housing providers reinvest more funds to build more affordable housing units for Albertans in need.

Mr. Speaker – Madam Chair, again, sorry. The notes are not correct; my apology. Madam Chair, why on earth the NDP would want to scrap a bill that would help build more affordable housing is beyond me, but we're accustomed to them saying one thing and doing another. Bill 20 will also allow municipalities the ability to offer multiyear residential property tax exemptions. Some municipalities like Brooks have asked for this flexibility. They want it because it incentivizes both home construction and home ownership.

How much time do I have, Madam Chair, if you don't mind?

The Chair: Two minutes.

Mr. McIver: Two minutes.

Getting more homes built is always the goal, and this measure will help. That's why we require municipalities to offer some form of digital participation when it comes to public hearings for developments. It will also give residents the opportunity to participate. At the same time, we're restricting the ability to unnecessarily delay approvals on housing developments by holding extra hearings. Rather than preventing municipalities from simply holding new hearings, we want them to move ahead. The opposition doesn't seem to care what's in the bill; they just care about getting their sound bites. The president of Alberta Municipalities was asked twice on April 29 if the bill should be scrapped, and twice he said no.

Madam Chair, the changes in Bill 20 will improve the lives of Albertans. It strengthens and improves local elections, and I urge all members to support this bill and the amendments I have tabled.

With that, Madam Chair, I move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Chair: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee rise and report progress on Bill 20.

[Motion carried]

The Chair: We shall now rise and report progress.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Mr. van Dijken: Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 20. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

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

Hon. Members: Aye.

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

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

Bill 22

Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and move second reading of Bill 22, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024.

In November of 2023 I announced our government's intention to refocus Alberta's health care system. For far too long Albertans have been faced with a system that doesn't put them first, a system that's overburdened, hard to navigate, and unfocused in its efforts. This has been an ongoing problem for nearly a decade. It's been highlighted by long wait times for emergency care and surgeries. Families have been left without family doctors, and emergency rooms have struggled to keep up with the demand. These issues are not unique to Alberta; provinces across the country are facing the same struggles. But our government has a bold plan to refocus the

health care system to improve patient care and to better support our amazing front-line workers.

The Health Statutes Amendment Act will lay the groundwork for a transformative journey toward building a health care system that not only meets the needs of Albertans today but also paves the way for future generations to thrive. Through the Health Statutes Amendment Act we are poised to usher in an era of efficiency, accessibility, and patient-centred care. The proposed amendments are not just bureaucratic changes; they represent a fundamental shift in how we approach health care in Alberta. By updating legislation to better enable governance and oversight of health care, we are laying the foundation for a stronger, unified provincial health care delivery system. These amendments would enable the creation of four new provincial health agencies focused on delivering the very best health care to all Albertans. These agencies will be responsible for delivering integrated health services and ensuring that Albertans receive timely access to care regardless of where they live.

Through clear identification of roles and responsibilities, we will streamline operations and enhance accountability and improve transparency within our health care system. This would lead to improved patient care and better support for front-line health care workers, who will work in organizations that focus on their expertise. Alberta's health care workers are not just the backbone of the system; they are its lifeblood.

Our government has heard from thousands – and I mean thousands – of health care workers as we've engaged with them on the refocusing. One of our guiding principles has been to leverage the experience of health care workers and prioritize their well-being. As part of the refocusing we've conducted one of the largest in-person public engagement series ever done by the government of Alberta. We held 65 public, in-person engagement sessions across the province to gather feedback from health care workers, patients, families, and caregivers about what is working in the current system and what needs to be fixed. Sessions were held from Fort McMurray to the Crowsnest Pass, High Level to Medicine Hat, and dozens of communities in between. When we factor in telephone town halls and online feedback, we've received input from more than 18,000 Albertans and health care workers who will help us shape the way forward. Their input will help guide us in the right direction as we work to stand up these new organizations.

This new system will also be informed by the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Alberta. We're meeting with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities across the province to gather information that will help ensure that all patients, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, are treated with dignity and respect when accessing care. There are over 30 in-person sessions across our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

The Health Statutes Amendment Act includes amendments to the Regional Health Authorities Act, related consequential amendments, and the Health Information Act, some of which have not been updated since the 1990s. Madam Speaker, as part of these amendments, the Regional Health Authorities Act will be renamed the Provincial Health Agencies Act, reflecting the shift towards the more streamlined and sector-specific provincial health system. Proposed amendments ensure clarity in the roles and responsibilities of provincial health agencies and health care providers.

3:20

This clarity is essential as we transition from a single regional health authority to a more agile and responsive system. Under the amended legislation provincial health agencies would take on responsibility for operational planning and the oversight of clinical service delivery across the province. This would enable them to

prioritize health care delivery based on the unique needs of Albertans. Furthermore, these amendments reinforce the authority of the Minister of Health to oversee the health system and set the strategic direction. It will also allow other ministers such as the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction to oversee their respective sectors. This clarity of oversight ensures that strategic direction is aligned with the evolving needs of Albertans, paving the way for a health care system that is responsive, efficient, and patient centred.

The legislative changes will also support the transition of staff from Alberta Health Services to the new provincial health organizations while enabling Alberta Health Services to continue operating as a regional health authority. Ensuring stability is key throughout this process. There are no anticipated job losses for staff who transition into the new organizations, and every effort is being made to ensure that there are no interruptions to employment or to patient care. Unionized employees within Alberta Health Services who are transferred to the new provincial health agencies will have their collective agreements and collective bargaining processes confirmed through legislation, and they will continue to apply in the same way under their new employer as they do under AHS. This will ensure seamless care for Albertans until the new acute-care health authority is established and AHS's transition to an acute-care service provider.

I want health care workers to know that we are here to support them through this transition and beyond as we utilize their expertise to shape a health care system that better supports them and the patients they care for. The vision for this refocused system is ambitious yet attainable. It is a system where every Albertan has access to a primary care provider, where acute care is swift and efficient, where assisted living options are equitable and comprehensive, and where mental health and addiction services are integrated into the fabric of care.

This is the future we are working towards, a future where health care works for Albertans. Madam Speaker, achieving this vision requires us not only to pass these legislative changes; it requires collaboration, innovation, and commitment to excellence. The Health Statutes Amendment Act would foster a culture of collaboration and integration within our health care system by providing governance and structure that supports its success. This will help further empower front-line workers and regional partners to drive change at the local level. Enhanced governance oversight will ensure that resources are directed where they're needed most: on the front lines, supporting our health care professionals, and improving patient care.

If passed, the Health Statutes Amendment Act would take effect this June, marking a significant milestone in our pursuit of better health care outcomes. Madam Speaker, recovery Alberta, the mental health and addiction provincial health agency, is set to be operational this summer, with the other three provincial health authorities to follow in the fall of 2024. Each of these agencies will play a crucial role in realizing our vision for a healthier Alberta. That vision includes every Albertan having access to a primary care provider, reduced wait times for health emergencies, enhanced access to care, and comprehensive mental health and addiction services when and where Albertans need them.

The critical improvements to transparency and accountability proposed in this legislation would support the successful refocusing of the health care system to one that is responsive, effective, and reflects the needs and priorities of Albertans today and for generations to come. Madam Speaker, therefore, I look forward to the debate and encourage all members to support Bill 22, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024.

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

Dr. Metz: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is really with a lot of sadness that I have to speak to this bill today. It is a major mistake that this government is making. Instead of focusing on the things that are important in the health care system today, they are spending a lot of money and effort and building distrust amongst workers by breaking up the system rather than bringing some focus – that's a good word – to many of the issues that we need to deal with.

We knew long before they came forward with this bill that the big issues would be workforce. We need to retain our workforce, and we need to bring more teamwork into play. By chasing doctors away, burning out nurses, annoying staff, demoralizing staff over the last few years, and now breaking things up into silos, that is not a way to build teamwork and bring focus towards building our teams.

We know that wait times are a major problem and that they are growing. There are known ways of dealing with wait times. I'll give an example of when I was the leader of neurology for Calgary zone. At the beginning we had a wait time of 21 months for a general neurology appointment. We did well with emergencies, but that was a ridiculously long time. We worked with the primary care network leaders within the zone, and together, noting that these are two groups that would be in different silos in this new plan, we came up with strategies that brought that wait-list down to four and a half months. We used proven strategies, and it wasn't just a piece of IT that sorts people to different providers. But we need to be able to work together on this at all levels.

We also know that continuing care spaces are an issue. We know that we need to focus on that. Breaking things up and dividing them out so that you've got wholly different teams and you only have integration at the very top is not going to help this. In the past, when we were one, we could move budget dollars around, but it was known and shown that by implementing some strategy at a different level, we could overall save dollars. So that was something that could be done more nimbly than we will get if we have a number of different silos.

Separating out mental health and addictions really is also another major problem. First off, mental health is health and to take that out of Health is ridiculous. It is so intertwined with everything we do in the health care system that we're only isolating people with mental health problems, which is the thing of the past. We used to have mental health hospitals, and then we knew that the better way of providing care and the least expensive way was to integrate mental health into the overall health care system.

We know that focusing on addictions is a major issue. I'm not going to talk more on that because that's a whole topic unto itself.

We also know that public health is critically important for the health of the population. This government doesn't even know, can't tell us where they place that. I'm not sure that they believe that it actually exists. Public health was really one of the very first ways of focusing on health of populations; for example, moving latrines away from where the population was.

We do have huge public health issues that we need to deal with today. One of them is our understanding of the potential for more and more pandemics. We've been through one terrible impact on the wellness of people and on our economy and on everything we do, and we know that the world is set up for more of that. We learned that the COVID-19 virus was airborne. We should be having a strong public health system to help guide us in how to manage airborne diseases in future, but not even significantly accounting for this is going to be a major problem, and public health

crosses all of the four groups that are now separated out in this new design.

3:30

We also have known that there's a terrible problem in the way we have cared for Indigenous people, and part of that problem has been because Indigenous health care is kind of an afterthought. It's added on. It might be discussed when new health measures are brought in. It's partly the responsibility of the federal government and partly, more so, of the provincial government. We know that we need a focus to work on solving the problem of Indigenous health. While I understand that there is a new deputy minister in the Health ministry, this is a big issue and needs all of the proper attention.

We also know that rural health care is much more challenging, for many reasons, to deliver than health care within our cities. Part of that is that there's travel to get health care, and most specialists are going to be more centralized. In order to recruit and retain many specialists, they have to be working together to provide that care. The very small populations more distally are going to have to travel in, but we should be looking at better ways of delivering health care to our rural populations and better ways of supporting them in the tremendous costs of travel.

We also know that recruiting family physicians is most challenging the more rural an area is. Many of us acknowledge and know that there's a wonderful quality of life in rural areas, but if there's a smaller community, it might be more challenging for the individuals that may go there to have the right job for a partner, perhaps, or perhaps to have a cultural community that supports them or a religious community that supports them. There are many, many challenges that we have to be working on, and this dividing up into different pillars is not going to help us work together to get there.

So, yes, we need to focus, but we can focus without blowing up the system and spending probably \$100 million separately on this plus all the other money that will go with it and taking away all the time that should be going into fixing our problems and instead going into moving the deck chairs around.

The other things that are really important are that we need to be measuring all of our outcomes. What are the outcomes going to be here? Are they going to be shorter waiting lists – I hope so – and more people with access to family physicians? We need reliable ways of measuring that, and all we hear are counts off a registration website at the College of Physicians & Surgeons. We need to know what the workforce actually is that is working in different areas. Now, that would be valuable. That is something we need to be measuring, and we need to be reporting it. We need to have visible, timely dashboards where you can be proud about the progress that's being made. All of these are being removed, or the definitions of what you're measuring are changing, and this is all creating a great deal of distrust. We're not able to see where we're moving.

The other big thing is the bureaucracy. We already know that it's long been known that we wanted to have more local control over the things that should be decided more locally. Instead, this is taking more things up to the top and building a whole new bureaucracy rather than putting those dollars into supporting both the front-line workers and the leaders at the front line so that they can make the decisions that are appropriate for that level. Creating more ministries is not going to put anything into solving the problems that we're facing in the system.

The other thing that I would mention is that, really, the top-down approach is not even taking into account the expertise of people who know what's needed in health systems. This is being decided based on ideology, and the system that's being designed has never

been done anywhere. This is not what you do on a province level. We should be learning from others in other parts of the country, learning from what we know in Alberta, learning from other places in the world what works and what we need to focus on.

This isn't going to solve any of that, and it's going to cost us a great deal more money, and it's putting the control into the hands of politicians. Really, the design of the system and how to run the business part of how you get your care delivered is not best in the hands of people who don't even understand the complexity of the system.

The other thing that this act will do is that it may allow inclusion of more private operators in the system through the new health services delivery organizations. We know from so many pieces of evidence that if we start bringing more private providers in – might I say, the DynaLife fiasco – we are going to end up with greater cost and crappy service. We've seen this again and again. When privatized cleaning was brought in, we know that the cleanliness decreases and there are more in-hospital infections. When we brought in DynaLife, we know that they just couldn't handle the complexity of the system, and the system failed. We saw this in the past, where with the beginning of outsourcing surgeries in Calgary, they weren't able to do even as many as in the public sector. Yes, we have lots of things to fix and improve upon. Our turnover time in our hospitals between OR cases is inefficient and too long. Why don't we fix that instead of contracting out?

The other thing that is worrisome is that we are anticipating that more care will be delivered through the sort of debit card approach or the voucher system, and that is built in and still present in this piece of legislation. We know that a voucher system did not work in home care. There are very few people that need the service that have the capacity to hire and manage a team, and the idea that this could be brought into long-term care is terrifying. This is going to be so harmful to our seniors and is nothing more than a way to shovel money to providers without getting care for individuals.

The other thing is that we realize that one of the new focus areas will be primary care. We do need to focus on primary care, but that needs to be integrated, because one of the big problems we have in primary care is that it isn't connected to our hospital system. One of the main complaints I hear from people in primary care is that they can't get access to the health records, the connect care system, in our hospitals, and now we're going to make another silo and disconnect things? It really makes no sense.

3:40

We also heard about nimbleness, and I haven't seen any evidence of any nimbleness in this new system. Everything is always just a plan for a plan. We've been hearing about what we're going to do with primary care, and we just see more little dribbles of plans, and things aren't rolling yet. When are we going to get the teams built and start allowing physicians to have better and competitive ways of delivering care? We need competitive funding. We need to be competitive in our care providers. We need the wages to match, or we're just going to keep bleeding to other places. That's something we should be focusing on, not building up a bureaucracy.

We've also totally disregarded the planning teams that know our health care system. They've been working for years, looking at the data, looking at the needs, looking at what's available in different places, yet they've played absolutely no role in any of this, so we're disregarding the expertise of people who know the system. These consultations that happened after the fact, after it was decided what's going to happen, these round-table consultations: I've heard from so many people who went to them, and they feel that they're just talking to the air; there's nothing being truly gathered from them; they're a total waste of time for all of the individuals.

I really just want to summarize and say that we're creating chaos. We're putting huge dollars and huge time and effort into creating an entirely fabricated, made-up system that will not work, and we should be focusing on the things that Albertans need.

I'm now going to pass the time over to my colleagues to speak to this bill.

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

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak to Bill 22. Bill 22 is not about improving care. It's about increasing control. It's part of a disturbing pattern from this government of increasing authoritarianism, in centralization of power, of undermining local authority and capacity while increasing the size of government and bureaucracy, from a Premier who has repeatedly made grand promises and failed to follow through, whether it's what she promises not to do, that being, you know, installing an Alberta pension plan or pursuing a provincial police force, or the things that she promises that she will do, providing an income tax cut for Albertans or fixing the health care system in 90 days. Again, a government of grand promises and no results.

This is a government that has consistently shown they are not there for Albertans, and it was interesting to me to hear the Minister of Health stand and say that for too long Albertans have been living with a system that doesn't put them first. Madam Speaker, for the past five years Albertans have been living with a government that does not put them first, and there has been no better example of that than this government's utter failure with our public health care system and indeed the deep damage they have done to it and the deep damage that they are now going to be doing further with Bill 22.

Madam Speaker, there is no rationale – none – for the massive changes that are represented in Bill 22 or for the new system design that it's laying the foundation to build. Or I should say, perhaps, that the rationale that they are putting forward is really the thinnest of fig leaves to conceal the actual intent of a drastic change that's already creating massive chaos in our health care system, a system that's already under enormous pressure and strain.

You know, to repurpose the introduction from the popular television improv show *Whose Line is it Anyway?*: welcome to the UCP government, where everything is made up and the facts don't matter. Because that is what we are hearing; we are hearing a lot of doublespeak, Madam Speaker, about this government's intentions.

What this government is doing with the health care system, which remains in crisis at this moment, would be akin to going to wildland firefighters and saying: "You know, we recognize you're in the midst of fighting some massive wildfires in multiple parts of the province, but – you know what? – while you're doing that, we're just going to redesign the entire system that you're working in. We're going to create four new divisions for each kind of fire: for grasslands, for forest, for underground, and for brush. Each one is going to have new managers, individual boards, report to a different deputy minister, who, in turn, will be part of a different board. They'll work to co-ordinate everyone with ultimate power, direct control over every aspect being held by a government minister and the Premier."

Those folks on the front lines just trying to fight fires are left wondering: "Well, who do I actually answer to? Who's going to be my employer? Who's going to sign my paycheque? Are my pay and contract going to remain the same? Who's actually making the logistical decisions to ensure that we're going to have the resources we need?" And the response from government, Madam Speaker, is: "Well, just don't worry about that. Just trust us. Keep fighting those

fires while we arrange and turn over everything around you." It's a recipe for chaos.

Indeed, before Bill 22 was even tabled, before it's even passed, the mere planning and the groundwork to set up this arbitrary new system is already creating chaos for health care workers and patients who need care, and it is guaranteed, Madam Speaker, that it is going to create even more. To quote Dr. Stan Houston – he is a semiretired physician who has worked internationally in primary care, practised for 31 years as a specialist here in Edmonton. In his words: "There is no chance the proposed restructuring will resolve the health-care system's problems. In fact, the key question is just how much worse they will get."

Dr. Houston points to a deep concern with this, again, utter reconstruction of the entirety of the health care system while workers are trying to do the work. He says that one of the biggest costs is going to be an "unavoidable period of paralysis," and we have seen this already, Madam Speaker. Under the government's previous term, four years, with their direct interference in the health care system we saw these periods of paralysis where for a substantial time nobody knows what decisions they can make; they don't know who they can talk to; they don't know how to get things approved or just how things work in the new order. I can tell you that both myself and my colleague Dr. Metz, who spoke so eloquently against this bill, have been hearing exactly this from folks in the system already. Things are stalled all over the place. Important work is not getting done because of the uncertainty that's been created by this government.

Dr. Houston talks about the impacts on recruitment. It's always one of the decisions, he says, that gets "postponed during restructuring." We have seen this, too, Madam Speaker, already: orders not to hire, orders to hold off on positions while folks on the front line are struggling. More chaos, more uncertainty that's going to have more damage on the health care system and make it harder for Albertans to access the care they need.

I would say, Madam Speaker, that in my view chaos isn't just the result of this government's actions; I'd say it's the point. Chaos isn't just a bug in Bill 22; well, it's kind of the feature. If we just take a look at what the Premier and the Health minister's arguments have been for why they're proceeding with Bill 22, the Minister of Health, you know, last week here in the House with the press said, I quote: the focus in 2008 was really to develop one regional health authority that was focused on acute care, but obviously Alberta Health Services has branched into so many other areas other than acute care. We've heard the Premier repeat the same.

The thing is that that narrative, that statement is absolutely, concretely false. It's a fever dream from an alternate universe. We know from a news release that came out exactly 16 years ago, May 15, 2008, titled One Provincial Board to Govern Alberta's Health System, which stated that

the new Alberta Health Services Board will be responsible for health services delivery for the entire province . . .

The new governance model is intended to strengthen a provincial approach to managing health services, including surgical access, long-term care, chronic disease management and additions and mental health services as well as health workforce and access to primary care.

3:50

AHS was never built only for acute care, Madam Speaker. The actual facts utterly contradict the claims that have been repeatedly made by the minister and the Premier. They're either utterly misinformed or repeatedly choosing to promote a narrative that runs entirely contrary to the facts, which leads us to question, then: if why they say they are doing this is concretely, factually not true,

why are they? Either way, the particular argument they're making to justify this massive overhaul represented in Bill 22 is clearly not true. It's an attempt to rewrite history.

The other argument that they've put forward is that this overhaul being supported by Bill 22 is necessary to fix a broken system. We heard the minister repeat that here today. The system is broken, and it's all the fault of AHS. Indeed, the Premier just today tweeted: "AHS was not delivering the patient care Albertans expect. That's why we split the management-heavy AHS into four new units to deliver quality care, faster!"

Madam Speaker, there is no question that the system is broken. We have hundreds of Albertans who have no access to primary care. Wait times for surgery of almost every kind are well below the national benchmarks. We're desperately in need of more space in continuing care. We continue to see high wait times in our big-city ERs, regular ER closures in municipalities across the province. We desperately need more capacity in treatment and support for mental health and addictions.

The Premier and the Health minister: they're pointing their fingers at AHS, but the fact is that it's been under UCP governments that in every one of those areas of our health care system we have fallen behind. In pretty much every area that they've attempted to reform, they have utterly failed. In fact, their attempts at reform have made things worse. They launched a war on doctors that decimated primary care. They claimed it was to root out fraud. They said they had to rein in costs, that it would improve access to care. It did not. What they did do was drive doctors out of practice, out of province. They wasted three years, in the midst of a pandemic, simply undoing everything that they had done.

My colleague from Calgary-Varsity: she talked about the DynaLife situation. This was one of the marquee reforms of this government that they swore would make things cheaper and more efficient. They spent three years working to put that contract in place, laying all of the groundwork to privatize those services. It collapsed in six months. It was more expensive. Alberta taxpayers had to buy out the system, and for the period that that existed, before and after the election, for months, Albertans got far worse service, and indeed it jeopardized people's health and care.

The Alberta surgical initiative: completely undermined by their own war on doctors, top-down, reckless interference with public health in the midst of a pandemic, leaving us short on anaesthesiologists, OR nurses, all of the staff needed. We can't keep up with emergency surgeries right now. Calgary hospitals are diverting patients for emergency surgeries or acute surgeries, and we have rolling surgical outages across the province. ERs continue to be backed up. Paramedics report they're back to waiting for hours in hallways with their patients. And that's not because of a failure of AHS, Madam Speaker; that is a failure of this government and this government's repeated interference in their work, interference that's about to get even worse because Bill 22 is going to enable even more direct government control of every aspect of the health care system.

As columnist Don Braid wrote last week: "What they're doing is ensuring total political [care] over health care, end to end. The days when a governing board could argue with the government are [long gone]." It's in line, Madam Speaker, with bills 18, 20, and 21, part of an unprecedented consolidation of power and control in the hands of government to ensure that no one anywhere ever again makes a decision or takes an action that the Premier doesn't like. It's not about improving care; it's about increasing control.

That's made very clear by this government's direct interference in the fall vaccination campaign. Again, Madam Speaker, we saw some of the lowest levels of vaccination. We saw incredibly high numbers of deaths. We saw incredible impacts on the system. That

was not because AHS failed; it was because this government directly interfered because of political ideology and their political interests and undermined the work of public health. We've seen this government directly interfering with public agencies across the province, including AESO, and then being, shall we say, less than factual with Albertans about it.

The Premier violated the Conflicts of Interest Act in attempting to interfere in a criminal court case, which flies in the face of the Premier's recent comments on her radio show, where she attempted to suggest, despite the fact that she just tweeted today that she is making this move because it was management heavy at AHS, which we know was false – they had some of the lowest administrative costs in Canada. She said on the radio this weekend that, well, hey, sometimes you need to have more decision-makers and more than one decision-maker. I guess I take a different view because I come from a world where I've looked at how free enterprise works. In free enterprise the reason you go into innovation is because you've got a thousand different decision-makers. She goes on to talk about a thousand different people trying a thousand different things. Some work and some don't, and you do more of what works; you do less of what doesn't. She said that if you have a single decision-maker in a system that's as complex and costly as health care, it's going to bottleneck every decision.

But that is what they are setting up in Bill 22, Madam Speaker: complete, total political control of the entirety of the health care system, disempowering the folks on the front lines, the folks with ideas. The Premier is creating more bureaucracy and management. She's just making sure that this time it's directly under her control and the control of the Health minister.

Really, we know what the Premier is referring to. When she talks about a thousand people trying a thousand different things, what she is talking about there isn't about empowering health care workers; it's about another long-standing obsession to introduce more privatization in the health care system, more free enterprise. When she talks about a thousand people doing trials and different things, I'd suggest what she's looking at is carving up health care supports and services that Albertans depend on, contracting them out to all kinds of private providers, and the result will be chaos. This is a government that isn't actually interested in governing, in regulating, in ensuring the quality of the services once the contracts are signed. We've seen that with DynaLife. We've seen that with motel medicine. This is a government that's about ideology, about taking revenge and tearing the public health care system down, about gutting public health in particular, Madam Speaker.

My time is concluding, I believe, in my opportunity to debate on Bill 22, at least at this stage, but I think I've laid out pretty clearly what my concerns are and the concerns about the impacts this is going to have on the folks that are working so hard to hold our health care system together after years of neglect and attack by this government. The millions of Albertans who are already struggling to access care in this system are going to face even more barriers and blue tape because of the decisions of this government as they attempt to remake the entirety of the system.

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

Member Irwin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. What an honour to rise to speak to Bill 22. You know, I'm so grateful for our Health critic, the good doctor from Calgary-Varsity, who's a wealth of information. I hope that the members opposite were listening to her remarks. So, too, am I grateful for our critic, who was a critic throughout one of the toughest times in health care. That's the Member for Edmonton-City Centre. It doesn't seem fair that I have

to follow these two in comments on Bill 22. For those watching at home, I'm just going to urge you to keep your expectations low for the next 10 minutes or so.

You know, I want to just start my remarks as well by – and, I mean, I will add that, despite what some in this Chamber might say, COVID is still a reality, and we need to remain quite cautious. But throughout the peak pandemic I often made it a point to give a shout-out to front-line workers, and I think on this bill, Bill 22, it is quite timely to give a shout-out to health care workers – I know I can speak for myself and I think a number of members on this side of the Chamber, probably that side of the Chamber as well – who've reached out and shared their concerns about Bill 22.

I'll talk more about health care workers in a moment, but because my memory is terrible, I better do this first. I would like, Madam Speaker, to introduce an amendment on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-North West. And you may – it's been a while. I'm new here. You may need to remind me: do you need me to read in the entire amendment?

4:00

The Deputy Speaker: Yeah. Just wait till I have a copy, though, and I'll provide further instruction.

Member Irwin: Okay. Perfect.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment RA1.

Hon. member, please proceed to read the amendment into the record.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Member for Edmonton-North West moves that the motion for second reading of Bill 22, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, be amended by deleting all of the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 22, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, be not now read a second time because the Assembly is of the view that the reorganization in the health care system resulting from the legislative amendments proposed by this bill, if enacted, will destabilize and create inefficiencies regarding effective patient care in the health care system, resulting in negative impacts for patients and health care workers.

All right. Sounds pretty good. Yeah. I mean, exactly that. I will urge all members of the Chamber to read this amendment and to actually thoughtfully consider it, the destabilization creating inefficiencies at a time when, as I noted earlier, I mean, our health care system is under so much strain.

I want to start by just talking a little bit about what the government says Bill 22 is going to do. They're noting that Bill 22 is going to enable the government to take the necessary next steps to refocus the province's health care system, ensuring that Albertans have a health system that prioritizes their need to find a primary care provider, get urgent care without long wait times, have access to the best continuing care options and supports, and have access to comprehensive mental health and addiction services across the province. Well, Madam Speaker, that all sounds wonderful on paper, and absolutely none of us in this Chamber would disagree that all four of those key points are areas that need to be strengthened in our health care system.

However, as has been pointed out by my colleagues and the previous speaker to this bill, while that might sound great, there is a whole heck of a lot of opposition to this, and as our Health critic noted just earlier, I mean, this is nothing more than an additional step from this government to create more control in the Premier's office. It's a blueprint to escalate the chaos in our hospitals and

clinics, that will do nothing to improve results for patients or support staff.

You know, I was a teacher in rural Alberta. I've talked about it a lot in this Chamber, especially when we're debating education bills. When I was an administrator, vice-principal in Forestburg, Alberta – shout out to Forestburg if anyone's watching – we'd always remind our teachers. We'd talk about why we were there, why we were in the classroom. We were there for our students, right? You talk to health care workers: they're there for their patients, right? You want to provide the top quality care that you can for your patients. Instead, we have a Premier who wants to control everything. This giant bill, this Frankenstein of a bill, is just going to further the dismantling of Alberta Health Services and stuff those very patients into ineffective silos.

Oh, gosh. Time is always confusing to me, but probably a week or two ago, our Health critic and the Member for Edmonton-City Centre and I believe the Member for Edmonton-Riverview stood with the daughter of a patient who had been receiving care in the hallway of a hospital for more than two weeks. In fact, her name is Patrice Koshman, the daughter. She's my constituent, and she reached out to my office ... [interjections]

It's very loud in here.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Hon. members, there's a lot of chatter. I can't hear the member who has the floor. If you would like to have conversations, the lounge is a great place to do that.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It was getting a little loud in here. I just thought it was my inspiring comments that were instigating that, but I'm imagining it's because of the big Oilers game tonight that people are excited. I don't blame them.

So getting back to the patient that was in the hallway of an Edmonton hospital for two weeks: Patrice Koshman is his daughter, and she's my constituent, and she reached out to my office and shared the horrifying details of the patient care that he was receiving or the lack of care that he was receiving. He's an 81-year-old, retired civil servant, someone who dedicated decades and decades to this province, someone who, like all Albertans regardless of their background or what they did, deserved – he built this province. He deserved access to quality patient care.

What he got was the absolute opposite of that. He was left in a hallway next to a nursing station for over two weeks before falling after trying to use a washroom in another patient's room. As my colleague from Calgary-Varsity pointed out, I mean, we should be treating seniors like James with dignity. They shouldn't be left waiting for care in a hallway or sent down the highway to a motel, because I think about the fact that all of us – I mean, we may not be needing that care right away, but at some point we will be. Many of you in this – I know folks on our side of the Chamber, I know that many of you have dealt with aging parents, right? We all want the best care for folks in our lives, for our loved ones.

You know, I think about that patient, and that's just one story. I know when I posted about that on social media – coming back to health care workers – I had a whole bunch of health care workers, not a lot of them publicly – a few did in comments publicly. They just shared, like, that this is common. You know, as sad as that story is, this happens a lot. I said, "you know, you're right," but we still, in the NDP opposition, wanted to highlight that story, because it was a heartbreaking one.

I share all of this, I share the example of this one patient, this one example, because, you know, under the new plan, under Bill 22, what would have happened to this patient? What will happen to future patients? How many different departments, managers, ministries would need to answer to his care under this chaotic plan?

Nothing in this giant Bill 22 supports patient care. It's all about funnelling even greater powers into the Premier's office.

Don't just take our word for it. Don't just take, you know, the NDP opposition's concerns about this bill. There are a whole lot.

Mr. Stephan: We won't.

Member Irwin: Thank you. You know, if the members over there – they were being so great. They were being so quiet and listening so attentively, but if they want to join debate, I'd be happy to hear them. You can intervene, in fact, if you'd like.

An Hon. Member: You're doing a good job.

Member Irwin: Thank you. I am doing a great job.

I want to talk a little bit about, you know, what health care workers are saying about this bill. The representatives of actual health care workers across this province are incredibly concerned. Let's talk about AUPE. Vice-president Sandra Azocar pointed out that the UCP's plan to ram through these significant changes through Bill 22 is alarming. She points out that we know front-line workers are adaptable, they're nimble, they're willing to change. We've seen that. These health care workers, these health care heroes did all they could and a whole lot more throughout the pandemic. We know what they're capable of, but when you throw workers who are already short-staffed, overworked, and burnt out into a major systemic overhaul, you create chaos, and you're more likely to do more harm than good.

She goes on to say that this does not make health care workers feel seen and valued. In fact, it may drive more health care workers away from their jobs and do nothing to improve morale or retain or recruit workers. So at a time – at a time – when we should be supporting health care workers, we should be focused on attracting and retaining health care workers, the UCP instead are driving health care workers away.

4:10

I would urge all members of this Chamber to consider our amendment to not read this bill a second time, go back to the drawing board, listen to those health care workers and kill Bill 22.

With that, Madam Speaker, I would like to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Yes, Madam Speaker. I rise to request unanimous consent for one-minute bells for the remainder of the afternoon sitting.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Government Motions

(continued)

Time Allocation on Bill 21

39. Mr. Schow moved:
Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 21, Emergency Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in second reading, at which time

every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

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

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's again a sad day for democracy, for the Legislature that the Government House Leader has now moved another time allocation motion on an important piece of legislation. That's, I believe, close to the 50th time allocation motion they have put forward.

What this motion does is that it limits the ability of members to speak to this important piece of legislation. If we take the executive out, there are quite a few private members on both sides that with the time the Government House Leader has allocated, members will not get one minute on this piece of legislation. I think I would urge the private members of the House, government backbenchers to think about it. The executive is trying to curtail debate, trying to limit the role of this Legislature, and ram through their agenda without consultation with Albertans and without any regard for the debate in this House.

I think it's heavy-handed. It's becoming routine practice for this government. Such motions were exceptions to the rule, but now for this government, I think that's how they operate, that they will table a bill and after a few speakers they will bring in time allocation and ram through their agenda.

I think that's unacceptable. That's not what Albertans expect from this House. They want their representatives to be able to debate, but this government, this executive, is curtailing debate and limiting the role of this Legislature in ways that we have not seen before.

I urge all members of this House to think about your role, think about the role of this Legislature, and stand against these heavy-handed practices of this executive. I urge everyone to vote against this motion.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 39 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:14 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

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

Against the motion:

Boparai	Ip	Renaud
Dach	Irwin	Sabir
Deol	Loyola	Schmidt

Eggen Goehring	Metz Pancholi	Shepherd
Totals:	For – 45	Against – 14

[Government Motion 39 carried]

Time Allocation on Bill 20

40. Mr. Schow moved:
Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 20, Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in Committee of the Whole, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

The Deputy Speaker: Any members wishing to join the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. Certainly, again, this is an obvious affront to democracy. But, you know, there’s a different level with this particular choice for time allocations on Bill 20 because, of course, just a few short minutes ago the same government dropped a whole plethora of amendments to Bill 20 this same afternoon. So we presume after all of the debate – and, certainly, it’s not just been in this Chamber. This debate has been taking place all throughout the province of Alberta, this antidemocratic sort of grab for power, trying to control everything all at once all of the time here in the province of Alberta, in this case with the Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, right?

4:20

The government has faced a tremendous amount of pressure on this. It’s out, Madam Speaker, not just amongst political types, but it’s out in the public’s eye as well. I’ve not seen a bill of this type being spoken about by people in passing, you know, having dinner or coffee or around the water cooler. People are talking about this government reaching into municipalities, reaching into councillors and mayors and elected officials all across the province and curtailing their democratic, elected right to govern at a municipal level.

I guess the government has been listening a little bit because they dropped a whole whack of amendments to Bill 20, but that just happened maybe an hour ago. An hour and a half later suddenly they are putting in time allocations so that we can only debate this whole new bill for an hour. I mean, the irony of that and the ridiculousness of that is not lost on people.

I can tell some of the new members here on the UCP side – I’m sure that they’ve been reassured by the veterans and the brain trust, whatever they have over there for a brain trust, that, oh, you know, people don’t worry about time allocations. The public won’t . . .

Mr. Williams: Point of order.

**Point of Order
Language Creating Disorder**

Mr. Williams: I appreciate the member is passionate. We ask him to please refrain from language including “what the hell,” which is inflammatory and inappropriate.

Mr. Sabir: I didn’t hear that. The member was speaking to the motion, the time allocation motion, and how the government is doing overreach with their motions by limiting debate in the Legislature, by limiting the role of this Legislature, and by walking roughshod over the concerns of so many Albertans. I don’t think it’s a point of order.

Also, the member did not reference any section of the standing orders, so I urge you to find it not a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: Yeah. I didn’t hear the accusation that was said. We have a small amount of time here. I know the hon. member, who is very seasoned in this Chamber, certainly wouldn’t do anything to cause disorder in this House, and I’ll ask him to continue with his remarks.

Mr. Eggen: I will. Absolutely not. I mean, you know, I can’t remember ever swearing. Ever. So there you go.

Debate Continued

Mr. Eggen: Anyway, I mean, it’s obvious. People say: oh, well, time allocation; who cares; we can just do that. Not in this case, Madam Speaker. It’s a completely different situation when you have not just Bill 20, but you also have Bill 18 and Bill 22, all of them trying to consolidate power into the cabinet and into the Premier’s office. People are not lost on that.

And suddenly here we have, again – I’ve just been keeping count here. Since the UCP did form government here five years ago, I believe this is the 50th time that they’ve used time allocation during that time. So it’s like the 50th anniversary of using this antidemocratic process. I mean, you’ve got to use it sometimes, right? I think we did it probably four times when we were government. These guys have used it 50 times in the last five years. That’s undemocratic. That’s one thing. But layering it on top of that with these very sort of controlling bills, like Bill 20, a bill that they just dropped a whole bunch of amendments and changes on an hour and a half ago: that is patently and obviously and categorically ridiculous.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 40 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:24 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

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

Against the motion:

Boparai	Ip	Pancholi
Dach	Irwin	Renaud
Deol	Kasawski	Sabir
Eggen	Loyola	Schmidt
Goehring	Metz	Shepherd

Totals: For – 45 Against – 15

[Government Motion 40 carried]

Time Allocation on Bill 22

41. Mr. Schow moved:
Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 22, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in second reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

Member Irwin: Wow. It's truly shameful to have to rise once again and point out that this government is once again limiting debate on a bill. This time it's on Bill 22. Take a look at this bill, a huge bill that does absolutely nothing to improve results for patients, for

staff, a bill that is nothing more than a plan to centralize more control in the Premier's office, and a bill that health care workers are speaking out against. At a time when we should be uplifting and supporting health care workers, at a time when we should be doing all we can to support and strengthen patient care, this is the bill that the UCP are jamming through.

We all will need to go back to our constituents who are asking us questions about Bill 22, about Bill 18, about Bill 20, about . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt, but the House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 4:30 p.m.]

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

Activity to Thursday, May 23, 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)

Royal Assent — (May 16, 2024 aft.) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2024 c4]

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.), 1334-1341 (May 7, 2024 aft., passed)

Third Reading — 1448-55 (May 14, 2024 aft., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (May 16, 2024 aft.) [Comes into force May 16, 2024, except section 1, which comes into force on proclamation; SA 2024 c6]

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)

Third Reading — 1367-74 (May 8, 2024 aft., passed)

Royal Assent — (May 16, 2024 aft.) [Comes into force May 16, 2024; SA 2024 c3]

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.), 1341-43 (May 7, 2024 aft., passed)

Third Reading — 1395-1400 (May 9, 2024 aft., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (May 16, 2024 aft.) [Comes into force May 16, 2024, with some sections deemed to have come into force on March 21, 2024; SA 2024 cR-5.3]

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*), 903 (*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*)

Committee of the Whole — 1456-60 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1490-92 (*May 15, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2024 c7]

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*)

Committee of the Whole — 1361-67 (*May 8, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1464-66 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2024 cC-1.5]

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.*), 1329-34 (*May 7, 2024 aft.*), 1533-40 (*May 21, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1540-42 (*May 21, 2024 aft.*), 1569-77 (*May 22, 2024 aft., passed with amendments*)

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

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

Second Reading — 1344-48 (*May 7, 2024 aft.*), 1400-03 (*May 9, 2024 aft.*), 1455-56 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1460-64 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1492-96 (*May 15, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 16, 2024 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2024 c8]

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

First Reading — 1271 (*Apr. 25, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1374-82 (*May 8, 2024 aft.*), 1562-69 (*May 22, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1591-94 (*May 23, 2024 aft., adjourned; amendments introduced*)

Bill 21 — Emergency Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Ellis)

First Reading — 1394 (*May 9, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1508-19 (*May 16, 2024 aft.*), 1542-48 (*May 21, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 22 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (LaGrange)

First Reading — 1447 (*May 14, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1594-1600 (*May 23, 2024 aft., adjourned on amendment*)

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)

Royal Assent — (May 16, 2024 aft.) [Comes into force May 16, 2024; SA 2024 c5]

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.), 1294-1300 (May 6, 2024 aft., passed)

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

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

Second Reading — 1300-09 (May 6, 2024 aft.), 1417-20 (May 13, 2024 aft., defeated on division; not proceeded with)

Bill 208 — Psycho-Educational Assessment Access Act (Hayter)

First Reading — 1359 (May 8, 2024 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 1420-29 (May 13, 2024 aft., adjourned)

Bill 211 — Arts and Creative Economy Advisory Council Act (Ceci)

First Reading — 1590 (May 23, 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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