



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, December 8, 2025

Day 22

The Honourable Ric McIver, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

Second Session

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Party standings:

United Conservative: 47

New Democrat: 38

Independent: 2

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, December 8, 2025

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

Hon. members, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by Mr. Sidney Manning. I invite all to participate in the language of their choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all of us command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

[applause]

The Speaker: We don't always get applause after the national anthem, so that's a good thing.

Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

The Speaker: The Legislative Assembly is grateful to be situated upon Treaty 6 territory. This land has been the traditional region of the Métis people of Alberta, the Inuit, and the ancestral territory of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux, Iroquois, and Nakota Sioux people. The recognition of our history on this land is an act of reconciliation, and we honour those who walk with us. We also acknowledge that the province of Alberta exists within treaties 4, 7, 8, and 10 territories and the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, seated in the members' gallery today are representatives of the Majha People Association. For 22 years this volunteer organization has supported Albertans with roots in the Majha region of Punjab, the heartland that includes Amritsar and the Golden Temple. Their annual banquet reinforces the strong bonds of Alberta's Majhails and supports the integration of newcomers to Alberta. Their work is sustained entirely through volunteer effort and donations from local businesses. It gives me great pleasure to introduce Harpinder Sandhu, Harjeet Sandu, Satwinder Kahlon, Laal Bhinder, Jasbir Singh Gill, Sukhraj Rai, Rupal Khehra, and Amrik Hajran. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

School groups, starting with the hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you 50 grade 6 students from Muriel Martin. I

will have them all stand and have everyone join me in welcoming them to the Assembly.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 36 grade 6 students from Rio Terrace elementary school along with their teacher, Andrea Bluteau. Please have them rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The Member for Camrose.

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly a dedicated group of teachers from the Gujarati language school of GGAC, representing the vibrant Gujarati community from India, one of the fastest growing diasporas in Alberta. Their commitment to teaching language helps preserve culture and heritage and keeps the next generation connected to their Indian roots while contributing to life in Alberta. I would request that they stand and please accept the traditional warm welcome of the Chamber.

The Speaker: Other guests, Edmonton-South West.

Mr. Ip: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you the president of the north China-Canada business association, Mr. Bao Wei Zhang, along with members Yan Xie, Mackenzie Guo, and local entrepreneur Gina Cai. This is Mr. Zhang's second visit to Alberta, and the association is committed to strengthening intercultural exchange and trade between Alberta and China. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Stephan: Mr. Speaker, today is another good day in Alberta. I introduce the Garvi Gujarat Association of Canada, a most excellent organization celebrating India heritage in Alberta, including a very fun, super-duper event at the Butterdome. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Member Boparai: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Singh Sahib Giani Baljit Singh Ji, the honourable and highly respected head priest of Sri Harmandir Sahib Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab. He also has graced us as a guest here in Alberta, accompanied with the new management committee of the Dashmesh Culture Centre. I ask that they rise to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Job Creation

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta has done it again. For the third time since June Alberta has led job growth across the nation, making headlines as the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

Unlike the opposition, we realize that it's not government that creates jobs but businesses both big and small. That's why we take our mandate seriously to make Alberta the most business-friendly province through low taxes, cutting red tape, and training a workforce ready to take on the jobs of tomorrow. Last month alone Alberta created nearly 29,000 jobs, over half of Canada's total job gains. In September we drove growth even further with more than 42,000 new jobs, making up over two-thirds of Canada's job

creation. Again in June Alberta led the country with 30,000 new jobs. Mr. Speaker, this is no accident. It is directly related to our government advertising Alberta to the world, making sure they know we're open for business.

The good news does not stop there. Our unemployment rate dropped last month a whopping 1.3 per cent, almost two full points since August, the fastest, biggest dip seen in Alberta's recorded history. Youth unemployment has come down almost 7 per cent since July, showing clear signs of our job market catching up with population growth. This comes after the creation of our youth hiring incentive and our ongoing work to fight against immigration that oversaturates the job market with entry-level workers. Remarkably, Alberta makes up half of Canada's job growth for youth since 2019.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta has always been and will continue to be the place for Canadians to get ahead, saying no to policies that stop investment, increase house prices, and shut down economic prosperity. Three hundred and thirty thousand new jobs since 2019: we're just getting started.

Thank you.

United Conservative Party Principles and Policies

Mr. Shepherd: With Bill 14 the UCP says that they're the only provincial party that can call themselves conservative, which is ironic because they're not. Conservatives believe in the rule of law, but the UCP think they're above it. Led by a Premier who tried to interfere in a criminal case, they pass laws to strip Charter rights, to interfere in court cases, and do favours for their friends and supporters, enforcing laws that serve themselves and ignoring ones that don't.

They even think they're above the courts. While conservatives respect institutions, the UCP tears them down. Public health care, education, social services, municipal government, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms: just grist for the mill, dusty relics to strip for parts to build a shiny new idol in the Premier's image.

1:40

Every public servant and institution better bend their knee because while conservatives believe in smaller government, the UCP likes it big: over two-thirds of their caucus in cabinet, the biggest in Alberta's history; four times the number of ministers, managers, and bureaucrats in health care; countless new agencies cutting bloated contracts they hide from the public behind abuse of information law and NDAs.

They're intruding into every part of our lives. While conservatives believe in decentralizing power, local decision-making, the UCP like to hoard it for themselves. They want to be the final word on everything, every decision made, every dollar spent, micromanagers seizing power to make decisions in your doctor's office, workplace, city council, and local streets.

But their biggest fail: conservatives believe in fiscal responsibility, respecting tax dollars, and controlling spending. The UCP don't. Under this Premier they've increased spending twice as fast as we did with a growing deficit to boot despite having three times the royalty revenue with no benefit for Albertans, just billions blown on half-baked schemes that reward their friends while undermining the services we pay for and depend on.

Albertans deserve better than a government of unprincipled, petulant populists cosplaying as conservatives. They deserve an ethical, competent government that respects Albertans and the institutions they depend on, and Alberta's New Democrats are ready.

Christmas Reflections

Mrs. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, Albertans across our province are preparing to celebrate one of the most cherished times of the year, Christmas. As we approach, it's important to reflect on the blessings we enjoy as Albertans and the values that have shaped our province.

This season is a time of generosity and an opportunity for us to reflect. Around Alberta and especially in constituencies like Lacombe-Ponoka values like community and compassion are the core driving factors that unite our neighbours. These values are foundational in Christianity, and they have very clearly shaped Albertans and the institutions that they rely on.

This month of December is particularly important because it is in this month that we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. A birth that was felt around the world, His birth is known to be the main influence of even the Gregorian calendar, the calendar we still use internationally today. Jesus Christ's love for us is something we don't deserve, yet it's forever enduring and welcoming for all. Jesus invites us to be peacemakers, to seek forgiveness, to learn to forgive, and to be a blessing to our families.

Mr. Speaker, Christmas is more than a festive season. It's a time to reflect on gratitude, family, and the spirit of giving. It reminds us of the enduring values that unite us and the importance of serving others in that spirit. As we all head to our homes around the province and unwind from the hard work of this legislative session, I hope each of you find the time to give back and spread joy.

As we celebrate the season, let's remember the blessings we share, which are freedom, opportunity, community, and family. May this Christmas inspire us all to extend kindness, foster understanding, and to work together for the common good. To all Albertans and my colleagues: I wish everyone a joyful and merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 14

Member Gurinder Brar: Checks dismantled. Safeguards ignored. Democracy threatened. In 2022 the Premier claimed to be in touch with Crown prosecutors and then retracted her claim when she was criticized for exceeding her authority. In 2023 the Premier breached conflict of interest laws while attempting to interfere in the justice system to help street pastor Artur Pawlowski with his criminal charges. In 2025 the UCP government under this Premier now introduces a law to force Elections Alberta to withdraw its reference to the court under the Citizen Initiative Act.

The Legislature doesn't work when representatives are silenced; it works when they are empowered to do their job. Democracy doesn't work when politicians are power hungry; it works when there are proper checks and balances. The justice system doesn't work when politicians meddle; it works when it is independent to do what is right, not what is convenient.

Rule of law is essential to a functioning democracy. It's like train tracks that keep all branches of government on their tracks to ensure none of them venture off the rails and collide. With Bill 14 the UCP government has gone off the rails and on a path to collision. On Friday Justice Colin Feasby said, "Legislating to pre-emptively end this court proceeding disrespects the administration of justice."

Mr. Speaker, when a government grabs the power that it was never meant to claim, when checks and balances are treated like a political game, when the rule of law is bent to serve only the UCP's name, that is shame, shame, and shame.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Camrose.

Property Crime and Law Enforcement

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Copper theft has become a growing issue in my Camrose constituency. Just this past month the Friends of the Battle River Rail in Forestburg were the targets of copper wire theft, forcing them to cancel their annual Christmas market. This type of story has become all too common, not only in my constituency but across Alberta. Thieves will steal copper and other precious metals wherever they can be found, quickly reselling them to unscrupulous buyers who won't question where it came from. Ottawa has repeatedly passed legislation that rewards criminals and punishes victims. As quickly as criminals are brought in, they're released back into the streets to wreak havoc in the name of woke moral posturing.

This is why Alberta's government has made amendments to the Scrap Metal Dealers and Recyclers Identification Act to make it easier for law enforcement to target the theft and trafficking of illicit scrap metal, quickly bringing offenders to justice. This bill expands existing reporting requirements to include business-to-business sales and ensures that law enforcement officers have the information needed to monitor transactions, identify suspicious activity, and trace stolen property such as catalytic converters. Law enforcement agencies across Alberta can enforce and investigate violations under the act. Regulatory changes made by Alberta's government streamline enforcement by making it easier and faster to charge those who violate the act and make more effective use of their court resources.

In Alberta we have a strong United Conservative government that believes in law and order. To the Friends of the Battle River Rail and all other Albertans who have been the victims of theft and other crimes: we hear you. We hear that you're fed up with the status quo, and we're doing all that we can to stand up for you and your families because that is the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker.

Government Policies and Cost of Living

Ms Ganley: Alberta's minimum wage earners are the lowest paid in all the land, but seven years without a raise and the UCP still can't hear their pleas, or maybe they just can't hear them over the sound of their own pleas for supports. They certainly rushed to give their own parliamentary secretaries a raise. You might call this government out of touch, but of course they rushed to work on Albertans' costs, except that raising insurance by 15 per cent, charging granny more for her medication, and refusing to even look at grocery costs probably weren't the actions that struggling Albertans were looking for.

They raise their own living allowance by hundreds a month while rejecting action on anyone else's rent. Well, except, of course, AISH recipients, whose rents they raised. There's not a dime for public school students struggling in overcrowded classrooms. You see, the UCP had to violate those teachers' rights. A fair hearing on the matter might have cost them too much. Disabled Albertans already struggling to get by: well, they just had to roll them back because there isn't a penny to be found, except, of course, for the hundreds of millions to start their own politically motivated police force. While Albertans struggle, this UCP government lives high: plenty of money for themselves, for contracts for insiders, for vanity separatist projects. Insurance companies sure need a raise, but Albertans? Well, it seems there's nothing left.

You see, this UCP government isn't any more broke than Ebenezer Scrooge was. While Albertans wait outside in the cold,

see no action on costs or wages, the UCP members find a way to give themselves raises. Maybe this government is waiting for a visit from the three ghosts to help them see the world as it is, but that's not what Albertans are waiting for; they're waiting for a new government.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The first question belongs to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Citizen Initiative Legislation

Mr. Nenshi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government finds itself in an interesting political quandary. Legislation currently before this House attempts to pre-emptively end a court action which is already concluded. The Premier responded by railing against, quote, unelected judges and the courts in general. She used to talk about inalienable rights that cannot be taken away by any government, and now she rails against the courts. Does the Premier believe her government is the sole arbiter of what is constitutional, or do the courts have any role?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Citizen initiative is meant to be permissive. It's meant to allow for citizens to identify an issue that they can get a collection of their fellow citizens to come together to put it on a ballot so that it can be voted on. It is not meant to have gatekeepers. We don't want to see a gatekeeper in the Chief Electoral Officer. We don't want to see a gatekeeper in the court either. We are the elected representatives. We make the decisions. We are a parliamentary democracy. That's in law 101. Maybe the former professor didn't take that course. We do not have court supremacy; it's parliamentary supremacy.

Mr. Nenshi: Well, that was certainly a novel reading of the entire legal traditions of Canada under the Canadian Constitution. It's not true.

The Premier talks about gatekeepers. She rails against a whole pile of gatekeepers standing in the way of her personal agenda. I don't call it gatekeepers. I call it the rule of law. In the Wildrose era the Premier said that referenda, quote, must be deemed constitutional by a justice of the court. Only a separatist government would throw away the constitutionality of a question meant to break up the country. Could the Premier please pick a side? Does she believe the courts have any role at all?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, our Constitution includes the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and includes a notwithstanding clause which asserts that the parliamentary supremacy remains supreme in our system. We actually do have the power to make the decision in the interest of preserving democracy. In this case the citizen-initiated referenda law was meant to be permissive. We had anticipated that the Chief Electoral Officer would take it in that spirit. It's turned out that there have been several things that have been referred to the court. There have been several things that have been delayed. We want to make sure that these kinds of initiatives can be put forward without the gatekeepers.

Mr. Nenshi: I wonder if the Premier really understands what she just said. What she just said is that she will use the notwithstanding

clause at any time to overrule anything the courts don't want us to do. That is not the point of the notwithstanding clause. That's not what her own ministers have been saying about it.

Now, she seems to say that it doesn't matter if something is constitutional if the people want it. Let's play that through. If she allows an unconstitutional referendum question to go through and it passes but then you can't do anything about it because it's unconstitutional, the whole process is a sham. Why would the Premier want people to vote on something that's a sham?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not for us on this side to judge what might be of interest and importance to citizens. That's for them to decide, for them to get the requisite number of signatures. What's incumbent upon us is that if they are successful in getting the number of signatures and it goes to a vote and a majority of Albertans want it, then it's up to us to implement that in a way that is constitutional. That's how it's supposed to work. You can't even get to that point if you have gatekeepers who won't even allow citizens who are well meaning to ask the question in the first place.

The Speaker: For the second set of questions, the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Nenshi: Once again the Premier's answer there is deeply troubling. She's essentially saying that she will go around the courts if that's what people want her to do or if that's what she wants to do. This government's continued attacks on the judiciary and on the legal profession are equally troubling.

Justice System Concerns

Mr. Nenshi: The Premier has now adopted American-style rhetoric about unelected judges appointed by her political enemies. Where is the government going with this? Are they in favour of electing judges now, or are judges appointed by Conservative politicians okay? Or does the government believe that there is no role for the judiciary here?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've seen some troubling judgments that have come out of the courts in recent months; for instance, the issue around striking down minimum sentencing in the case of possession of child pornography. That was a very troubling decision that came down. There was a split decision, incidentally, 5 to 4, with the five judges who were in favour of that being recent Trudeau appointees. We also recently saw an upending of private property rights in British Columbia, once again because a single judge has put into question a long-standing principle going back to the Magna Carta. This is what we're concerned about when we talk about judicial activism.

Mr. Nenshi: This kind of rhetoric has very real consequences, and if the Premier is not willing to back up her rhetoric, then all she's doing is engaging in rage and grievance politics. She's attacking the very foundations of our legal system. In particular, the attacks on the Law Society and the Alberta Law Foundation this session are unprecedented. I'm tempted to ask, "Why does the government hate lawyers so much?" but I think I know why. It's because they don't like anyone who may preserve any authority over their unbridled use of power. Why is this government attempting to muzzle anyone who has a different point of view or criticizes them?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would invite the member opposite to look at the professional organizations over the last 10 years or so and see how they have gone well beyond managing the professional conduct of their members. The professional associations have self-regulatory power because they're to look at misconduct on the part of their members, not whether or not they violated some speech code or refused to take some kind of woke training devised by the members opposite. What we're doing is getting all of the professional associations, including the Law Society, back in their own lane and making sure that the clients are protected.

Mr. Nenshi: I thank the Premier for answering these questions today because her answers have been incredibly enlightening. She just said, basically, that people can't be trusted to manage themselves; only the government can do it for them. This is pure conservative politics from the UCP. You know, I was a professor of nonprofit management, and the rule for nonprofits is that they are owned and managed by their members. I have never seen a government make such a power grab against independent nonprofits as they've done with the Alberta Law Foundation. Why does the government feel that the minister should make directives, bylaws, and run a foundation, not its members?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I'm saying the exact opposite of what the member opposite said. What I am saying is that individual professionals should be allowed to go on to Twitter and Facebook and comment on things that have nothing to do with their profession without being punished by an overreaching professional body, as we have seen time and time again. We call it the Peterson law for a reason. We don't believe that there should be mandatory training on right-think because somebody goes online and makes a political opinion well known. This should be about protecting the clients of that individual and professional conduct.

The Speaker: The third set of questions belongs to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Nenshi: The Premier has just told us that the only one who can punish individuals is the Premier, and by the way she just confirmed what her Minister of Justice would not, that under this law the Law Society will not be able to offer mandatory Indigenous training despite Indigenous people being overrepresented in the population.

Bill 14

Mr. Nenshi: But you know what? Like a baker hiding raisins in butter tarts, this government has hidden bad things in Bill 14. It's one of the most antidemocratic statutes I've ever seen. It gives all Attorneys General of Alberta in history immunity, and of course three Conservative Justice ministers in a row have been sanctioned. So why do it now?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Attorney General of this province answers to the people of Alberta, not the Law Society, and we want to ensure that the Law Society is not going to engage in any additional, politically motivated, targeted attacks against someone who has served this province so well. This is the kind of approach they take in Ontario. It's not an unusual approach. We're just going to have the same legislation in place that they have there.

Mr. Nenshi: Like a slice of pineapple ruining a decent slice of innocent pizza, this provision only makes a bad bill even worse.

Look, we know that the Minister of Justice is Sam Mraiche's best friend and travel buddy. He's refused to table receipts from his Florida trip. We don't know the details of his relationship with Sam Mraiche, and in the end we don't know what is happening here or why this legislation is needed, so can the Premier tell Albertans exactly how many complaints relating to her Justice minister are before the Law Society right now?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the members opposite love to engage in conspiracy theories about what may or may not be in newspapers from a particular outlet, but I can tell you that the reason they're doing that is they don't want to talk about what's happening in this province. It messes with their narrative. They keep on talking down Alberta rather than talking it up. Why hasn't the member opposite stood with us in asking... [interjections]

2:00

The Speaker: Members. Members, let's make sure that we can hear the person we are supposed to hear at the time.

Ms Smith: Why hasn't the member opposite stood with us in asking for the bitumen pipeline to the northwest B.C. coast? Why doesn't he call his leader, Don Davies, and encourage him to vote in favour of the MOU when it goes towards the House of Commons tomorrow?

Mr. Nenshi: Mr. Speaker, we have officially entered the Upside Down when the Premier and her love for chemtrails and antivax conspiracy theories calls other people conspiracy theorists.

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

Mr. Nenshi: The real question is: if there are no complaints against the minister, why do we need this legislation? What is the government expecting to come? What have Albertans not been told about the conduct of this Attorney General, and why should members of this government and only this government and their supporters not have to abide by the rule of law?

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 2 o'clock.
The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Continued conspiracy theories. They're not talking about government policy, and the reason they're not talking about government policy is that they want to avoid talking about the MOU that we recently signed with the federal government. There is a vote in the federal Parliament tomorrow. Has the member opposite called any of the candidates for leadership of that party to see if they will support the MOU? Has he called Avi Lewis? Has he called Heather McPherson? Has he called David Eby? He doesn't appear to be wanting to stand up for Alberta. I'm asking him the question: why not?

Investigation of Health Services Procurement

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, the public expects and deserves their tax dollars to be spent ethically. Justice Wyant found that that did not happen as part of his limited review of the corrupt care scandal. The public expects that contracts must be properly sent to tender. Justice Wyant didn't find that either. The public should know who in the Premier's office had their hands all over this. Justice Wyant couldn't determine that. Albertans don't trust this government

with their health care system for good reason. When will the government call a full public inquiry?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Judge Wyant did in fact conduct an exhaustive and independent review of AHS procurement, interviewing dozens of witnesses, reviewing more than 2 and a quarter million records. His investigation confirms what this government has said all along. There was no evidence of any improper conduct by any member of government, any staffer, anybody in the public service. The reality is that the member opposite simply will not accept Judge Wyant's reports no matter what they are.

Ms Gray: What the minister doesn't say is that Justice Wyant was given an intentionally restrictive scope in his report and that he signalled that he could not investigate all aspects. The government gave a private surgical centre with bloated prices another contract extension even after Judge Wyant found that Jitendra Prasad was working for both sides of the deal and after we found out that Mr. Prasad was also involved with the Premier's leadership bid. Why won't this government finally admit that they need a full public inquiry to clear the air on all of this? The Wyant report does not clear them.

Mr. Jones: As the members opposite are aware, the ASG Edmonton facility was a bridge contract to provide surgeries while the RFPed Enoch surgical facility finished construction. Unfortunately, there have been delays in the construction of that facility. It's now set to open in the summer or fall of 2026. Of course, we didn't want 4,000 surgeries to be cancelled in between now and then. I believe that that ASG contract should have been initially RFPed, so to make it fair, we're going to open up the same surgeries at the same prices to all providers in the Edmonton zone this month.

Ms Gray: After sweeping corruption under the rug, the government is also funding a recovery centre that operates out of a building owned by Sam Mraiche. The company they gave this contract to didn't even exist three months before they got 70 million taxpayer dollars. We've asked and the Premier has never answered if she was briefed by her former chief of staff on how strange that coincidence of players was. Justice Wyant couldn't look into any of this; it was outside of the restrictive scope he was given. Why won't the Premier do the right thing and call a full public inquiry?

Mr. Nixon: There goes the NDP again, Mr. Speaker, going after the Métis Nation, who's working to care for homeless people in our province. What was interesting this week was reporting in the *Globe and Mail* that showed that Sam Mraiche has donated more to the NDP when they were in power than this side of the House. At the end of the day, is it that side of the House projecting what they were doing when they were in power? That's quite alarming. That's likely why we had to fix the entire procurement system when we took over.

The Speaker: Okay. We are now at the point where there are no preambles on the supplementaries.

Citizen Initiative Legislation (continued)

Mr. Sabir: Mr. Speaker, the UCP government has a terrible relationship with the rule of law. Bill 14 will end a court reference

on the constitutionality of a citizen initiative for Alberta's separation from Canada. However, the court already heard the case, and Justice Feasby has released the court decision, which noted, "legislating an end to litigation is extraordinary." This goes against the rule of law. Will the Justice minister explain what possible justification this government has for this extraordinary step?

Mr. Amery: Well, Mr. Speaker, the justification is that we're opening the Citizen Initiative Act to all Albertans. I realize that the members opposite do not like that, when Albertans participate in direct democracy, but the reality is that the amendments in Bill 14 will clearly open up the opportunity for any Albertan to bring a question of importance to the people of Alberta. That is direct democracy operating exactly as it should. That's what the Citizen Initiative Act was intended to do. Again, we value the contributions of Albertans.

Mr. Sabir: Given that Justice Feasby concluded that the Citizen Initiative Act "did not give citizens the power to initiate a referendum on the question of independence from Canada" and given that this decision clarifies that any question of Alberta's separation from Canada violates the Charter, treaty, and Indigenous rights that are recognized and affirmed by our Constitution, why won't the government respect the court decision as well as treaty and Indigenous rights and abandon Bill 14?

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, we'll do no such thing. The Citizen Initiative Act is important to Albertans. It doesn't matter what members of the government nor members of the opposition think about a particular question. The process needs to be to allow diverse voices from all Albertans to contribute to a democracy here. That's what the Citizen Initiative Act is all about. If those that are seeking to have a question put on the ballot believe they have the support for it, they should be entitled to have that question put to Albertans.

Mr. Sabir: Given that the court said that this last-minute change after everyone, including Elections Alberta, expedited their participation is "contrary to the rule of law" and given that the court also called out Alberta's cavalier disrespect for the process and the lack of respect for First Nations who intervened in the case and said that that is "disappointing, to say the least," will the government respect the rule of law, stop acting as if they are above the law, and kill Bill 14?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Look, the separation of powers is an important constitutional principle. The Assembly has been elected by the people of Alberta to debate and pass legislation that's in the public interest. That member doesn't like the citizen initiative process.

Ms Gray: Point of order.

Mr. Amery: Fine. That's up to him. But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that Albertans deserve the opportunity to be able to put questions of importance before the people of Alberta. Just because the member doesn't like the particular question doesn't mean that we won't allow it to happen.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 2:09.

The next question belongs to the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

2:10 Economic Development and Job Creation

Mr. Wiebe: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is literally in a league of its own: those are the words of BMO's chief economist talking about our rapid creation of 42,500 jobs in September. And guess what? We did it again, leading the nation last month with nearly 29,000 new jobs. To the Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration: what message does this job growth send to our neighbours, friends in other Canadian provinces?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, 'tis the season for great news. Alberta has led Canada in job growth three out of the past six months. Canada needs a strong Alberta; 81,000 jobs created in the past three months and 100,005 jobs created since last year are an obvious example of why Alberta deserves respect in Confederation. Jobs added in other provinces last month were mostly part-time whereas here in Alberta they were full-time. These are grocery-buying, mortgage-paying jobs. When other provinces struggle, Alberta continues to thrive.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that youth unemployment has been a major challenge for every province in Canada thanks to the unchecked immigration policies of the Trudeau Liberals and given that Alberta's rapid population growth created a unique pressure for entry-level workers, leaving many Albertan youth struggling to find their first job, to the same minister: what policy or action have you taken to bring youth unemployment down nearly seven points between July and November of this year?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not only has Alberta introduced the youth hiring incentive; we've also fought hard for better immigration that works for all Albertans and Canadians. The NDP hate to hear it, but Alberta has created half of all jobs for youth in Canada since 2019. That's real success. For young people that are fleeing other provinces that are too expensive, they're moving to Alberta for more opportunity. The youth are seeing the future in Alberta of owning a home, having a great career. We are finally seeing the job market catch up, and it's great news. I wish the members opposite would take heed.

The Speaker: The member.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that our government has taken a major step forward in strengthening the economy by opening new doors to investment and job growth thanks to the MOU signed with Ottawa and given that this means Canada is restoring its reputation as a great place to do business and gives Alberta the potential to be a global superpower, to the same minister: how does this MOU keep the momentum going for Alberta's economic prosperity and job growth?

The Speaker: The Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank that member for these incredible questions. His constituents are well represented. We are just getting started in the province of Alberta. Every poll we've seen shows massive support for a pipeline to carry Alberta oil to the west coast and to Asian markets. Job growth in services like we saw last month is great news, and I'm excited to see this happen in good producing, manufacturing jobs. The

Premier in her leadership is unlocking deals and new potential for economic growth in Alberta. Everyone should be grateful. Why won't the NDP show some respect?

Measles Outbreak in Alberta

Mr. Haji: In late October the province identified more than 450 probable measles cases. This would have brought our total case count to nearly 2,500 measles cases. That means Alberta is the province with the largest number of cases in the country. This past June the minister was told to update data standards to common national practices and report these probable measles cases. Why did the minister ignore this expert advice from her own officials?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of preventative health.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I need to correct the member opposite. It was in October that I received the request from the department to look at including probables, but by that time we were actually seeing negligible numbers of measles in the province. We are using the same standards that we have used all along in terms of reporting that we have in years past, and in fact half of the provinces in Canada do not report probables. [interjections]

The Speaker: I'm going to get to you, but we're going to wait until everybody can hear you. Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Haji: Given that the minister's own briefing notes obtained by the media stated that, and I quote, expanding public reporting to include both confirmed and probable cases is the key step in maintaining transparency and keeping Albertans informed, end quote, and given that this advice was ignored and three months later a child died of measles, does the minister regret not taking this advice, that would have demonstrated to Albertans the urgent need to get measles vaccinations on time?

The Speaker: The minister.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we took measles seriously from the very moment that we learned about it back in March. Again, correcting the member opposite, I was not actually approached on the probable cases until the fall, October, to be exact. The briefing note may have been written at a previous time, but it was not brought forward to me until the fall. We have taken it seriously. We have added additional immunization, we have seen tremendous growth in immunization, and we encourage everyone to immunize against measles.

Mr. Haji: Given that transparency about measles outbreaks is one of the only ways to curtail the spread of the disease and given that 2,500 cases are not negligible numbers, given that Alberta did not have a permanent chief medical officer of health for eight months with full autonomy to provide regular public health briefings to the public, why did the minister refuse to fill the chief medical officer of health position, reject the public health briefing recommendations, and underreport measles cases in the province?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. None of what was just said was accurate. In fact, we have been looking diligently for a chief medical officer of health to replace an interim medical officer of health, who has been doing a very, very good job. In fact, we will be announcing, I believe very soon, a permanent chief medical officer of health.

That being said, we will continue to take measles seriously, as we have all along. We converted information into 14 different languages to make sure we actually got to the people who needed it the most.

Health Services Procurement Process

Mr. Schmidt: Albertans deserve transparency and accountability from this government, but none is forthcoming. It's been nearly a year since the corrupt care scandal broke. For months this government has been ducking and dodging questions around shady procurement practices and sweetheart deals for their cronies, and now they're doubling down by forcing American-style health care on Albertans. A simple question for any of the health ministers: with so much alleged corruption and no answers in sight, how can Albertans trust this government to do anything to fix the broken health care system?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar accused the hon. minister of education of allowing a sex predator back on to the streets. Insinuating that he had any direct involvement in that is despicable and disgusting, and until an apology is rendered, the government will no longer be taking questions from the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, given that I stand by my statements that I made last week and no apology will be forthcoming ever and given that this botched contract, which Albertans are still paying for, has not stopped this government from considering other Sam Mraiche affiliated companies from procurement contracts related to private surgical services, to the minister: why are the same names appearing over and over again on these contracts? How can Albertans trust that these processes are fair and above board?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has a history of making despicable, defamatory comments in this Chamber that he has not apologized for. I believe that last week he crossed a line. For that exact reason, until there's an apology, there will be no answers coming from the government to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that the only people who deserve an apology are the parents of Willowbrae Academy and they haven't gotten anything from this government, to the minister: how extensive were the ties between the Premier's chief of staff and Sam Mraiche, and how much did it impact government decisions on health care procurement?

2:20

The Speaker: Well, I didn't notice any connection between your third question and the first two, which is a problem.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, as I have said, given the nature of the comments from the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar last week the government will not be taking questions from that member going forward until an apology is offered, but I will say, in closing my remarks . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Schow: I will say in closing, Mr. Speaker, that since 2019, when that member, the minister of education, was elected, he has served the people of Alberta and served this Chamber diligently and deserves respect. On this side of the House we will stand behind that minister.

The Speaker: The next question belongs to the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Agribusiness Industry Development

Mrs. Sawyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta prides itself on utilizing technology and sustainability to meet the needs of food insecurity in Canada. However . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Both sides, order.

Mrs. Sawyer: There is a rising opportunity to expand and become a value-add processing province as well, no longer exporting our commodities just to buy them back as consumer goods. To the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation: how is the government of Alberta supporting the farmers and ranchers to develop into value-add processors?

Mr. Sigurdson: Well, Mr. Speaker, Alberta is leading the way in value-added processing, and that's because our government has created the best investment climate in all of North America. Because of that, we've seen a record agriprocessing investment of almost \$5 billion, which is bringing more and more processing home here to Alberta, diversifying our economy, growing our GDP. With the lowest tax rate in Canada you've got a recipe resulting in record investment, job creation, stronger supply chains, all of which help battle food affordability for Alberta families and Canadians.

The Speaker: Minister, when the clock gets to zero, you need to stop talking.
The hon. member.

Mrs. Sawyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you so much to the minister for that answer. Given that our agriculture products such as canola, wheat, and barley are internationally renowned and given that businesses such as Parrish & Heimbecker are choosing Alberta over other provinces as the location where they want to set up shop, to the same minister: what programs, services, and incentives are helping create Alberta's value as a prime location to do business in the value-add space?

Mr. Sigurdson: Mr. Speaker, Alberta is a top choice for companies like P & H because we've built a competitive, business-friendly environment for them to succeed through our agriprocessing investment, tax credit, streamlined approvals, capital supports, our lowest corporate tax rate, and we have the best farmers and ranchers in the world, all of which make Alberta the best place to invest in the value-added space. Every new facility means stronger markets for producers and more affordable, Alberta locally made food products on store shelves right here at home.

The Speaker: The member.

Mrs. Sawyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again to the minister for that excellent answer. Given that Alberta is continuing to attract record investments from businesses such as McCain into our rural communities and further given that with these investments come high-paying jobs that rural Albertans deserve and are looking for so that they can stay in their local communities, to the same

minister: what is our government doing to ensure that Albertans can continue to benefit from these investments and jobs?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sigurdson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Investments from companies like McCain are a game changer for rural Alberta. These projects bring stable, high-paying jobs that keep families in their rural communities, they support local businesses, and they help to reverse rural decline. They also create additional opportunities in related sectors like construction and logistics, ensuring that the economic benefits ripple throughout the region and strengthen rural development here in Alberta for generations and generations to come.

Government Policies and Cost of Living

Member Boparai: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are paying more for everything while getting less, and this government's answer is distraction over re-election. Families need relief, not excuses. Given that utilities, insurances, and grocery prices keep skyrocketing while wages stay stagnant and given that families are stretched to the breaking point, how can this government call its plan affordable? Is this government's plan to help Albertans or to keep them on life support while costs keep climbing?

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

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I'm very proud to be part of a government that takes an all-ministry approach to affordability to serve Albertans. That's why we brought forward a tax cut to make sure that every single working Albertan will receive \$750 of their money back in their pocket every single year. We continue to do everything we can to make life more affordable. We are addressing utilities. We're addressing insurance. We're addressing food affordability. Every single minister here comes to serve Albertans and put them first, making sure that their life continues to get better. That's why we see so many people from across Canada moving to Alberta.

Member Boparai: Given that families are drowning under skyrocketing costs – utilities, insurance, and groceries – and given that the government voted against studying shrinkflation and has taken no action to curb these prices and given that this government refuses to raise minimum wage while costs soar and given that nine parliamentary secretaries are getting raises, which demonstrates real hypocrisy, when will the UCP government admit their agenda is failing families who feel abandoned during a cost-of-living crisis while the government rewards their own?

Mr. Neudorf: Mr. Speaker, that's why, again, we're seeking to make differences through every single ministry, making sure that access to health care is better, which is why we see more doctors working in Alberta than ever before. It's why we're settling with our biggest unions, making sure that we have more nurses than ever before, more teachers than ever before. We are putting all-ministry attention on these issues, making sure that we come forward with tax cuts, making sure we come forward with affordability measures. We've seen utility prices come down 63 per cent from their peak. We are correcting the failed opportunities and the failed messages of the NDP to make life better for Albertans.

Member Boparai: Given that Albertans are paying more for everything – auto insurance up 15 per cent, home insurance quadrupling, sky-high utility bills, groceries more expensive day by

day – and given this government’s cuts to supports like AISH all while they waste hundreds of millions on DynaLife, Turkish Tylenol, coal contract payouts, and countless panels that lead nowhere, how can they call this affordability? In the new year what more can Albertans expect from these ministries of unaffordability?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, Alberta’s government, the Conservative government, has raised AISH payments by 22 per cent in six years, double the rate of inflation. It’s going to be \$1,940 a month, almost \$500 more than any other province in the country. That member, when their party was in power, was paying \$1,588. If they want to talk about investments and affordability and making life better for Albertans, you’re seeing this side of the House do it. The real question is: why did they not raise AISH when they were on this side of the House, not even by one dollar?

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

West Coast Pipeline Proposal

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we’re blessed with an abundance of natural resources in the province, and the world wants what we produce and all that we can deliver. With the recent signing of an MOU with the federal government, even the federal government has seen that when Alberta wins, the whole country does. Too bad the Leader of the Opposition can’t figure that one out. There’s lots of hard work to be done here to make this MOU a reality, to actually get our pipeline built to the west coast. To the Minister of Energy and Minerals: what are the next steps for building the northwest coast economic corridor and that good, old-fashioned pipeline?

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

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hard-working member. This is one of the most important deals in Alberta’s history. We are now working to get the project on the national projects list. We’re doing the preplanning right now to act as the proponent to take steps on it. Key to this engagement, of course, is our partnership with Indigenous communities. This project will actually create tens of thousands of jobs, billions of dollars of economic activity right across the province, the country. It’s a great thing. We’ve spent a decade fighting these bad policies from the Trudeau Liberals and the NDP from the other side. There’s no question; this is the right thing to do for Albertans.

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Getson: Thanks again, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the minister for the answer. Given that the expanded capacity to get our products to tidewater will be a game changer for the Albertan economy, providing stability in trading and opening up new markets and, quite frankly, everybody along that corridor heading to the coast, inclusive of B.C., and further given the interest we’re seeing from countries like India and further abroad in Asia to our oil and gas products and many other resources, to the same minister: why is it so important to expand our energy exports to include countries like India?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, this is more important to the people of the world than people in Canada actually know. To India, to Asia, particularly China and Korea, this could be a game changer. We have the closest port in Canada in North America to Asia. It is a growing market in exponential ways. The U.S. is actually changing

its views on tariffs. We all sacrificed as a result of that. We need to change our ways, and Canada has seen that. We’re on Team Canada. We’re hoping the rest of Canada is on Team Canada. Diversifying our markets is the right thing to do for Albertans, and it’s making us stronger and freer.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. Given the wealth that comes from these large projects such as pipelines, it’s important that all communities along the route share in that wealth and benefit from this resource extraction for generations. Further given this government’s dedication to improve the quality of life for all Indigenous peoples by encouraging job-creation investment – and that’s for that seven-generation view again – to the minister: how will a pipeline on the northwest coast benefit Indigenous communities in Alberta and also in British Columbia?

Mr. Jean: So much benefit to the people of northern B.C. and northern Alberta, Mr. Speaker. We’ve seen it with Cedar LNG. We’ve seen it with Ksi Lisims LNG. We know what’s possible with our Indigenous partners. The Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, through the good leadership of the last minister of Indigenous affairs and this minister, is doing great things: \$750 million in loan guarantees that create great opportunities and great projects for the people of Alberta, the people of British Columbia, and the people of Canada. Congratulations to our Premier for getting this over the line, a great project indeed. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Children’s Health Care

Member Batten: Mr. Speaker, ’tis the season of winter gathering, bringing the usual germs, but what families face now is not usual. Thousands of Albertans lack access to a family doctor, long emergency waits, and children packed into classrooms. Kids are getting sicker than they should. Preventable diseases continue to resurface, flagging a need for immediate action, yet this government: crickets. To the minister: why has the government failed to set Alberta’s kids up for success? Why hasn’t the government ensured that everyone who is able to get vaccinated has and stays healthy?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of preventative health.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we have made sure that our immunization program is up and running for the respiratory virus season. It’s unfortunate that the flu vaccine is mismatched with the current strain that is out and prevalent within society, but we’re continuing to make sure that everyone who wants the flu vaccine has access to the flu vaccine as well as COVID as well as RSV. Nothing has changed in regard to the flu vaccine, and it is available to all Albertans.

Member Batten: Given that Albertans now have to pay for access to the same vaccines and given that the season should be about bringing comfort and given that more families than ever are using the food bank and given that families are struggling to afford winter coats, groceries, and school lunches and given that this government raised fees, cut the child subsidy, and let costs climb so high that many children won’t have anything under the tree this year, Mr. Speaker, why would the government make it even harder for families who are struggling just to make ends meet?

Why introduce two-tiered, for-profit health care that is going to increase costs to them?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the member opposite is misinforming the public. If we look at the number of flu vaccines . . .

Ms Gray: Point of order.

Member LaGrange: . . . that have been administered in the last six weeks since the public campaign in 2025, there have been 820,000 approximately; in 2024 roughly about 850,000. We are seeing the same uptake as we did last year. It's unfortunate that the flu vaccine is mismatched, but we're ready for the influenza season.

Member Batten: Given that this season should remind us to take care of one another and given that kids in Alberta cannot access mental health care when they need it – there aren't enough counsellors; there are not enough clinics – and given that families sit on long wait-lists watching their kids struggle because most families cannot pay for additional services and given that this government continues to spin tales of private access providing public services, to the minister: since kids cannot access the care they deserve, what does that say about the government's priorities, and when will Albertans' children come first?

The Speaker: A point of order was noted at 2:34.
The minister.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's children have always come first. They will always come first, and I still always wear the Alberta Children First pin. In fact, I do recall that when I was the minister of education, we increased mental health supports for our children post-COVID, and those were expanded by the current minister. We also have CASA, that is now providing additional mental health supports. We're going to continue to make sure that our children are set up for success, and we are seeing results. [interjections]

The Speaker: Members.

Minister, when you point at your button, that makes it a prop. You can't do that.

Provincial Achievement Test Results

Ms Chapman: With all the attention on the UCP's disrespect for teachers, failure to address current classroom conditions, and lack of planning to build the schools Albertans need, there has been little attention left for one of the UCP's favourite measures of an education system, standardized tests. The results for last year's PATs are in, and, wow, are they something. Can the minister of education please enlighten us on just how well the UCP's new K to 6 curriculum performed on the PATs?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of education.

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we see in many of our PATs is a continuing of strength with respect to score improvement from COVID-19. During that time jurisdictions, of course, here in Alberta but across Canada and around the world experienced some significant decline in testing. We continue to see measures improve in some areas parallel to that seen in pre-COVID times. These are important results that we still need to evaluate and make sure that every student is set up for success in the best possible way.

Ms Chapman: Given that when it comes to grade 6 English language arts, the number of students achieving the acceptable standard dropped 10 per cent, the number of students achieving excellence dropped 7 per cent, and the number of students rated below acceptable increased to a shocking 20 per cent of students, given that the grade 9 tests with a curriculum untouched by this government saw no such dramatic changes, to the minister: is it the students, the teachers, or is it, in fact, this government's failed curriculum that has caused this dramatic drop in literacy rates?

Mr. Nicolaides: I have to be honest. I find it incredibly rich that the member just stood to talk about literacy when their entire caucus stood and voted against Bill 6, that would have supported literacy and numeracy in our province. We won't be deterred, however. Mr. Speaker, part of the reason that we introduced Bill 6 is to make sure that our education system is focused on strengthening literacy and numeracy as a number one priority for all students to ensure that they can excel. I believe the members opposite should be ashamed that they don't support literacy and numeracy strength in Alberta students.

Ms Chapman: Given that if you thought those literacy rates were bad, you best hold on to your hat for the math scores, given that grade 6 students achieving an acceptable standard in math dropped a staggering 16 per cent and now nearly 40 per cent of Alberta students are performing at below acceptable levels in math, given that teachers have been raising red flags about this curriculum since its implementation, will the minister apologize to teachers for once again failing to listen to their concerns?

Mr. Nicolaides: Mr. Speaker, we're listening very closely to the concerns of our teachers, educators, and other professionals. That's precisely why our government has approved over 150 school projects since 2019. Under the NDP only 46 school projects were approved. We've also increased funding to our education system by over 11.7 per cent. That exceeds total investments made by the NDP while they were in office. In addition, we have provided increased funding to support mental health needs and to other specialized programming to ensure students have those supports.

The Speaker: The Member for Grande Prairie.

2:40 Health Services in Rural Alberta

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Northern Alberta faces unique challenges when it comes to health care access and delivery, particularly in attracting and retaining medical professionals. These challenges impact families and communities across our region, making collaboration essential to finding sustainable solutions. Could the Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services share how she is working collaboratively with communities in our region to address these challenges and strengthen local health care capacity?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of preventative health.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I was proud to join the members for Grande Prairie and Grande Prairie-Wapiti this summer to engage with local health professionals and celebrate the launch of the University of Alberta's northern Alberta medical program in partnership with Northwestern Polytechnic. These members advocated hard for these projects, and because of them, this incredible initiative is now a reality. This program is a game changer for northern communities. It will train

physicians closer to home and create pathways for students who want to serve in rural Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for that. Now, given the growing demand for additional health care capacity in northern Alberta and given that our government has introduced initiatives like the rural and remote family medicine resident physician bursary and new payment models to support nurse practitioners, could the minister please outline how these measures will help strengthen primary care in rural and remote communities across our province?

The Speaker: The minister.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Strengthening primary care in rural Alberta starts with keeping talent right here at home. That's why we launched the \$16 million rural and remote family medicine resident physician bursary program to support residents who commit to practising in rural and remote communities after their training. We expect about 90 family physicians to begin practising in these areas. In addition, we've introduced a payment model for nurse practitioners so they can provide comprehensive care. These steps ensure Albertans, no matter where they live, have access to quality care right here close to home.

The Speaker: The member.

Mr. Dyck: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, given that Albertans are touched by long-term chronic health conditions – many of them are, and people in my constituency have told me stories – whether they are supporting a loved one or managing those challenges themselves and given that in my own family my grandfather spent over a decade on dialysis, during which health care workers provided exceptional care, can the Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services explain what measures our government is taking to help northern residents on dialysis and with complex health needs?

The Speaker: The minister.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has invested \$2.4 million in the new Sargent Family kidney care centre in Grande Prairie, and I know the members pushed really hard to get the project over the finish line. In a new era of care we're finding innovative solutions to complex health challenges right across our province. I'm extremely proud of the work our members are doing on this side of the aisle to, in fact, make sure that their communities have the projects and the resources and services that they really need in those communities.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, please remain in your seats.

Speaker's Ruling Remarks off the Record

The Speaker: Last week after question period while the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake was leaving, he said something loudly in the House. I don't know the full words of it, but it included the word "racist." The hon. member needs to – and whether you want to deny that or not, you said something loudly. You don't get to do that. You need to apologize and withdraw in this House.

Mr. Sinclair: I did not say "racist." I apologize and withdraw. I said "tough but fair."

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. I appreciate that very much.

In 30 seconds we will carry on with the daily Routine.

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give oral notice of several government motions. First, Government Motion 22, sponsored by myself, which reads as follows.

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 9, Protecting Alberta's Children Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in third reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

Government Motion 23, sponsored by myself, which reads as follows:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 11, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2), is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in third reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

Government Motion 24, sponsored by myself, which reads as follows:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 14, Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, 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.

Government Motion 25, sponsored by myself, which reads as follows:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 14, Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, 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.

Finally, Government Motion 26, sponsored by myself, which reads as follows:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 14, Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in third reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five copies of *Alberta Doctors' Digest*. The title is Pushing Back against Changes That Make Life Harder for Disabled Albertans.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Member Arcand-Paul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite copies of four documents here. One is a press release titled Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations Applauds Court's Decision on Separation Question.

The second document is titled Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs Society – Welcomes Court Decision Protecting Treaty Rights.

The third document is titled Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta Respond to Court Ruling Declaring Alberta Independence Referendum Question Contravenes Section 35, all from December 5, 2025.

Then I also have a court decision here, which identifies that an independent Alberta would contravene the numbered treaties and that First Nations are founding partners in the creation of Alberta, from Justice Feasby from December 5, 2025.

The Speaker: Very efficient with the tablings.

Ms Hoffman: I have my Christmas card to table in the House today. I want to thank Elliott, a grade 3 student, for doing the beautiful art that's on it and wish all of you, through you, Mr. Speaker and directly, a neutral third party, a very Merry Christmas and happy holidays to all.

The Speaker: Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table a *Wall Street Journal* article titled Europe's Green Energy Rush Slashed Emissions – and Crippled the Economy.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five copies of an e-mail from my constituent Adele McDonald. She is urging the UCP to not pass the undemocratic Bill 12, Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2), and is concerned about them mismanaging our pensions, as they often do.

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

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the five requisite copies of three different tablings. The first one is from 16 different constituents who are opposing private health care policy by the government.

Secondly, people who are opposed to ADAP, proposed by the government.

Also, constituents who are concerned about the CPP disappearing into an Alberta pension plan.

The Speaker: Are there any others? Yes, there is. Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have an academic paper by concerned students of the University of Lethbridge regarding Bill 9 and the UCP's cavalier use of the notwithstanding clause.

2:50

Tablings to the Clerk

The Acting Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk: on behalf of the hon. Mrs. Sawhney, Minister of Indigenous Relations, Premier's Council on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit Plus People 2023-2024 annual report.

The Speaker: Okay. Now we are at points of order. The first one was called at 2 o'clock by the Government House Leader.

Point of Order Parliamentary Language

Mr. Schow: Yes, Mr. Speaker. At 2 o'clock I rose when the Leader of the Opposition was asking I believe it was his third question, or

at some point, and he said, according to my unofficial records, "We have officially entered the Upside Down when the Premier and her love for chemtrails and antivax conspiracy theories calls other people conspiracy theorists."

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things that are problematic with this. First off, the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, is presupposing what the Premier does or does not love. We don't do that in this House. I do believe that's a point of order. We've set that precedence already in the past, unless I misunderstood or my records are incorrect.

The second thing is that we have a lot of examples of saying things like "tin foil hat on again." That was said to the Premier on March 27 of this year . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, thank you for your submission.
The Opposition House Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In this instance the Leader of the Official Opposition was responding to the Premier, who had referred to NDP conspiracies, and he responded in an unparliamentary way. He should have referred to the UCP government conspiracies, mirroring the Premier's language. I will chat with him. In the meantime I will apologize and withdraw on his behalf.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The second point of order was called at or near 2:09 p.m. by the Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order Parliamentary Language

Ms Gray: Thank you very much. Under 23(h), (i), and (j), a very similar point of order to the one we just heard, Mr. Speaker. I do not have the benefit of the Blues, but I heard at 2:09 the Justice minister starting to muse about: that member doesn't like the citizen initiative process. The member was certainly asking questions about the citizen initiative process, but talking about what members like, do not like, leads to personalization. I do not have the benefit of the Blues, so perhaps the member will apologize and withdraw. If not, I look forward to your ruling.

The Speaker: The government side, any comment?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, like my point of order, I think it'd be wrong to presuppose what someone does or doesn't like, but I don't have the benefit of the Blues, so I'm going to listen to what your records are and then go from there. I don't believe the member was out of order, but I anxiously await what the Blues have to say on this matter.

The Speaker: Here's what they say. This is what was said in the House. "That member doesn't like the citizen initiative process." We all know that we don't get to say what some other member likes or doesn't like, so that's clearly a point of order, very similar to the first point of order that was just withdrawn and apologized for.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: Okay. Well, both sides agree that that's not in order.

Point of order 3 was called at 2:34 p.m. by the Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order**Allegations against a Member**

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is similar under 23(h), (i), and (j), similar but more serious. At that time the minister of health said that the member opposite is misinforming the public. Misinforming the House or the public is equated to lying. We cannot do indirectly what we cannot do directly. Calling another member in this Chamber a liar is absolutely unparliamentary. I would ask that the minister apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: The government side.

Member LaGrange: I apologize and withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Indeed, and that was the proper thing to do.

Orders of the Day

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to request the unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive Standing Order 8(1) to proceed immediately to government business.

The Speaker: Members, the Government House Leader has moved to go straight to government business under 8(1). It needs unanimous consent, so the only question that I will ask: does anyone disagree?

[Unanimous consent denied]

Mr. Schow: Okay, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Disappointing because I would have loved to chat more about bills 9 and 11 during government business.

If that's not happening, then I do move that the Assembly be adjourned until 7:30 this evening.

The Speaker: All right, folks. I think we can all agree this is somewhat unusual, so I consulted with – what I've learned, or confirmed, I guess, is that the motion is in order, and it's not debatable.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion to adjourn carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 2:55 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

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

3:10

Against the motion:

Arcand-Paul	Elmeligi	Kasawski
Batten	Erenenko	Metz
Boparai	Ganley	Pancholi
Brar, Gurinder	Goehring	Renaud
Brar, Gurtej	Gray	Sabir
Calahoo Stonehouse	Guthrie	Schmidt
Chapman	Haji	Sigurdson, Lori
Dach	Hoffman	Sinclair
Deol	Hoyle	Sweet
Eggen	Ip	Tejada
Ellingson	Irwin	Wright, P.

Totals: For – 45 Against – 33

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 3:13 p.m.]

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