



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday morning and afternoon, March 26, 2026

Day 39

The Honourable Ric McIver, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

Second Session

McIver, Hon. Ric, ECA, Calgary-Hays (UC), Speaker
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UC), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UC), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UC)
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Boitchenko, Hon. Andrew, ECA, Drayton Valley-Devon (UC)
Boparai, Parmeet Singh, Calgary-Falconridge (NDP)
Bouchard, Eric, Calgary-Lougheed (UC)
Brar, Gurinder, Calgary-North East (NDP)
Brar, Gurtej Singh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Calahoo Stonehouse, Jodi, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, ECA, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Chapman, Amanda, Calgary-Beddington (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy Assistant Whip
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Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
de Jonge, Chantelle, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)
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Dyck, Nolan B., Grande Prairie (UC)
Eggen, Hon. David, ECA, Edmonton-North West (NDP)
Ellingson, Court, Calgary-Foothills (NDP)
Ellis, Hon. Mike, ECA, Calgary-West (UC),
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Eremenko, Janet, Calgary-Currie (NDP)
Fir, Hon. Tanya, ECA, Calgary-Peigan (UC)
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., ECA, Calgary-Mountain View (NDP),
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Ip, Nathan, Edmonton-South West (NDP)
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Kasawski, Kyle, Sherwood Park (NDP)
Kayande, Samir, Calgary-Elbow (NDP)
LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, ECA, Red Deer-North (UC)
Loewen, Hon. Todd, ECA, Central Peace-Notley (UC)
Long, Hon. Martin M., ECA, West Yellowhead (UC)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UC)
Lunty, Brandon G., Leduc-Beaumont (UC)
McDougall, Hon. Myles, ECA, Calgary-Fish Creek (UC)
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Miyashiro, Rob, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Nally, Hon. Dale, ECA, Morinville-St. Albert (UC)
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Nicolaidis, Hon. Demetrios, ECA, Calgary-Bow (UC)
Nixon, Hon. Jason, ECA, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre
(UC)
Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
Petrovic, Chelsae, Livingstone-Macleod (UC)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UC)
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Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
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Wiebe, Ron, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UC)
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Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC),
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Yaseen, Hon. Muhammad, ECA, Calgary-North (UC)

Party standings:

United Conservative: 47

New Democrat: 38

Progressive Tory: 1

Independent: 1

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Searle Turton	Minister of Children and Family Services
Dan Williams	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Rick Wilson	Minister of Mental Health and Addiction
Muhammad Yaseen	Associate Minister of Multiculturalism

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Jason Stephan	Parliamentary Secretary for Constitutional Affairs
Ron Wiebe	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health (North)
Justin Wright	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health (South)
Tany Yao	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Northern Development

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Kayande
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Stephan
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Cyr
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Brar, Gurtej
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Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Sawyer
Schmidt
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Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Mr. Dyck
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Al-Guneid
Armstrong-Homeniuk
Calahoo Stonehouse
Cyr
Ip
Petrovic
Rowswell
Yao

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

10 a.m.

Thursday, March 26, 2026

[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 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 *God Save the King* by Michael Peters. I invite all to participate.

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: Thank you. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: First up, we have the Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Lundy: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have a school group to introduce. I understand they might be running a bit late, but it's important that we acknowledge them, the école Mother d'Youville school from Beaumont. Their grade 6 class is visiting. If you are here, I ask you to rise and please receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. members, today I would like to introduce to Assembly members the members of the '25-26 Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission, who are seated in my gallery. We have with us Hon. Dallas Miller, chair of the commission; Dr. Julian Martin; Ms Susan Samson, and Susan's husband, Robert Samson. I would ask all of them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce a distinguished guest joining us in the gallery. We are honoured to be joined by Norm Gerestein, who is the mayor of Brooks, from my own constituency of Brooks-Medicine Hat. Mayor, please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly members from my Department of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration, some incredible JETIs: Jennifer Jabs, Mary Ballantyne, Richard Skelton, Jennifer Mitok, and from legislative services, Eric Martin. I ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly. They are part of this amazing team that I have.

The Speaker: Calgary-Beddington.

Ms Chapman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce my favourite four human beings in the world. They come for the mall; they stay for their mom. Thanks for spending your spring break with me. Jonathan, Lizzie, Oliver, Arthur, please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my uncle Bill Neudorf from La Crête. Welcome, and please receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you Hamza Nihal, who works in the Premier's office in Calgary, along with his beautiful family: Soha Nihal, Rafael Nihal, and Fakhar Jabran, who joins us from Pakistan. I ask that you please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe my guests may be running a little bit late, but I want to get them on the record as well. Allow me to introduce to you and through you members of the Paul First Nation. They're out in God's country in Lake Wabamun. It's Chief Casey Bird, councillors Darren Rain, Delores Rain, Jason Saulteaux, councillor Faron Bull, and Dwight Paul. Please give them a big round of applause, and welcome to the Assembly.

The Speaker: Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mrs. Sawyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly the provost of Prairie Bible Institute, Dr. Mark Jonah, from my constituency of Three Hills. Please rise and accept the warm welcome of this institution.

The Speaker: The Minister of Mental Health and Addiction.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured today to introduce to you and through you one of my favourite constituents, also known as my daughter June Boyda, who is here in Edmonton not to see me, unfortunately, but for the Alberta Municipalities convention this week. She's also serving as chief administrative officer for several summer villages. Please rise and receive the warm welcome.

Members' Statements

150th Anniversary of Treaty 6

Member Arcand-Paul:

Can we stop the power of the white man from spreading over the land like the grasshoppers that cloud the sky and then fall to consume every blade of grass and every leaf on the trees in their path? I think not. Before this happens let us ponder carefully our choice of roads.

There are men among you who are trying to blind our eyes, and refuse to see the things that have brought us to this pass. Let us not think of ourselves but of our children's children. We hold our place among the tribes as chiefs and councillors because our people think we have wisdom above others amongst us. Then let us show our wisdom. Let us show our wisdom by choosing the right path now while we yet have a choice.

Mr. Speaker, these are words spoken by okimaw ahtahkakoop, or Chief Star Blanket, one of the Nehiyaw leaders who entered the Treaty 6 relationship with the Queen Mother for all our benefit, to live peacefully for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of this sacred relationship being formalized on this land we find ourselves on today. Treaty is older than this Assembly. This is not just history; it is our present, and it is our future. Okimaw ahtahkakoop's words could not ring any more true today. The chiefs in treaties 6, 7, and 8 showed us their wisdom with a vote of nonconfidence against the UCP for threatening treaty by not denouncing separatism. Let's continue to build an Alberta that respects Treaty 6 for the next 150 years because, Mr. Speaker, we are all treaty people.

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order at 10:08.

Career and Employment Services for Youth

Mrs. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, for generations people have come to Alberta seeking good opportunities for themselves and their families. This includes young people starting out their careers, learning new skills, and gaining experience that will help them throughout their lives. Across Canada youth employment has been a challenge, with many reports pointing to oversaturation of the entry-level job market because of bad management of the temporary foreign worker program. Others add that in some jurisdictions increases to minimum wage have pushed businesses to look for cost savings, which sometimes include reducing the number of staff they employ.

Mr. Speaker, this is a shame. Our next generation is depending on us to ensure that they have a fair shot at success, which begins with their first job. That is why our government is continuing to fund the Alberta youth employment incentive that was introduced last year. This program establishes a direct partnership with businesses to off-set the cost and lift the financial weight of hiring and training of young workers.

With the recent announcement of \$20 million over the next three years added to last year's funding, our government expects to help up to 8,750 Albertans between the ages of 15 and 24 to gain valuable work experience, training, and skill development. Since this program started last year, it's already helped nearly 860 young Albertans connect with employment. The best part: 95 per cent of participating businesses have been small and medium-sized, meaning not only does this support youth with jobs but also business owners based right here in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to building our workforce, it's Conservatives who get the job done. The NDP is bad for businesses. They commit to raise taxes, push ahead with unexpected minimum wage hikes, and drive out investment that keeps our economy strong. On this side we're helping young Albertans get to work.

Thank you.

10:10 Complex Classroom Supports

Ms Chapman: In this Chamber classroom complexity feels abstract. It's tens of thousands of Albertans protesting but just out of sight. It's budget lines, committees, complexity teams. It's moving at the speed of government.

For teachers, classroom complexity is close. It's visceral. They see it. They live it every day. They don't have the option of sealing themselves off against it, and they have been managing this complexity for years. Under the tenure of this government classroom complexity has

escalated to common occurrence of classroom violence. One teacher wrote to me to describe the situation in her classroom. She writes:

This year alone, my students have seen me hit, scratched, spit on, kicked, and bitten. They have heard threats from another student expressing a desire to hurt, stab, or kill me.

During these incidents, as required, I remain calm, do not defend myself, and the student responsible either remains in the classroom or returns to the classroom shortly after with a perfunctory apology. The expectation is that everyone resumes the day as though nothing has happened, until the next violent outburst.

For some children, witnessing violence at school may be the first time that they have seen such behaviour unfold in front of them. For others . . . who come from homes where violence is [a] part of their life, these incidents reinforce an existing worldview: that aggression is expected, tolerated, and woven into relationships.

Before the strike, after the strike, today, this year, last year, any year the UCP has been in charge of education it's nothing but committees and promises, and "we'll look at it," "we hear you," "we're on the same page," yet the state of our classrooms is exactly the same today as it was the day teachers went on strike, and our kids deserve better.

The Speaker: Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

Port of Westlock Expansion

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize an important economic achievement that reflects the strength, innovation, and leadership of the Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock constituency. The port of Westlock, a dry port initiative spearheaded by the next-generation co-op Westlock Terminals, has secured a significant, long-term industrial transloading partnership. This means that we'll see high-grade steel moved by rail from eastern Canada directly to Westlock. This agreement establishes a reliable and scalable rail corridor, connecting eastern and western Canada. Better yet, it marks a major step for the region's role in national supply chains. This demonstrates that Westlock is well positioned to support complex, industrial-scale operations.

With modern rail infrastructure, strategic location, and a skilled local workforce, the riding continues to prove that rural Alberta can compete nationally. By reducing congestion, improving predictability, and streamlining material handling, it lays the groundwork for future growth. This includes the expansion of rail volumes and, also, adding more commodities to the mix. It also provides an opportunity for two-way transloading that could see products from our region shipped across Canada and into global markets.

Beyond the logistics benefits, this achievement highlights the broader economic impact for the region of Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock. It supports job creation, attracts investment, and reinforces the riding's reputation as a hub for transportation, agriculture, and industrial development. It also strengthens Alberta's contribution to Canada's supply chain infrastructure at a time when reliability and resilience are more important than ever. Mr. Speaker, this success reflects the strong spirit of co-operation, hard work, and forward thinking that define my constituency. It's an honour to represent a constituency that continues to lead by example, drive economic growth, and help build a stronger Alberta.

The Speaker: Edmonton-North West.

Investigation of Health Services Procurement

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been quite a couple of weeks in the UCP's ongoing corrupt care scandal. To recap a few of the interesting recent developments, the RCMP raided MHCare offices in

Edmonton, spending several days there gathering documents and collecting evidence as they continue their investigation into shady procurement deals between this government and Sam Mraiche. Then the RCMP paid a visit to an accounting firm of Sam Jaber, a Mraiche associate who used to serve as chief financial officer at MHCare and who was appointed in 2023 at the explicit direction of this Premier's office to serve on the board of Invest Alberta. No thanks to the Premier who, after the news of the police raid, did nothing at all, Sam Jaber is now on a voluntary leave of absence. That's a lot of smoke and certainly a lot of investigative activity around the man whose organization was paid nearly \$50 million in advance by this government for not delivering and then sorting delivery issues of the useless Turkish Tylenol.

Now, I haven't even gotten to the hundreds of millions of dollars of bloated contracts that they are in the process of giving Sam Mraiche for private surgical facilities. The UCP keeps telling us that there's no corruption to see here. Nothing could be further from the truth. The snare is tightening, Mr. Speaker, and Albertans are fed up with this government. It's time to do the right thing and call a public inquiry or, better yet, just call an election.

Auditor General Appointment

Mr. Shepherd: Yesterday we saw the announcement of the next Auditor General for Alberta, a position and office that's critical to the protection and functioning of our democracy in our province. The Auditor General's role is essential to ensure that programs operate transparently, ethically, and deliver for Albertans. They hold government to account, and we as legislators must guard their independence and ensure they have the resources they need to do their important work. Sadly, that's not been the UCP's record.

Under the current Premier and government we've seen an increasing campaign of disrespect against the current AG as he's been providing much-needed scrutiny of their spending and decisions. The AG's investigation into the UCP's disastrous DynaLife deal took two years because the UCP mounted an unprecedented campaign of stalling and obstruction. He even wrote at the end, "Documents were either not provided or were heavily redacted."

Then as the AG prepared to take on the most important work of auditing the UCP's teardown of AHS and the 11 new health organizations they created, they tried to deny him the funding to do it and accused him of refusing to do his job. Most recently as the AG's been hard at work investigating corrupt care, the UCP denied him an extension to finish.

Throughout our work on the subcommittee to search for the next Alberta AG, we saw the UCP engage in unprecedented disruption of procedure and attempted politicization of the entire process. Not surprising, I suppose, from a Premier who was found to have breached the Conflicts of Interest Act as she attempted to interfere in a criminal case and a government for whom political interference is as natural as breathing.

But here's the thing. No matter how hard they try, they can't hide the truth forever. Their control is slipping. I have every confidence that our new Auditor General will carry on the good work of this independent office, and the UCP's attempts to obstruct processes and cover up their actions won't succeed. Albertans deserve the truth, and we're all going to work to make sure they get it.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

The Speaker: The Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Lundy: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As chair of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices I'm pleased to table the committee's report recommending the appointment of Phillip D. Peters as Auditor General for an eight-year term commencing on April 29, 2026. Copies of this report will be available online.

Thank you.

Introduction of Bills

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

Bill 21

Interprovincial Trade Mutual Recognition Act

Mr. Schow: Why, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request leave to introduce Bill 21, the Interprovincial Trade Mutual Recognition Act.

Breaking down internal trade barriers is a focus of our government, and if passed, this legislation will implement the Canadian mutual recognition agreement in Alberta, which means that products approved for sale in one Canadian jurisdiction are automatically approved in Alberta. I would like to acknowledge the incredible work of my team, particularly those seated in the gallery today, to help bring this legislation together. I'm grateful for them; could not do it without them. We have a great squad.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill 21.

[Motion carried; Bill 21 read a first time]

10:20

Oral Question Period

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

Foreign Interference in Provincial Referendums

Mr. Nenshi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier seems to fail to recognize that there's a very real risk of foreign interference with her upcoming separatist referendum. The Alberta Prosperity Project has raised over a million dollars. Their officials have met with U.S. State Department officials. But when we ask the Premier about this risk of foreign interference, she rattles off something about her supersecret spy agency, or she tells us about citizenship markers on drivers' licences, none of which have anything to do with the very real risk. What is her actual plan to deal with foreign interference in these referenda?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have had instances across the country of foreign interference in elections, and sadly one of the things we discovered was that CSIS does not proactively share that information with provincial Premiers or the individuals who are impacted. In fact, you have to go through and get special security clearance. I'm in the process of getting that clearance now. If there is anything that is flagged by the spy agency, we'll deal with it at that time. But at the moment we've got no evidence that anybody is interfering in our elections in Alberta.

Mr. Nenshi: Well, the Premier, of course, is no stranger to foreign interference. She railed against it when the Liberal government was in the crosshairs over and over again, and of course last year she dabbled in it herself when she went to the United States and asked them to pause the tariffs so that Pierre Poilievre could win the election. It didn't work. Mr. Poilievre sent her to Japan to keep her

as far away from that election as possible, and now she accepts lavish gifts from foreign governments. What credibility does this Premier possibly have in actually preventing foreign interference in her referendums?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. No one likes hypocrisy, and that's what we're seeing from the member opposite. I don't know why it's okay to accept an exchange protocol when you are a mayor but not okay to accept an exchange protocol when you're Premier. I'd be interested in knowing from the opposition leader: did he accept \$80,000 worth of gifts when he was in the mayor's office?

Mr. Nenshi: The Premier understands hypocrisy better than any of us because, of course, she didn't disclose any gifts in the last two years. We know she's accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars of gifts from a foreign government. That is not protocol. That is not tobacco. That is hypocrisy. And she says she wants a security clearance. Does she understand that having accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars of gifts from a foreign government means she won't get that top secret security clearance? Does she understand the consequences of her actions?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If a cat statue was indeed made of solid gold, it would be a \$700,000 gift. As it is, it's made of copper, and it is only worth about \$80. But, again, the member opposite is acting hypocritically. We'd like to know about the \$4,000 in silk ties he received from a single individual, \$800 in gift cards, a soapstone sculpture. If this is okay as a matter of protocol for a mayor, why is it that matters of protocol are unacceptable for the Premier's office?

The Speaker: The second set of questions belongs to the Leader of the Official Opposition, and I'd like to hear both the question and the answer, please.

Mr. Nenshi: If the government disclosed anything, we could be having this conversation, but they hide it all because the Premier only knows how to deflect.

Children's Pain Medication Purchase

Mr. Nenshi: She has been deflecting on the Turkish Tylenol scandal, saying it was about AHS procurement. But Justice Wyant writes on page 17 of his report, "The Deputy was asked to have the department conduct an assessment of the purchase and it did not recommend proceeding." It was political direction. It was the Premier's office that presented it. Why did the Premier direct that AHS work with her friend and the Justice minister's cousin Sam Mraiche?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is not correct. What happens in government when you identify an issue that needs to be resolved: you ask your department officials to do the procurement on your behalf. In the middle of a world-wide shortage of children's acetaminophen and ibuprofen we asked if the very skilled procurement division of AHS would be able to identify where we might be able to source that product, thinking that we might have shortages for years. They came back with a single option. Unfortunately, the contract was not written in a way that protected taxpayers, and those are the things that we're assessing and addressing.

Mr. Nenshi: The Premier just said that Justice Wyant was wrong when he said AHS procurement said not to do it.

Now, we know that Mr. Prasad, Jitendra Prasad, had 39 years of procurement experience, yet somehow on this one contract directed by the Premier and her office, he forgot to ask the lawyers to look at it. Are we expected to believe that? This is the same Mr. Prasad who the Premier met with secretly before she was Premier. This is all just coincidence, I suppose. Now the RCMP has raided Mr. Prasad. Now that the cops have come knocking, does the Premier admit she made a mistake?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Someone who had 39 years of procurement experience, having handled billions of dollars worth of procurement on behalf of AHS in the past: yeah, we would have expected that they would have made sure they didn't have conflict, they would have made sure that they had issues if the product was not delivered in the contract terms, they would have ensured that they had an oversight by legal. Unfortunately, none of those things happened. That's what we discovered through the Judge Wyant report. He gave 18 recommendations, and that's what we're addressing. We're going to fix it.

Mr. Nenshi: What was different about this particular procurement is that the Premier interfered in it with her buddy Jitendra Prasad. Health officials said: don't do it. She did it anyway because of political direction from her staff. That's what Wyant said. Albertans are still owed 50 million bucks after three years of the hospital minister's mediation and the previous minister's attempts to give the drugs away. But here's an easy thing. Why doesn't the Premier just get the money back by calling the Justice minister's cousin – I'm sure he's got the number on speed-dial – and asking her buddy Sam for the money back?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was an AHS procurement, an AHS contract, which is why AHS has to go through the process of either having the contract fulfilled – and they've had some conversations about that over the last couple of years. If that does not yield a result in satisfying the contract, then they have a process to be able to get the money back. There are two pathways available to AHS, and I've been told by the health minister that they're pursuing both.

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

Recovery Community Contracts

Mr. Nenshi: Every time the Premier blames bureaucrats, she tells on herself in terms of her not being able to run her own government. Meanwhile the minister of assisted living continues to tell us that they respect First Nations peoples and their right to make decisions despite the nonconfidence vote. So it's just a coincidence that all these First Nations happen to contract from the same guy, who has no experience in building recovery centres . . .

An Hon. Member: You don't trust First Nations.

Mr. Nenshi: . . . who has no experience in health care, who just happens to be tipped off about the land that's going to be sold. Can the government look Albertans in the eye and say that there was no interference directing those First Nations to hire Mraiche?

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 10:28.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The company in question is owned by a Ukrainian family that has been in the construction business for over 30 years. We did a check to see if we've ever done business with them as a government, and we haven't. They haven't built assisted living homes for us. They haven't built seniors' lodges for us. They haven't built affordable housing for us. They seem to operate in the private space. We know nothing about them, which is why we rely on the First Nations and the Métis, when we give them a grant, to manage their own contracts. They have their own connections, their own experience, and it is up to them to be able to manage their contracts. [interjection]

Mr. Nixon: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 10:28. That's two points of order at 10:28. Not a good sign.

Mr. Nenshi: And it's just an absolute coincidence that this company that the Premier has never heard of, that's getting hundreds of millions of dollars of government contracts, happens to also be owned by Sam Mraiche and is in a legal dispute with him. We now know that the subcontractors on these things aren't getting paid. We know that they've stopped work on at least one of these recovery centres, and the government, hopefully, is figuring out that when you hire inexperienced people like Sam Mraiche and storefront accountants like Sam Jaber, bad things happen. Does the Premier regret putting Sam Mraiche in charge of every element of her government?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd invite the member opposite to read *The Tyee* because they're looking at 25 different suits and countersuits. It's a little bit confusing to figure out who is responsible, but if you talk to the leaders, the leaders have said that they gave the money to the Melewka company, which is owned by the Ukrainian family, and they are expecting that that company is going to pay their subcontractors. I'm not sure about the connections that he's drawing, but the fact of the matter is that this is a civil dispute that is in the courts, and that is where it will have to be resolved. There's a number of different accounts, Mr. Speaker. He shouldn't speak with such certainty on this. He doesn't know.

10:30

Mr. Nenshi: It's taxpayer money, Mr. Speaker. We expect as Albertans that the government looks after taxpayer money, but this government is so gullible. They get taken by any grifter on the street, and it's now putting their Alberta recovery model at very serious risk. After seven years only four recovery centres opened. The rest of them stalled out because of these disputes that all involve the same guy, Sam Mraiche, the same guy sitting on \$50 million of taxpayers' money. Why is Sam Mraiche's wallet more important to this government than the needs of Albertans with addictions?

Ms Smith: This is rich, Mr. Speaker. The party of safe supply, the party of safe consumption sites, the party that wants to keep people in addiction now worried that the recovery model is going to be at risk. The recovery model is not at risk, not from this side of the House. It's at risk from that side of the House, who ideologically don't support people who want to get into recovery, want to keep them in their addiction. This is the reason why we have built the recovery communities, why we're partnering with First Nations and Métis. The projects in question are over 70 per cent complete, and we expect them to open this year.

Premier's Acceptance of Gifts and Benefits

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, 44 years of Conservative dynasty ended in 2015 with bad budgets, eroding public services, and extraordinary entitlement and corruption. The Premier knows this well because she had a front-row seat to all of it. UCP caucus members should be asking: what's changed? Those same MLAs heard here, not from their leader, about the Premier's private jets and luxury hotels in Saudi Arabia. Why didn't the Premier tell her caucus in advance that she'd be taking the most expensive gifts ever received from a foreign government?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, it is common protocol that when dignitaries from one nation or subnational jurisdiction and another meet, they exchange gifts. It's an opportunity for us, particularly the Premier, to go to these jurisdictions, build relationships, and use those relationships to continue to advance the interests of Alberta's economy. That's exactly what the Premier has been doing, and as a result we are leading the country in job growth; 85,000 jobs created year over year. We are at the head of the pack.

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader knows that flights in private jets are not protocol gifts. That is not business as usual. Albertans would never have known about these lavish gifts had our leader not asked. This government no longer believes in transparency. It's time for the members opposite to hold their leaders accountable. So far it seems none of them have stood up to the entitlement. Why did the Premier refuse to be transparent about the lavish private jets and luxury hotels that she received as gifts from the Saudi Arabian government?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, as I just said, it is not uncommon to exchange gifts with other governments when visiting, but in this case in question taking an airplane over an oil refinery that is guarded by the military is not something you can do in a commercial aircraft. The Leader of the Opposition suggested we do these meetings by Zoom or just say no. That is the economic development strategy of the members opposite: "Just say no. We don't want your money. We don't want your investment. Keep it out of Alberta. We want to drive everybody out of the province. We want to fail as a province." That's their plan.

Ms Gray: Corruption and entitlement did not end with the fall of the PCs, Mr. Speaker. Quietly accepting expensive private flights, opulent hotel rooms from a foreign government is inappropriate, and there are many other ways to handle the situation. The RCMP is now raiding businesses and homes of those closest to this government, and every day the Premier and her Attorney General are asked, "Who will be raided next?" by the media. This is as serious as it gets. Will the Premier apologize to Albertans for being at the centre of multiple scandals?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to tell the members opposite that there is no apology coming from the Premier on this. What I can also tell you is that in advance of this trip to Saudi Arabia that the members opposite are citing, the Premier consulted with the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that the entire trip was in accordance with the act. The members opposite are choosing to throw insults at foreign governments. Imagine for a moment – heaven forbid – the nightmare if they ever come into government. Guess what: no one will want to do business with them.

The Speaker: We're at the fourth question, which means no preamble on the supplementaries, and that question belongs... [interjections] Members, I don't require the help that's being offered to me right now,

and I'll just thank everybody to let me have my time. I'll soon let somebody else have their time, and that person will be the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Cancer Surgery Wait Times

Ms Hoffman: Did you know that if you have breast cancer and your surgery is delayed eight weeks, your risk of death goes up 17 per cent, and if it's delayed 12 weeks, you're 26 per cent more likely to die? [interjections] It's no laughing matter, Mr. Speaker. When the Premier got her job, 70 per cent of Albertans needing breast cancer surgery got it within the medically recommended window, but now it's way worse: only 43 per cent. The trend line is bad under the UCP. What does the Premier or any of her health ministers have to say to the people waiting for their breast cancer surgeries who are afraid that they won't get them in time?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of hospitals.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that too many people are waiting too long in this country and in Alberta for surgeries, which is why we've established a dedicated provincial health corporation to focus on cancer, and we're resourcing it at record levels: \$1.2 billion this year, an increase of \$250 million. It's investments like that that are the reason that we're doing a record number of cancer surgeries, up 7 per cent year over year, and we expect that momentum to continue. I'll be happy to outline some of the other areas where we're investing in cancer care for Albertans so they can get faster treatment and better outcomes.

Ms Hoffman: Given that while the NDP built the Arthur J.E. Child cancer centre in Calgary, the UCP is now in charge of it and they failed to open it to its full potential and given that the UCP has prioritized staffing private surgical centres owned by the Justice minister's cousin over staffing cancer care, does the minister understand that political interference is pulling staff out of hospitals where breast cancer surgeries happen and that it's putting lives at risk?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Arthur J.E. Child has 106 in-patient beds open, an increase of 95 from when it opened in 2024. We also have additional space there that we're evaluating to expand capacity. It's common to build shelled spaces in facilities to accommodate additional growth, and we are evaluating that as part of our shelled space, \$63 million that we've allocated through Budget 2026 if passed. We're also looking at updating our fleet of equipment through an eight-year partnership with Siemens.

Ms Hoffman: Privatization.

Mr. Jones: Over eight years we will be substantially upgrading with modern technology, including AI, to make our scans more fast and accurate.

The Speaker: You don't often hear somebody with a question heckling in the middle, but you go ahead with your next question.

Ms Hoffman: Given that private surgical centres can't do surgeries that would save lives like heart, brain, or cancer surgeries and given that the UCP signed contracts guaranteeing staff for those private sites even if it's at the cost of nurses and an anaesthesiologist for the Calgary cancer centre or the Rockyview hospital and given that in the budget debate the minister of hospitals admitted that there wasn't a legal review before contracts were signed with MHCare,

will the minister admit that these decisions hurt our health care system, and will he apologize on behalf of the Premier and the UCP to breast cancer patients still waiting for their surgeries?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we are making record investments to improve the provision of cancer care in Alberta at \$1.2 billion, a substantial increase of \$250 million, and we're also onboarding new oncologists every day. We've had success in recruitment, and we expect to. One of the exciting parts of the Siemens Healthineers eight-year contract is two centres of excellence, which are going to make Alberta a destination for research and workforce development. We expect that to help with our long-term workforce strategy. We're also looking at bringing proton beam therapy to the province, the first in Canada.

The Speaker: The next set of questions belongs to the member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Career and Employment Services for Youth

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Across the country youth unemployment remains a large concern for our next generation as they're feeling the pressures and stress of falling further behind. Unfortunately, too many young people are feeling hopeless about their futures, wondering if they'll get ahead, especially when they struggle even to find their first job. To the Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration: what is Alberta's government doing to support employment opportunities for Alberta's youth?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can say with confidence that I'm sure every member of this Chamber can express the importance and the value of getting that first employment opportunity. That's where young people learn the important skills, things like showing up on time, doing their hair, speaking to others, and, frankly, just learning those soft skills that carry them through the rest of their employment experience. Now, last year our government introduced the youth employment incentive to partner with businesses and help young Albertans get their first job and enter the workforce. Yesterday we announced another \$20 million to support this effort.

10:40

The Speaker: Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. Given that the Alberta youth unemployment incentive was introduced last year to help ease the risk for businesses to hire youth and given that the higher youth unemployment is due in part to the federal government flooding the market with entry-level foreign workers, with young Canadians losing out opportunities to temporary foreign workers in entry-level jobs, to the same minister: how is the government ensuring Alberta's youth get the first crack at these jobs in our province?

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me be very clear. The federal government's failed immigration policy has directly impacted young Albertans and their ability to get the entry-level position they so desire even here in Alberta. We are taking an approach that focuses on economic migration and not putting youth out of work the same way the members opposite did when they were in government. Our ask to the business community is to help us give young Albertans a chance, to

give them that first opportunity for employment and learn those ever-important skills that will carry them through the rest of their lives.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the minister. Given that the NDP is the bad-for-business party and seemed to do everything they could to drive away investments when they had the helm and given that we still see examples of this – when they ran in the last election, they were hoping to hike up taxes by 38 per cent, and given some of the conversation heckles we’ve had in here, they ain’t changing course – and given that we saw it when they tried to force yet another hike on minimum wage without consulting or having the support of Alberta’s business communities, to the same minister: what is the government doing to ensure businesses can keep on creating jobs for Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. House leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank that member for the question. It was an excellent question. What I can say is that, yes, the Alberta NDP is bad for business. They drove business out of the province for years, and seven years after, seven years removed from their government, we’re still cleaning up their mess. Now we see that their investment in job creation and attraction, their strategy for job creation and attraction is to insult foreign dignitaries. That is not a plan. The members opposite have no plan. They presented no plan, no shadow budget, no nothing. It’s the plan of absolute, abysmal failure.

The Speaker: That’s good. I can hear myself think. I like that.

Government Communications on Affordability

Mr. Schmidt: Yesterday I highlighted some helpful tips for saving money from this government’s affordable advice for life website, that included such bangers as: buy generic brands, use the food bank, and “Be Content with What You Have.” This website is such a treasure trove of advice that I want to highlight some more. How about this gem? “Eggs are usually lower cost than meat. Check that the [egg] shells aren’t broken.” To the Premier: does this government think that people are too stupid to not buy broken eggs?

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

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s great to get up here and remind Albertans that they in the majority voted for our government. They did themselves a favour by making the greatest affordability decision in Alberta’s history by not electing the NDP, the NDP who campaigned on raising taxes, who brought in the carbon tax, the largest tax increase in Alberta’s history. I’m proud to be part of a government that got rid of that when we were elected and kicked them out of office. I’m proud to bring forward an income tax cut with the Minister of Finance putting Albertans first. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. We’re just going to hear from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, and let’s hear the question and the answer, shall we?

Mr. Schmidt: Given that affordable advice for life contains this hot tip for saving money in the grocery store, “Be aware of who you bring with you. It can really make or break your budget,” and given that Albertans know this too well because they see the Premier bringing Sam Mraiche with her and he’s broken Alberta’s budget on Turkish Tylenol, private surgical facilities, and recovery communities that’ll never get built, will the Premier take her government’s own advice and stop breaking the budget and just leave Sam Mraiche at home?

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

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m trying to remember the last time an NDP government in Alberta tabled a balanced budget. Oh, wait, they never did that. They never even got close. They just increased the deficit. They increased the debt. They campaigned on raising taxes. And you know what they did for Albertans? They got rid of coal and asked taxpayers to pay \$2 billion for that. Not only that; the renewable energy program is such a failure that our government continues to pay \$60 million to \$80 million a year for their horrible contracts. We will do what they never did. We’ll put Albertans first.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that by Albertans the minister means Sam Mraiche and given that helpful tips from affordable advice for life just keep coming and given that some more advice for making life more affordable includes real genius-level stuff like “consider getting a part-time job” and given that Albertans who can’t afford groceries don’t need a second job; they need a job that pays more and given the Premier had no problem raising her own salary shortly after she took office, will the government stop berating hard-working Albertans and just raise the minimum wage?

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. If we take a trip down memory lane, we’ll remember when the NDP arbitrarily introduced significant wage increases for the minimum wage, which made it very difficult for young Albertans to get that first employment opportunity. But I’m happy to report that the UCP government, under this government . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. I just can’t even hear the answer, so let’s tone it down, please.

Go ahead.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, the truth must really hurt.

I can tell you that under this UCP government and the leadership of the Premier Alberta has the highest weekly earnings in the entire country, and you want to know why? It’s because we’re leading the charge and, like the minister of affordability said, we’re putting Albertans first.

Property Taxes and Government Spending

Member Kayande: Mr. Speaker, for a government that claims to be fiscally conservative, the UCP sure does relish tax increases on hard-working Albertans, especially on Calgary homeowners. The UCP’s annual provincial property tax requisition from Calgarians will skyrocket nearly 20 per cent as a result of this bad budget, taking \$340 per year from my constituents with absolutely nothing to show for it. While Calgarians are tightening their belts, the UCP is reaching into their pockets. To the Finance minister: why won’t this government get back the \$50 million held for more Turkish . . .

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. There’s a 35-second thing that applies to everybody.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We’ve heard loud and clear from the members opposite, from Albertans at large, the importance of funding education: growing classrooms, more complex classrooms, a need for schools to meet the population surge we’ve seen over the last three years. We’re very committed to that. We said this budget was about priorities. We’ve also heard criticisms even within that question about the deficit. Once again, are we spending today, or are we saving

today? I'd like a little consistency from the members opposite. What we're going to do is focus on priorities of Albertans.

Member Kayande: Given that this budget is all pain and no gain for the people of Calgary who are just trying to make ends meet and given that Albertans expect that if this government raises their taxes, they'll at least get something in return, like gas tax-relief or quality public health care, and given this government is raising taxes and running a \$9.4 billion deficit while doing nothing to make life more affordable, instead wasting millions on Turkish Tylenol settlements for foreign coal companies and luxury travel for the Premier and cabinet, simple question: where did the money go?

Mr. Horner: I know that member has a financial background. We've just been through estimates. I don't know if we need a tutorial on how the budget works, but the money went in health care and education. To the point of his question – what did Calgarians get? – the property tax education requisition is just for operating, \$10.8 billion in education, and it's not just Calgary; it's in every community across the province. Everyone is pitching in to pay for this great education system. That's not even counting the schools, 161 schools in this plan, 14 new schools in Calgary alone.

Member Kayande: Given that the UCP are piling property tax increases on Calgary homeowners while running a massive deficit with no plan to balance and given that two provinces over the Manitoba NDP are slashing property taxes and cutting grocery prices, all while moving back to balance and keeping the lowest deficit in Canada, why wouldn't the minister just phone a friend and call his NDP equivalent in Manitoba for some pointers instead of leaving Calgarians to pick up the tab for his wasteful spending?

10:50

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, if anybody is going to phone the NDP mother ship, it won't be this side of the House. I don't think they're phoning them anyways. I think the messages just come in one direction.

People are moving to Alberta in droves, largely for affordability reasons and reasons of opportunity. That is what Alberta provides to the entire country. We've created more jobs than anywhere else in the country. In fact, if it wasn't for Alberta, Canada would have been in negative job creation over the last year. This is the only place in Canada that's able to do that, and they're coming for affordability reasons.

Supports for Seniors

Ms Sigurdson: Many Albertans are struggling to make ends meet under the rising cost of living that this UCP government has done nothing to address, and sadly some of the most severely impacted are seniors, Mr. Speaker. In a recent study more than a third of respondents aged 65 to 85 who own their own homes said that they were experiencing financial insecurity due to rising costs. Many of these seniors, both homeowners and renters alike, also said that they faced difficulties making mortgage and rent payments. This is unacceptable. When will this government start taking the well-being of seniors seriously?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, we take the well-being of seniors very seriously. That's why this government is investing \$6.7 billion in supporting seniors in this province in this budget year alone, something I think the NDP have indicated they're going to vote against. When it comes to affordability and housing, what we did was that we rejected the NDP's ridiculous socialist idea of bringing in rent control. That would have stifled our cost of housing and would have made the situation significantly worse. Instead, we

focused on making sure that we can increase supply. Our rent is down four times the national average because we rejected, again, the NDP's philosophy.

Ms Sigurdson: Given that home ownership used to be an indicator of economic stability, given that many of the province's seniors are saying loud and clear that they're struggling to get by and do not feel secure in their own homes and given that these troubles are the direct result of the pressures of rising inflation, soaring grocery prices, and the skyrocketing cost of living, which this government has done little to combat, here's a simple question. What relief, if any, can seniors expect from this UCP government?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again, \$6.7 billion being invested in supporting seniors by this government. The largest continuing care capital expansion in the history of the province is being led by this government. Constant day-to-day effort to be able to make sure that seniors aren't left inside acute-care beds, where they don't belong, but instead are in safe continuing care homes. That hon. member was a minister who built no new continuing care homes, built no new housing when she was in charge of housing. Again, as I say over and over in this Chamber, my job is easy. I hear what the NDP want to do; I do the opposite, and it works every time.

Ms Sigurdson: Given that this UCP government is too busy blowing up the province's budget to lift a finger to help ease the financial burden being placed upon seniors, given that they prefer to deal with their \$9.4 billion deficit by cutting services and raising taxes on seniors and given the Premier herself is too preoccupied with globe-trotting on private jets, accepting lavish gifts from princes, and staying in seven-star luxury hotels to worry herself too much about the struggles average Albertans are facing, why should Albertans put up with this entitled UCP government?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I've been very clear on the unprecedented investments that this government is making in this space, but if we really want to talk about why things are challenging, particularly in our largest city, for individuals to pay their bills, it's because the Leader of the Opposition increased their property taxes when he was mayor by 81 per cent. It's because he could not be bothered to listen to his officials and fix the pipes, and the good people of Calgary are now having to pay for that and ration water. I don't think there's much of an argument here. Albertans have spoken many times. They've rejected the NDP's ridiculous philosophies, and they want this side of the House to work because it's working for Albertans.

Alberta Separatism

Member Boparai: Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Calgary-Falconridge are proud Albertans, and while they come from all different walks of life and many places around the world, one of the things they share in common as Albertans is their love for Canada. My constituents are tired of this government's refusal to denounce separatism. Hundreds of thousands of Albertans have already signed a petition calling for just that. Why won't anyone in the UCP caucus have the courage to stand up and simply say: I denounce separatism?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the members opposite and all members of this Chamber that the Alberta government believes in a sovereign Alberta within a united Canada, one that is respected by the federal government. Because of the pressure and the advocacy of our Premier we have now signed a historic memorandum of understanding to get our world-class products to market and increase investment attraction right here, investment

attraction like P&H Milling Group, with a \$241 million flour milling facility right here in Alberta. The investments just keep coming. The members opposite don't know what they're talking about.

Member Boparai: Given that thousands of my constituents took great effort to make the journey to live in this country, given that they worked hard to fulfill their dreams of becoming Canadian citizens by living and working here in Alberta, why is this UCP government willing to put their dreams on hold just to cater to people who want to pull Alberta out of Canada instead of making our country better?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, Alberta continues to lead the country in economic growth, in job creation, and investment attraction all because we believe in fighting for Alberta's best interests, the low taxes we have, a fair deal within the province. It's that advocacy that has led to investments like NewCold's \$222 million facility in Coaldale, rural Alberta. Everybody is feeling the love from this government. Why won't the members opposite get on board?

Member Boparai: Given that my constituents in Calgary-Falconridge are still struggling with targeted extortion, skyrocketing insurance costs, and record-high gas prices that this UCP government has done nothing to address, given that incidents of targeted hate against immigrants, including small-business owners in northeast Calgary, are on the rise and given that this UCP government is too busy defending lavish gifts of golden cats and private jet trips with Saudi royals, when will the UCP end the separatist destruction and finally listen to my constituents and all Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to begin by saying that of course we condemn violence in any form against any member in Canada or even around the world. It's totally unacceptable. This government is focused on economic migration to continue to support the growth that we've seen as a result of the leadership of our Premier in this government to attract investment. The only struggling the members of Calgary-Falconridge are having is the fact that they're represented by the NDP. On this side of the House we're going to continue to fight for all Albertans. Why won't the members opposite do the same?

AI Data Centre Projects

Mr. Rowswell: Mr. Speaker, demand for electricity in our province is growing, both because of our growing population and emerging innovative technologies, like AI data centres. While these energy-intensive data centres provide new opportunities, they're also creating concerns for reliability of the power that families, businesses, and communities rely on. Can the Minister of Affordability and Utilities reassure folks in my riding that our government is prioritizing the reliability of electricity now and into the future?

The Speaker: The Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for his tremendous advocacy, putting his constituents first. Our government has been clear right from the very beginning that data centres will not compromise the reliability of the power that Albertans depend upon. That's why we made changes to prioritize projects that bring their own power to off-set what they might draw from the grid. At the same time, through cost-causation principles we're ensuring that the industry, not

Albertan ratepayers, pay for power infrastructure upgrades, also protecting affordability of power that Albertans pay for.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. Given that the Alberta Electric System Operator has received over 19,000 megawatts of connection requests from data centre proponents and given that not all interested data centre proponents will be able to connect to the provincial grid due to the capacity constraints, can the same minister explain how our government is helping data centres meet their energy needs through planning, development, and alternative supply options?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member. To be a destination of choice, you need to give data centres choices to meet their energy needs, and that is exactly what we're doing. We've made changes that require centres to bring their own generation to our grid, protecting the reliability of power that Albertans rely on while speeding access to market for industry. Generators can also build on-site generation with the ability to sell the excess power to the grid, further supporting reliability and further supporting Albertans and Alberta ratepayers.

11:00

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. Given that these large-scale AI data centres can require hundreds of megawatts of power to operate reliably and given that some of these projects can potentially consume as much electricity as the entire city of Edmonton on their own, can the same minister explain how this government is encouraging investment and growing power generation to meet the needs of data centres and Albertans for generations to come?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the greatest barriers to investment was the federal government's clean electricity regulations. They were disastrous for investment. With the work of our government and our Premier and getting those suspended, we've unlocked up to \$18 billion of private natural gas generation investment. Capital Power CEO Avik Dey had this to say: it was an absolute game changer. That's going to make Alberta more attractive, not less. We're making responsible choices that will make sure our grid is reliable for generations to come and continue to put Albertans first.

Cancer Prevention and Treatment

Ms Hayter: Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women, with approximately 1 in 7 Alberta women expected to develop breast cancer in their lifetime. The fear and dread when you know something is growing inside of you that shouldn't be, that is spreading, and the longer that you wait, your chances get worse. Only 30 per cent of breast cancer surgeries are completed in the recommended time frame because under the UCP wait times are increasing. Why has the minister of primary care failed to get Alberta women reduced wait times for breast cancer treatment?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of health.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Breast cancer is a very serious issue for women, and it's why we have increased the

screening. We were, in fact, the very first province in all of Canada to lower the age for breast cancer screening to under 50. We're actually going to be making an announcement shortly to lower it even further, but I don't want to pre-empt that. We are also seeing an increase in the number of women getting screened. Since 2020 we've had a 104 per cent increase in the women that are getting their mammograms. That's good news.

Ms Hayter: Given that reduced investment upstream almost always means higher demand downstream, more emergency presentations, more advanced cancer diagnosis, longer hospital stays, and growing pressure on oncology, given that early detection is the best way to reduce wait times but the UCP is cutting the very programs that help catch cancer early, leading to later diagnosis, will the minister of primary care immediately reverse the UCP cuts to cancer screening, prevention, and diagnosis and get Alberta women the breast cancer treatments that they need?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to correct the member opposite. There were no cuts. In fact, we're increasing the amount of screening that we're doing not just for breast cancer but also for colorectal cancer, for lung cancer, for cervical cancer, and for prostate cancer. We've added investment over the years, and we're going to continue to add that investment because the earlier that we can catch these cancers, the better prognosis and diagnosis for people in Alberta. We want the best for Albertans. We're going to continue to do that.

Ms Hayter: Given that when the Alberta NDP was in government, they knew prioritizing early detection would make treatment of these cancers more successful and given that the Alberta NDP government built a comprehensive cancer centre for that reason and given that this government just tabled a \$9.4 billion deficit that fails to properly fund ways to speed up cancer surgery, screening, and research, why has the minister of primary health failed to prioritize the urgent needs of Alberta women cancer patients? Where did the money go if it's not for reducing wait times?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, the members opposite do not know what they're talking about. We have increased our screening program significantly, and we're going to continue. I also want to show that in cervical cancer screening we're transitioning to HPV testing because it's a more effective approach that detects risks earlier than the Pap tests. We're expanding access by further launching an HPV self-sampling pilot. We're going to include the lung cancer screening. We've got a mobile unit. We never had that before.

Provincial Pension Plan Proposal

Ms Wright: Mr. Speaker, the UCP government's obsession with pulling Alberta out of the CPP is a bit like Groundhog Day. It just keeps coming back and back again and again despite the crystal clear message from Albertans: hands off our pensions. This Premier will do anything to keep her shaky separatist coalition together even if it means gambling with decades of pension contributions of Alberta's workers. Perhaps a reminder is necessary. Pension contributions are not the government's money. Will this Minister of Finance finally listen to Albertans and commit once and for all to leaving Albertans' CPP alone?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, we've been through this many times, and I think that the only people that are talking about this are the

members opposite. We've been quite clear with the legislation that we've brought in previously that ensures that if ever an Alberta pension plan would be considered, it would have to be after a referendum and would have to prove to be beneficial through benefits and contributions, and the entire withdrawal of the asset would have to be used for the pension plan itself. As you can see in my mandate letter and what we're working on today, none of that work is going on.

Ms Wright: Given that the Alberta Next Panel called for a referendum on pulling Alberta out of the CPP, a referendum no one but separatists want, and given that the Premier has already planned nine constitutionally questionable referendums this fall and given the Premier has already catered to every other whim from her radical separatist base, why isn't the Premier therefore calling a referendum on the CPP? Is it because the Premier knows they would lose?

Mr. Horner: Well, I'm just making a mental note that the NDP is asking for a referendum on CPP. I think that's very interesting from what I've heard. As I just said, we're not doing work in that regard. We've ensured that it's protected from the future, and if it was ever to be looked at by a future government, it would be done appropriately for the benefit of all Albertans, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how much more clear I can be. The Premier's mandate letter to me, the work we're working on: we're working on making life more affordable for Albertans and making sure we have the best economy in this country.

Ms Wright: Given that more clear is probably a good thing given that seniors are demanding their CPP be protected and given that the vast majority of Albertans have told the UCP in their own survey that they do not support pulling out of the CPP and given that the UCP is calling a referendum on pretty much everything under the sun except the CPP, will this government finally tell seniors and workers and make it clear they will never pull us out of the CPP?

Mr. Horner: It feels a little repetitive, Mr. Speaker, but it's their time and I'm here to help, so we'll do it again. We're focused on affordability. We're focused on having the strongest economy in this country. We've been clear with the work that we've done previously that if this was ever to be considered, it would have to be for the benefit of Albertans and it would have to get through a referendum. As you've seen with the questions that are being proposed for a potential referendum, this isn't one of them. As I've said, the only people that are talking about this are the members opposite, and maybe if they quit working people up and fearmongering, we wouldn't be having this.

Addiction Treatment and Recovery

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, it's been over 10 years since the scourge of illicit drug consumption rocked Alberta, and what a horrific experiment that's been. As a former first responder who has actually dealt with overdoses, it's difficult to witness this proliferation of addicted victims roaming the streets, living in tents, filling the streets with garbage and feces, unchecked violence, and the mental health issues that were compounded by these mind-numbing, lethal drugs. To the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction: can you clarify what Alberta's Conservative government's policy is on safe supply and addiction?

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

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. Our government has been very clear. There's no such thing as safe supply, and we'll never have it in Alberta. It doesn't matter if they come

from a pharmacy or a drug dealer. Opioids are highly addictive and very potent. They are not safe. We know that the failed experiment in B.C. of flooding communities with more drugs is not the solution. The solution is to get people treatment and help them get their lives back, and that's exactly what we're doing with our Recovery Alberta model. We're building a comprehensive continuum of care, prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery that helps more people pursue recovery.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for that answer. Given that British Columbia's NDP government took a different path – they experimented on vulnerable people with deadly opioids; they stopped the criminalization of the drug distributors and possessors and allowed consumption in their streets and hospitals – and given that as a result of this hundreds if not thousands of Canadians had their lives changed forever, we took a different path, to the same minister: can you clarify what evidence or data or evaluations led to Alberta taking a different tack in regard to addiction?

11:10

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again thank you for the question. Alberta's approach is grounded in evidence, outcomes, and a clear focus on recovery. Addiction is a health care issue, and the goal must be to get people well. By expanding access to treatment and introducing innovative evidence-based programs, more people have recovered. For example, the award-winning virtual opioid dependency program supports thousands of people each year. We've already opened hundreds of new addiction treatment beds across the province. This focus on recovery is working. Alberta continues to see an overall downward trend in opioid-related deaths, with a 39 per cent reduction since 2023.

The Speaker: Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the minister. Given that whether it's in Toronto or Vancouver, drug consumption sites attract drug dealers; they expose citizens to violence and have increased rates of theft in adjacent neighbourhoods, further given these sites have not demonstrated any statistics that drug consumers are seeking help and thus failing in their primary philosophy that people will seek help at these places, to the same minister: in light of this evidence and ultimately our objectives, why did the government choose to shut down sites rather than reform or relocate or try and improve it?

The Speaker: The Minister of Mental Health and Addiction.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Drug consumption service sites do not break the cycle of addiction; they prolong it. These sites were introduced. They were introduced as a temporary measure at a time when treatment options were limited. Since then our system of care has evolved significantly, and we have better data to make evidence-informed decisions. Real change comes from recovery-oriented supports that help people reclaim their lives and rebuild relationships and restore wellness. Alberta chose to redirect funding into expanded treatment, medical detox, recovery supports, and outreach teams that connect people directly to this care. On this side of the House we believe addiction is a . . .

The Speaker: In 30 seconds we will continue with the daily Routine.

Introduction of Bills

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Bill 207

Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

Mr. Dyck: Excellent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce Bill 207, the Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

Mr. Speaker, when Alberta students graduate from grade 12, they do so having learned the knowledge and skills required to be more confident and productive members of society. Bill 207 ensures that they also graduate with the knowledge and understanding of our province's primary industries that, frankly, make this education possible. Bill 207 also proposes to establish fossil fuel recognition day annually on February 13.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of the Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 207 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview on behalf of the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Bill Pr. 1

The Ranchmen's Club Ordinance Amendment Act, 2026

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Calgary-Buffalo I rise to request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 1, the Ranchmen's Club Ordinance Amendment Act, 2026.

This is very straightforward legislation that amends the ordinance of the North-West Territories, 1891-92, No. 34.

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

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Bill Pr. 2

Prairie Bible Institute Amendment Act, 2026

Mrs. Sawyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to request leave to introduce Bill Pr. 2, Prairie Bible Institute Amendment Act, 2026.

This long-standing and well-respected institution has served its community with excellence for many years, and this bill will allow it to continue that work through the granting of degrees.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 2 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: Are there any tablings for members? Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite five copies of an article written by Noreen Willows entitled Alberta Can Lower Food Prices by Banning Supermarket Property Controls.

Secondly, I have another tabling titled Shifts at Alberta's Universities Erode Their Value, talking about the shift away from institutional autonomy, in a *Calgary Herald* article.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the chair of the 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission, the Hon. Justice Dallas K. Miller, submitted to me the 2025-26 Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission Proposed Electoral Division Areas, Boundaries, and Names for Alberta final report, and it says here, "To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly," which is me, so I'm repeating myself, and that happened today. In accordance with section 8(1) of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act and pursuant to section 10 of that same act I wish to table the appropriate number of copies of the report, which sets out the commission's recommendations for the areas, boundaries, and names of the 89 electoral divisions proposed for Alberta. In so doing, the report is now made public. I am instructing the pages to distribute copies of the report to Members of the Legislative Assembly at this time.

Okay. Points of order. We started even before question period today. The first point of order, as I recall, was at 10:08 a.m., and it was called by the Government House Leader, I believe.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought some of the language used by the member at the time speaking was creating disorder, but I'm going to withdraw and not waste our time on this. Let's get to government business.

The Speaker: Okay. This matter is dealt with and resolved.

Point of order 2 was called at 10:28 a.m. Let's hear from the Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At that point a point of order was called because the Minister of Forestry and Parks, who was very vocal with heckling throughout question period today, I will say – they were by and far parliamentary heckles until when the Leader of the Official Opposition was asking a question in question period and he yelled, "You don't trust First Nations." I called a point of order on that because heckles like this have been ruled out of order in the past. Those types of 23(h), (i), and (j) direct accusations to another member about what they do and do not believe, especially on a topic as sensitive as this: I called that point of order for that reason.

Mr. Schow: Disagree. Matter of debate.

The Speaker: Okay. Well, let's start with what I hope are the agreed facts, and by that I mean the Blues. The Leader of the Opposition was asking a question, and part of that was: "It's just a coincidence that all these First Nations happen to contract from the same guy, who has no experience in building recovery centres." It does say "An Hon. Member" here without identifying who was the hon. member that says, "You don't trust First Nations."

11:20

Somebody clearly said what the Opposition House Leader has quoted. Well, it may not be a nice thing to say, but it does seem to be debate although it's on the line of – here's the thing. A long-standing tradition here is that you don't get to say what's in other people's minds. I'm thinking out loud here, so you're going to have to forgive me for that. It does say, "You don't trust First Nations." I'm not sure who said it, but if somebody did say it, it is a point of order because you don't get to say what somebody else thinks, including what somebody else trusts or what somebody else doesn't trust or anything like that. Any hon. member that might have said, "You don't seem to trust," would actually not be a point of order. I know it sounds petty, but we have rules here, and that's how the rules here are divided.

Hon. Government House Leader, I would say to you that it doesn't identify a member that said it and it doesn't even identify that a member from the government said it. Without an admission of somebody saying it, I can't call a point of order. I'm asking if you have a response, Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Without knowing who said it, I have no way to apologize for anyone on their behalf.

The Speaker: All right. I hope we will remember the part about: if we had identified source of the comment, it would have been a point of order.

Another point of order, I think, was called at 10:28 a.m. I don't seem to have notes on it here. It was by the opposition.

Ms Gray: Apologies, Mr. Speaker. It was called by a member who's no longer in the Chamber, I believe. Oh, I shouldn't say that. I withdraw and apologize. I'm just trying to be helpful.

The Speaker: All right. Okay. Whatever the issue was, it's dealt with.

All those that wanted coffee can now have it. You could have had it sooner without the points of order. I'll just say that.

Orders of the Day

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 17

Fiscal Measures Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

The Chair: Are there members who wish to join the debate? The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Dr. Metz: Thank you. I'm rising today to talk to Bill 17, which is just another bill that makes life harder for everyday Albertans: higher costs, fewer supports, and new barriers to accessibility and essential information. Let's talk about a few specifics. The UCP in this bill will be charging Albertans who want to enjoy a stay-cation in their own province. With rising costs and so many Albertans needing to have two or more jobs just to make ends meet, many will be lucky to even have a vacation this year. This would be a great time to help Albertans vacation right here in Alberta because many, if they get any days at all, will need to stay close to home. After introducing the \$90 per year Kananaskis pass in prior years, they're now increasing the tourism levy by 2 per cent. It was already 4 per cent. There are many Albertans like myself who are privileged enough that this small increase won't make a difference, but there are many others who can barely afford to feed themselves, to pay their rent, and have rising credit card debt that this is going to make a huge difference.

I remember when I was a child and my family truly were struggling. My father ran a coin laundromat, which meant that he had to be there to open it every morning, close it every evening, and be in and out through the day to keep things clean and tidy. It meant that he could not take vacations because he couldn't afford to have someone else look after these duties. He also worked as an employee cleaning carpets during the day because, like many people today, he had to have two jobs in order to feed our family.

My mother would take us all on road trips, myself and my three siblings, in our old station wagon. We would stay at motels in lake communities in Alberta and in B.C. This was about 1970, so this

wasn't the days where you could look up ahead and prebook your vacation. We would go to a community and look for the places that had vacancy signs and stop out front. My mother would go inside and find out what the price would be. Twenty-four dollars a night was our usual goal that I remember. Twenty-five dollars or \$26 was too much, and we would drive on to the next place to find a place that we could afford to stay in.

To the people that are already wanting to stay in Alberta and are paying this 4 per cent on top and will now have a 2 per cent increase, this makes a difference. On top of rising gas prices, this will shorten the vacations that Albertans will be able to have or eliminate them entirely. We note that 45 per cent of the revenue that's coming from this tax will be directly from Albertans, not from out-of-province people.

The tourism industry is not really benefiting from this tax either. It is going into general coffers. It is a tax. It is, really, a stealthy way of bringing in a sales tax, where the sales tax is really being applied only to this one industry. It's going to be added with a 6 per cent tax on rental vehicles later on by the end of the year, again, a sales tax on some things but not on others. Albertans are paying so much and getting so much less.

Let's talk about another way that Albertans are paying more. My constituents will see the greatest increase in property taxes in Calgary that has ever happened. This government has levied this tax through the city of Calgary. The tax increase to my constituents will be in the range of \$500 to \$1,000 per home just for this government tax increase. Taxes to pay for needed services are one thing, but taxes to pay for crazy spending that we have seen from this government are another. We have seen the Turkish Tylenol debacle, which cost almost a \$100 million. Now only with pressure is this government trying to get back some of that money for what was never ever received by Albertans. Three years this has been going on, and now, finally, with pressure they are going to start trying to recover some of the money that never came back.

11:30

We also had the ideological and ill-thought-out cancelling of the public lab that was already starting construction in Edmonton, followed by the DynaLife debacle, which cost, again, hundreds of millions of dollars. This ends up in why Albertans are being asked to pay more taxes, pay for more things, as in Bill 17.

Now we're learning about the hundreds of millions of dollars that are going to Sam Mraiche and others to pay a premium price for surgeries. We need more surgeries. It's appropriate to put more money into surgeries, but we should not be paying a premium price for the easiest, least complicated surgeries.

Money is going to build recovery centres, and we need recovery centres, but will these ever actually be built? Can we trust that the funds that were paid for these were appropriate? We know the money was spent, but we don't know if we'll ever get anything for it.

This government is wasting our tax dollars by paying too much, having very poor oversight, and they should have appropriate oversight of our tax dollars. In the end we're not even getting anything for it. We don't have that lab that we know is needed. We don't have medication – the children's Tylenol never was useful – and we're not getting the recovery centres that all this money is going to.

This government will recover the losses of their foolish spending by increasing your taxes in a stealthy way. They say that they're not increasing taxes, but it will come to you through increased municipal taxes and increased fees and levies all over the place. They continue to waste your tax dollars in so many ways, and Bill 17 is another part of this package: spend wastefully, deliver so little,

pretend to cut taxes but really hide them, and break their own laws by bringing in a third huge deficit for three years in a row.

At the same time we need to look at how they've been generating revenue. They've created instability by courting a fringe group who promote separation. They won't even state where they stand on the idea of separation. Businesses need stability, and we're seeing and hearing that businesses are not willing to invest here or come here because of this instability. They also drove away renewable investment. This is another cost that we're now needing to pay for by this Bill 17.

Another issue that isn't discussed anywhere here is that we get a lot of money in federal transfers. Indeed, the federal health transfers pay for approximately half of the health budget, yet the federal government can claw back the funds for anything that was spent on services where citizens pay privately such as MRI scans or private clinics, and that is a clawback. We pay 100 per cent tax as Albertans for everything that an individual pays for that they should be getting covered by this government. Now this government is going to take measures to increase the number of services that will be able to be provided privately, paid for privately, which will increase the clawback by the federal government.

Sometimes with the clawback the province can make the case that they are trying to stop this private enterprise from taking Albertans' money for publicly insured services, but when the government is bringing in legislation that actually promotes and allows and brings in a lot more of this private spending, as they will be doing in their recent bills, the clawback is not only going to increase, meaning that Albertans pay 100 per cent tax for every penny spent on these private services, but we have no hope of making the case that we are trying to stop it when in fact we are the ones that are bringing this in.

I would like to state that I cannot support Bill 17, which is a way this government is trying to make the revenue that is getting around the high spending that they have forced on Albertans. I will turn this over to one of my colleagues.

The Chair: Any other members to join the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to join debate on this bill. Certainly, it is an omnibus bill. We see these more and more frequently by the UCP. These are bills that alter several pieces of legislation, and some of them may not be related to each other. I think, for the Albertans watching and interested in legislative affairs and certainly for us as opposition, that this makes it very difficult to debate these kinds of bills. You know, there may be some aspects that we agree with and some we don't, but it also just mashes together a whole bunch of stuff that really should be distinctly looked at.

So I just want to put that on the record again, that this is an omnibus bill that has several pieces of legislation being changed. They include Tourism and Sport, Technology and Innovation – these are the ministries that are affected – Children and Family Services, labour, Assisted Living and Social Services. That's a fairly long list for one bill to be addressing, and it's not the best way to put forward legislation.

I'd like to speak, first of all, about the Alberta caregiver credit. This is, of course, Assisted Living and Social Services. This amendment in the legislation means that no longer will Albertans be able to claim a credit for their parents or grandparents over the age of 65 who live with them. This has been an opportunity to support people who are caring for their loved ones who are aged in their homes. It kind of flies in the face of many of the values that certainly we as the NDP espouse, but certainly I've heard this many

times from the Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services and many members in the UCP caucus, that they want to support seniors to age in community. This actually makes it more difficult for that to happen, so these two things are incongruent. I'm just wanting to point that out to the UCP because I think that's not what they want.

Certainly, I've heard repeatedly from them, from the minister in this area that, actually, it's better if seniors can age in their communities, age connected to their families. That's a really good thing for our society. We know that not only does it support the mental health of seniors very much – you know, one of the major issues now is social isolation of many seniors, and we know that creates mental health and health issues – but if people can stay connected in their communities, living with their own families, have support from government, that means that they're probably not as involved in the health system. That means that their mental health, their physical health is better. In the long run it would actually save government money.

11:40

So this is quite a short-sighted decision by the UCP in this current budget to take away this opportunity for people to claim this credit. I just want to point that out so the UCP realizes that, you know, one aspect of their policy is contradictory to this legislation before us.

I also just want to say: I mean, I've heard repeatedly, certainly in budget estimates but I hear it in this House too, that there are no cuts in Budget 2026. If we ever identify specific cuts, whoever the minister responsible is will say that there are no cuts in Budget 2026. That's sort of their key message. But in fact, this is a very clear example. This is a clear cut where people are not being able to claim this as a credit. It has changed the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act so that people no longer have access to this credit that they used to previously. I feel it's very short sighted of the UCP.

We know that there's about 875,000 seniors in Alberta currently, and they're 16 per cent of our population. By 2031 – that's not too far away; it's five years – 1 in 5 will be a senior. Certainly, our systems right now, our health systems, our social service systems, are overwhelmed, so this kind of a support for families to be able to support people in their homes actually will take pressure off our public services. Again, it just sort of flies in the face of what the UCP seems to say that they're doing, when indeed they are not. So I think that this is short sighted. Obviously, it is something that Albertans can no longer rely on, and some of them might have to make the difficult decision to have their parents not live with them because they can't have that kind of support.

Again, I'm just concerned that the UCP is not understanding that the policies that they seem to believe in are impacted by this because it's not supporting seniors to age in community. You know, there are always opportunities for amendment or change, so I really ask them to look at that and make sure that the legislation they bring forward is actually congruent with their own values and what they've said publicly.

In addition, I'd like to speak a little bit about another aspect, the child and youth support program. Of course, this was eliminated back on September 1, 2025, and it's kind of a similar thing, too. This supported people to look after kids that for some reason weren't able to be with their biological parents. It helped with prescriptions. It helped with some funding on a monthly basis to care for these children. These are people in communities who have stepped up to support vulnerable children. Again, you know, this should be something that we actually do more to support people to care for people in their own communities, but again the UCP is deciding that this program is not doing what they want and this is the way that they're cutting back.

In the budget presentation delivered by the Finance minister he went on and on about: okay; we have a \$9.4 billion deficit, but we're doing that because we're investing in what matters; we're supporting people, we're keeping public programs strong; we're not cutting. Again that thing about not cutting.

In actual fact, I guess I would like to say: well, gosh, how come you're not including seniors in what matters? Why aren't you including families who step up to support vulnerable children in your communities? I don't get it. You know, they said very explicitly that this is a budget that focuses on what matters. I guess by interpretation I could say that these populations – these families, vulnerable children, and seniors in our communities – don't matter to the UCP.

Frankly, Madam Chair, that's deeply disturbing to me. These are people on oftentimes very, very low income, so it's not that, you know, they are doing well and that they shouldn't have it just because they're elderly. They should be supported to be able to live in their communities, just as kids who can't go home for different reasons – and certainly, having worked in child welfare earlier in my career, I know that there are many challenges different families face. When community steps up to support people, they should be supported, but of course here's another cruel cut by the UCP, and they are not deciding to do that.

Let's move on to another area, which is the accessibility aspect of this bill. Again, the UCP is failing Albertans on this issue. They're removing requirements for certain nondigital communications at credit unions, making it harder for Albertans, especially those facing disability, age-related limitations, or digital barriers, to access information and fully participate in their financial institutions. Earlier this week we had a golden opportunity in this Assembly to actually put forward a private member's bill by the Member for St. Albert regarding accessibility, making Alberta actually get up to speed. Along with Prince Edward Island we are the only province in Canada that doesn't have this kind of legislation. This is just, again, further eroding supports for people in the disability community who want to be independent in terms of their financial matters, and this helps some people that have some barriers in that area.

Again, you know, the UCP seems to be picking on the most vulnerable people: seniors, youth, and people who have disabilities. It doesn't make any sense to me. It just feels extremely cruel and unfair. With a \$9.4 billion deficit, somehow these people aren't included. The Minister of Finance said repeatedly: "We're focusing on what matters. We're not cutting public programs because we don't want this on the backs of Albertans." But that flies in the face of reality, and I've just given you three clear examples of how the UCP is further cutting programs and making it more difficult for Albertans in an affordability crisis, Madam Chair.

With that, I will conclude my remarks. Thank you.

The Chair: Are there others to join the debate on Bill 17?

Seeing none, I will call the question on Bill 17, the Fiscal Measures Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

[The clauses of Bill 17 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Any opposed? Carried.

The hon. government whip.

Mr. Wright: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee rise and report Bill 17.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Mr. van Dijken: Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 17.

11:50

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

Hon. Members: Aye.

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

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 17

Fiscal Measures Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

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

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to move third reading of Bill 17, the Fiscal Measures Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

I want to thank all members who rose to speak to this important bill in second reading and provide their thoughts. Madam Speaker, Budget 2026 helps Alberta focus on what matters by focusing on what we can control. This means limiting spending increases and setting clear priorities so taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. It means investing in our health care system to meet the needs of a growing and aging population. It means record support for students, teachers, and classrooms across the province.

Budget 2026 keeps our priorities clear and supports Albertans who need it most. It provides predictable funding for communities and invests in businesses to support a stronger, more diverse economy. These legislative amendments will help strengthen Alberta's revenue and make practical, targeted updates to ensure Alberta's laws are responsive to the needs of Albertans. These amendments strengthen oversight, streamline operations, and support more flexible and effective program delivery across government.

Madam Speaker, at its core Bill 17 is about balance and protecting affordability for families while ensuring we can continue to deliver the services people count on. It reflects a practical approach to governing in a time when global uncertainty and population growth are putting real pressures on our services and economy.

By adjusting the rate for the tourism levy from 4 to 6 per cent, we're charging for services used rather than implementing a blanket tax. This approach allows us to grow revenue without placing additional burden on Alberta families.

We're also taking steps to better support caregivers, people who quietly and consistently show up for their loved ones every day. By creating the new Alberta caregiver credit and expanding access to an additional 7,500 Albertans, we're ensuring support is more focused and meaningful. This change recognizes the realities families face while directing help where it is needed most.

Madam Speaker, Bill 17 also ensures our legislation keeps pace with change. If passed, we're removing outdated provisions from the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act to reflect programs that have already been wound down, keeping our laws accurate and transparent.

At the same time we're strengthening Alberta's position as a place to invest and grow a business. Updates to the Alberta Corporate Tax Act provide clarity for emerging industries like data centres, ensuring investors are rewarded for limiting their burden on our power grid. With a framework that includes rates up to 2 per cent and incentives for reducing grid impact, we're supporting competition while protecting the reliability of our electricity system.

We're also making targeted improvements to financial oversight. Amendments to the Loan and Trust Corporations Act will tighten governance and reduce conflicts of interest while changes to the Credit Union Act enhance regulatory efficiency and strengthen oversight through the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation. These are practical steps to help maintain confidence in Alberta's financial institutions.

Finally, technical updates to pension legislation will make it easier for employers operating across provinces to manage their obligations, reducing red tape and improving consistency. The pensions these changes apply to are governed by joint boards with trustees with equal representation from both employers and unions. This means the decisions to adjust contribution requirements or benefits will continue to require support from workers and employers.

Madam Speaker, taken together, these measures are about steady, responsible progress. They support families, strengthen services, and create the conditions for continued economic growth. A strong economy is one that allows us to invest in health care, education, and communities over the long term.

With that, Madam Speaker, I encourage all members to support Bill 17. Thank you.

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

Ms Wright: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll start my remarks on Bill 17 today by saying that it probably won't be a surprise to the folks in the House that I will not be supporting this particular bill for a number of reasons, though. To begin with, and my colleague from Edmonton-Riverview has already talked about this: the idea that we have again before us an omnibus bill, which, of course, just sort of collapses a bunch of things together and, as a result, because those things are not necessarily linked together, quite frankly, I think allows for a certain amount of – I don't know if this is quite the word – misdirection or a bit of being less than transparent. It sometimes makes it really, really hard for the folks who are looking at the bill to really get into the nitty-gritties of each of the particular sections when they are not, in fact, related to one another.

As we know, this particular bill affects a number of ministries, not the least of which are Tourism and Sport, Children and Family Services, and, of course, labour. I'll get to the portion about labour in just a moment. There is a question that is kind of overarching as well. It's that idea of, "Where, in fact, did all the money go?" particularly when you're talking about the ministry of tourism and that tourism levy increase. I spoke about this a little bit the other day, Madam Speaker. That 2 per cent increase on the surface absolutely sounds just fine. It sounds minuscule. It sounds like it won't matter except that, of course, it will.

One of the reasons why it will matter is because there is no guarantee, knowing that it goes into general revenues, that the money that is gained from the increase and gained from the tourism levy itself will actually make its way into any sort of local coffers. We don't know. For instance, like, if I were to go to Canmore and I've got that levy attached to whatever it is I'm spending my money on, do I know that that money is actually going to make it back to Canmore, to that business association, to that construction project,

whatever it happens to be? The end result, really, Madam Speaker, is a less than transparent tax.

It is indeed a tax. In fact, it's a bit of a consumption tax. As we all know, consumption taxes don't always work, particularly for those folks that don't have an awful lot of money. Everyone should be able to go to Banff, go to Kananaskis, go to Jasper, go to wherever in the province. But the fact of the matter is that even that 2 per cent for some folks, particularly those who are earning less than, say, \$75,000 a year, is actually going to make a meaningful difference to them. Yet it is hidden, and as I said, it doesn't necessarily make it back to those local communities. We have no idea where that money will end up.

We do know, of course, that because of that levy, it might not actually help the tourism industry. It isn't just about those local communities; it's about the industry itself, Madam Speaker. The minister a few moments ago talked about that this particular bill, Bill 17, is going to mean predictable funding, but I would argue the opposite. It's anything but predictable funding because, again, communities, hotel associations, business associations are not going to have any real idea from year to year how many funds are going to come back, if any, to them. They're sort of having to take it on trust, and as we know, trust is in short supply where this government is concerned.

I'm certainly hoping that as we go through the debate today, as the government gets to the regulations portion of this particular bill, they perhaps give some thought to the fact that the tourism levy, at the very least, needs to be much more transparent.

You know, you think about the fact that the hotel industry is very, very happy, for instance, about the destination marketing fee, but that's because they know exactly that the money is going to come back to the community, come back to the hotel associations, come back to whatever projects that particular community needs so indeed will come back to the industry itself. But, again, Travel Alberta has no idea, Madam Speaker, how much money is actually going to be coming to them. This is not predictable. This would be the opposite of predictable.

Certainly, this particular industry, because it is a growing industry and it is one that has been important to Alberta for a number of years, deserves the same consideration that the government gives itself. They should be assured that the levy will be reinvested in Alberta tourism, whether it's through Travel Alberta or whether it's through municipalities itself, particularly when we consider how much potential money is involved in such a small change, in that 2 per cent change. We know the levy revenues will increase, so we are talking potentially millions and millions of dollars every year. Again, one could forgive Albertans for asking, "Where exactly is all the money going?" and being told it's going to general revenue, Madam Speaker, with kind of a general promise to invest. That isn't good enough.

12:00

I certainly appreciate the fact that the hotel owners and hotel associations were hopeful in the beginning in terms of transparency. They had a previous really, really lovely relationship, but I do know that this is a real bone of contention for them. It's a real point of concern, Madam Speaker. The issue, as well, is that if everything is deferred to regulations, then things aren't being done in a transparent manner in any case. You can't just say, "We're going to push it off to regulations" without actually having talked to the people who are going to be dependent upon this sort of revenue.

Again, how will the tourism levy actually be applied? How will it be spent? How will tourism operators and residents know if those tourism dollars, if any portion of the local levies are being returned? What

assurances will they have? What data will be collected and then, one hopes, provided to those local operators, Madam Speaker?

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

All that these folks are going to be left with, Mr. Speaker – all that they're going to be left with – is an awful lot of uncertainty. Assurance isn't enough. Assurance isn't enough.

Now, what I'd like to do is move on to the issue of the employment pension plan changes, which I think are somewhere about page 3 of the act. I'm not completely certain about that. At its surface, again, it is one of those things, Mr. Speaker, that seems just fine. That notion that some of the pension investments that the people make may need to be adjusted, that employers and employees will be talking to each other about all these sorts of things: again, it sounds fine. But because Bill 17 allows employers to convert those negotiated cost pension plans into target benefit plans, there is a little bit of risk.

It isn't simply a small technical adjustment. That negotiated cost-benefit plan has in most cases been negotiated through the bargaining process. In most instances those agreements are made in good faith. There's a commitment on the side of both the workers involved in that bargaining as well as the employers involved in the other side, Mr. Speaker, that there's a commitment. They're all working in good faith because they all understand, in fact, that pensions are a really good thing. Every single Albertan should be able to access a pension whenever they decide to retire, and furthermore that pension should be a livable pension.

That's one of the reasons why, of course, we have defined benefits pensions. It provides that guarantee on a monthly basis, and you're not only provided that guarantee on a monthly basis – you're provided for the entire length of your lifetime – as opposed to a defined contributions pension, which for someone like me would simply not work; not being great at investing, say. If you want to talk about, you know, people not being sure about things, I would much rather be sure that I'm going to get a particular amount of money in my retirement year so that I'm not impoverished than to run out, which I know can happen.

The issue with the targeted benefit plan, of course, is that it allows employers, in times when they decide they need to, to reduce those accrued benefits. These aren't speculative future earnings; these are the pensions that these very Albertan workers have contributed to during the course of their work life. They've contributed year after year from paycheque to paycheque, and the idea, again, Mr. Speaker, is that the exchange is dignity in retirement. They get to go visit their grandchildren. They get to go on trips down to Banff and Kananaskis perhaps. They get to buy that one last new car. But in the event that those reductions happen, one would hope, of course, that indeed it's a lovely conversation between both those people representing the workers and the employer, but there have certainly been times in the life of pensions throughout North America where situations have been less than ideal.

I think even my own lifetime that one big one that happened, I suppose – oh, my gosh – 30 or 40 years ago, a very long time ago, was when the Sears pension plan was effectively raided because the trustees of the pension plan decided that the people who are on the board of directors of Sears should get all of the benefits of those pensions that those workers have paid a lifetime into getting. When Sears went into insolvency, it meant that workers throughout North America did not get their pension, and it wasn't a matter of their pension simply being reduced by a few dollars, Mr. Speaker. It was a matter that their pension that they had worked for and that they had expected and that, honestly, was their money – they had put a portion of each of their savings in each of those biweekly paycheques into that pension expecting it would come back to them, and suddenly it

was not there. There was a promise broken, and quite frankly that's one of the biggest risks here.

Now, I do understand that there are some circumstances where this sort of pension might be a good thing. That targeted benefits pension, particularly when you're dealing with a multitude of employers – as we know, folks in the construction industry particularly will often work for a number of employers, so the idea of a targeted benefit plan and a little bit more flexibility is a good thing. But, again, I worry about the lack of guardrails. I worry about the lack of guardrails overall because there's a generalized lack of transparency where this government happens to be concerned, Mr. Speaker, and because we're dealing with a government that can be, you know, as one of my colleagues termed it, a little bit disingenuous when dealing with legislation and dealing with pensions and the fact that we hear over and over: like, how dare you have a pension? Well, of course, you should have a pension.

I do think that we should be forgiven for being a little bit, for lack of a better word, suspicious about this sort of thing and about the reason. Now, again, I do understand that those multi-employer sectors are absolutely in favour of this, and that's a very, very specific sector that's generally, as I mentioned, construction unions, where people are working in various different areas of the sector throughout their lifetime. It's important for them, absolutely. But there are no guardrails attached, and we can't be certain that we'll see those guardrails, Mr. Speaker, in the regulations. So it might offer employers a few too many new powers.

There was something I saw about trustees being able to sort of make changes, so I wonder, then, when you consider, say, if we have the spectre of a government that's in charge of appointing all of those trustees to a particular pension plan and perhaps puts its governmental arm a little bit too close to those particular trustees – if there are no guardrails, quite frankly, I'm a little bit concerned about that. Honestly, it's because Albertan workers, those folks who have been working for their lifetime, absolutely deserve better. They deserve pension protections that honour their contributions, safeguard their retirement, and uphold that principle of dignity in retirement.

Just very quickly, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I do want to touch on just before I finish here is that idea of that lack of accessibility. I know it's very tiny, again, that credit unions maybe don't want, you know, to give out pieces of paper and that sort of thing, but honestly I'm thinking of my mom here. My mother was an absolute Luddite. Honestly, she barely answered the telephone because it just kind of – I don't know – wasn't, like, her jam or whatever it was. So I think about my mom going into a bank and expecting to get a piece of paper to be told: oh, we'll just send it to you via your e-mail. My mother never had an e-mail in her entire life, so she absolutely would not be served by this kind of, even if it's tiny, little phrase in Bill 17.

Again, because we don't seem to be putting up any sort of guardrails and we're having to wait for regulations until everything – is there going to be a clause that talks about exceptions? We don't know, Mr. Speaker, and that's a problem for all the folks out there like my mom. As a result of all of these sorts of issues and because, you know, I just kind of wonder and I'm a little bit suspicious of things these days even though I used to be much more optimistic, I just simply, in all conscience, cannot support this bill.

Thank you so much.

The Acting Speaker: I will recognize the Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Member Ellingson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to provide what, for me, are additional and maybe some summary remarks on Bill 17, the Fiscal Measures Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. As my colleague from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview pointed out earlier,

this is what we refer to as an omnibus bill, and it has many impacts on Albertans. This bill reinforces this UCP government's mission to make life more difficult for Albertans. It raises costs for Albertans as they plan stay-cations to visit their home province. It officially removes supports to vulnerable children. It takes away Albertans' ability to access communications and information from their credit union. It raises the potential of increasing costs for electricity and natural gas, and it adds uncertainty to the retirement plans for Albertans with private pension plans.

12:10

Mr. Speaker, this bill raises taxes for Albertans. On April 1, just in time for people making plans for their summer vacation with the family, the tourism levy will increase. In budget 2026-27 the government will collect \$90 million from Albertans visiting Alberta. Let's be clear. This is a consumption tax on Albertans. We might ask: is the levy being used to support the work of Travel Alberta and bring more international visitors to the province? No, it isn't. Is the levy being used to support municipalities with their infrastructure needs to support visitors? No, it's not doing that either. Is the levy being used to support housing for low-wage workers in the tourism sector? Doesn't do that either. The levy is a consumption tax on Albertans going into general revenue. Perhaps the government needs these funds to make up for the \$50 million they paid to Sam Mraiche for Turkish Tylenol that never showed up.

While this bill increases the tourism levy, it does provide relief to data centre developers. The bill amends the data centre levy, clarifying that data centres that build their own source of power are not connected to the grid and won't have to pay the levy. They also might not be paying corporate taxes if they're registered in another jurisdiction. No revenue to the government of Alberta. We should be ensuring that any investment in Alberta provides benefits to all Albertans. Data centres come with risks if we look at the jurisdictions south of the border that have rushed into data centre development. We've seen the risks around the consumption of water, noise, increasing utility bills. To off-set this risk, the government is racing toward investments that might not pay any direct revenue benefit to Albertans. Mr. Speaker, that just doesn't make any fiscal sense.

This bill removes references to the child and youth support program, perhaps to avoid any legal issues for having defunded a program that is technically still in existence. It is unfortunate that the government hasn't taken steps to protect themselves from being sued by international coal companies looking to mine the eastern slopes. The child and youth support program was defunded in 2025, Mr. Speaker, as they looked for ways to save money. This UCP government took money away from those caring for children when the parents or guardians were unable or unwilling to care for the child. Interesting choice to not support those who are stepping up to be caregivers, keeping children out of government care. It was wrong to defund that program, and it's wrong to strike it from existence today.

This bill makes it more difficult for credit union members to receive information and participate in their co-operative. Again, as we just heard from my colleague the MLA for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, you know, I'm experiencing the same. My mom used to be using e-mails until about a year ago, when her cognitive abilities kind of diminished to the point where she could no longer be processing e-mails. I think we also need to worry as we see more and more digital fraud happening. Why should we be facilitating the movement towards digital services and taking away paper services, which actually do a lot to protect especially our aging population against fraud? All of this can be done without the credit union members' consent.

You know, it's not just people that struggle with digital services, but we also need to think about the people who don't have access to digital services. Not everybody in this province has access to digital services, and we should be thinking about them. This all on the heels while the UCP government voted down our Bill 206, the Accessible Alberta Act. This bill reinforces that accessibility is simply not a priority for this government.

This bill also implements the government's plan to – I talked about data centres already.

Finally, this bill allows pension administrators or employers the ability to reduce accrued benefits to pension holders. Again, my colleague from Beverly-Clareview pointed out the risks to workers, meaning benefits previously earned, benefits that those workers paid into, could be just taken away from them without their consent. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, pensioners need better protection than what is offered in this bill. We have seen across this country and across North America time and time again that when companies declare insolvency, workers lose all of their rights. We have seen in so many examples through history workers' pension plans just being wiped out. All of those years of contributions gone. They deserve better protections.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting this bill, and I encourage all members of this House to vote no to Bill 17, the Fiscal Measures Statutes Amendment Act. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Are there any others wishing to make comments?

Seeing none, the hon. President of Treasury Board waives making closing remarks.

[Motion carried; Bill 17 read a third time]

Bill 20

Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2026

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

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise today and move third reading of Bill 20, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2026.

Bill 20 will provide authority for the government to pay from the general revenue fund for additional costs that are not already covered or otherwise provided for during the current fiscal year. It includes \$326 million in expense funding, \$202 million in other financial transactions, \$18 million for capital investment, \$18 million for the offices of the Legislative Assembly, and \$734 million in expense transfers. These estimates are about making sure we follow through on the commitments already made while responding to emerging pressures in a thoughtful way. Alberta is growing, communities are changing, and pressures on services are evolving. This legislation recognizes that reality and provides targeted adjustments where they're needed most.

Mr. Speaker, responsible government requires flexibility. Budgets are built on the best information available at that point in time, but over the course of a fiscal year new priorities emerge, new challenges confront us, and the government is expected to act. From wildfire season to legal obligations to increased demand for services, these changes reflect the challenges we faced in the '25-26 year. This bill ensures Albertans' needs were met without the delay of waiting for the next budget. A great example of this is our investments in wildfire response. Every year Albertans see first-hand how wildfire seasons are becoming longer and more complex. This legislation supports proactive steps, including investment in water bombers and emergency response capacity. They are practical decisions that protect communities, livelihoods, and Alberta's beautiful natural environments.

Mr. Speaker, this bill also supports families and communities in tangible ways. It invests in early learning and child care, helping make life more affordable for parents. It strengthens support for seniors, improving access to care and quality of life, and it enhances mental health and addiction services, particularly for young Albertans. These are not abstract commitments. These are real supports that Albertans rely on every day.

12:20

There is also a clear focus on safety and justice. Funding for legal aid helps ensure access to justice remains fair and accessible. Investments to combat gangs and organized crime strengthen community safety, and continued support for victims of gender-based violence reflects a long-term commitment to prevention and support.

Another important aspect of this legislation is economic resilience. Alberta's economy is strong, but it is not immune to global pressures. Targeted funding for skills training and workforce development helps workers and industries adapt to changes such as tariffs and shifting markets. This is about preparing Albertans not just for today but for the opportunities ahead.

I also want to address the question of fiscal responsibility. Albertans expect their government to manage public dollars carefully, and rightfully so. This bill reflects that expectation. Many of the increases are off-set by federal funding or revenue adjustments. Others respond to obligations such as legal settlements. At the same time, transfers between ministries ensure resources are aligned with where services are actually delivered, improving efficiency without increasing overall spending unnecessarily.

Mr. Speaker, this is a practical, measured piece of legislation. It does not speculate. It responds clearly and directly to the needs in front of us. Through the Speaker I ask again that all members support this bill and help the government move forward with funding Albertans' priorities.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Any others wishing to speak? The Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Ms Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Happy to rise and add a few remarks to our debate on Bill 20. Most but likely not all of my remarks will touch on those items having to do with legislative offices since we didn't get a chance to really talk about those before. They are found on page 3 of the bill.

I will say that I'm a very new member to the committee. I was only appointed in November, so that time that I've spent there in the last, you know, fourish months or five months – oh my gosh, five months now – has been, I would say, illuminating and, as with all things in this House, certainly an opportunity to learn. As a teacher I do appreciate that. It's also been an opportunity to learn a little bit more about this UCP government's priorities and in the case of the committee kind of weighing those priorities set against the work of each of these independent offices of the Legislature itself.

The offices, of course, Mr. Speaker, are independent for a reason, because they're meant to serve as a bit of a vanguard, more than just a backstop. They act on behalf of all Albertans. They act always in Albertans' best interests. From that vantage point, they provide a bit of a system of checks and balances, if you will. They get to tell the Alberta government and, of course, Albertans themselves what impact, if any, the work of this particular government is having on those individual Albertans, those things that the government might have forgotten. They provide consistency in their approach. They provide a sense of professionalism. As I said, they provide – and I think that this is really, really important – a different lens, a lens

that this place wouldn't necessarily employ when considering some of those impacts of government policy.

In my head at the moment, I'm thinking primarily of an office like the office of the Child and Youth Advocate. They have an opportunity to provide that information from a sense of unabashed honesty. It's simply the data that they've collected over time. They work always from a position of integrity, and perhaps most importantly of all they absolutely remove that opaque veil that too often from this government seems to be in front of all things. They operate as well from a position of transparency because, quite frankly, that's what they're legislated to do, Mr. Speaker. That is their job on behalf of each and every Albertan.

Having been part of the meetings in these last few months – and as we know from the supplementary supply estimates for legislative offices, the bulk of these asks are as a result of collective agreements and as a result of needing to ensure that people in these offices, these public servants working incredibly hard on everyone's behalf, are paid appropriately. However, there are a couple of instances where it isn't just about salary. It's also about the very basic part of budgets, and it's about resources. It's about equipment. Sometimes, of course, those resources do in fact involve people. Each of those offices is listed on page 3 of this particular bill.

I do want folks to know that the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, the Chief Electoral Officer, the Ethics Commissioner, the Child and Youth Advocate, and the Public Interest Commissioner: every single one of them, before they approached the committee for these necessary funds, had already done what they could to ensure – and in one instance one of the commissioners talked about their budget being a bare-bones budget. It was streamlined to the effect that they simply could not take any more funds. If they did, it would mean layoff of people. In the case of the Auditor General's office, for instance, over the last number of years they've already cut 5 per cent of their expenses. So they have already done the work in advance to ensure that aspect of being focused on integrity on behalf of the work that they're doing, Mr. Speaker.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

As I said, more than once they underscored the fact that there was simply nowhere else to cut. If the supplementary requests weren't going to be provided, as we see them here in Bill 20, it would mean that they either would have to put off work or in the case of the Chief Electoral Officer the next election would end up being encumbered with the money that wasn't provided to them. So you've got the spectre of them really sort of being in debt themselves when they are in fact not able to be in debt.

When speaking of the Auditor General's office, the Auditor General was very, very clear when he said to the committee that if the supplementary amount of \$4 million wasn't granted, then it would have a real immediate effect on the work that his office would be able to do. He was at the time – and this was in November, December – beginning to enter into contracts with folks who would assist, for one thing, in preparing the consolidated financial statements of the government. On occasion the Auditor General contracts out so that they have people with specialized experience in those sorts of things. Their workforce can't always supply the specialized workforce enough for a particular reason, like financial consolidated statements. On occasion it's because there's a performance audit, and they, again, need that specialized workforce.

Again, the Auditor General was very clear. If he wasn't able to contract with those folks, without getting the original supplementary ask, which we see here, then what it would mean was that he wouldn't be able to enter into a contract. If you can't enter into a contract when you're expecting to, particularly when the person you're entering into the contract is also expecting that, but then you have to do it a few

months later, it's actually going to be a little bit more or perhaps a lot more expensive. That was a real, real issue. Certainly, we don't want any of these offices of the Legislature to sort of be working in a cost-prohibitive fashion. We don't want them to expend too much.

When the Auditor General came before the committee to ask for exactly that, unfortunately they were essentially turned down the first time, which meant that there was a delay, Madam Speaker, which, of course, meant that in the end, when they were given the supplementary request in December – what do you know? – everything costs more money all of a sudden because they had to delay the signing of those contracts. Not only that; one of the things that the Auditor General and his staff talked to us about was that they might have to, because of that delay, go back to these agencies – and I'm speaking primarily of the new health care agencies that have been established – and say, "I'm sorry; I can't actually do your audit because I actually don't have the people to be able to do the audit" despite the fact that the office had been asked to do those particular audits.

It isn't just a matter of bolstering the workforce. It isn't just a matter of making sure that there's a new computer system. It's a matter of making sure that the accounts that are provided not only to this Legislature but also, quite frankly, Madam Speaker, to all of the people of Alberta are provided in both an efficient and effective manner but also in a manner that is proper, with the idea that they perhaps might not get that supplementary expense that they had asked for. It was a little bit disconcerting to me, to say the least.

One of the other things that happened as well, of course, has to do with the Chief Electoral Officer. Again, as a new member of the committee I was really, really taken aback with some of the questions that were asked. Now, I'll just reference again page 3 of the bill, Madam Speaker. The Chief Electoral Officer's ask was \$13,329,000 in terms of the supplementary ask. That is an awful lot of money, but, of course, that money was asked for because of the UCP government's changes; the changes in the Recall Act, the citizen initiatives, the referendum. And now we know that there will be a referendum in October. As we learned as committee members, each and every one of these things has, I guess, some unintended consequences, because for each one of these things the Chief Electoral Officer is required to hire people.

12:30

If you just think about the citizens' initiative, the original one that came through: over 400,000 signatures. The Chief Electoral Officer was required by legislation to ensure the veracity of each one of those signatures on those pages, which meant that people actually had to go through the signatures. They had to get to whatever the statistically appropriate number might have been to sort of know that, okay; we've gotten here; it's likely that the rest are verified as well. That means people. That also means they required a place to work. They required equipment that was current.

One of the things that the Chief Electoral Officer and his staff talked to the committee about all those many months ago in November was the fact that they in the past had rented machines, computers, and laptops, and that sort of thing from Ontario, but we're no longer able to do so, which meant that they had to expend them themselves, and that feeds into that \$13 million, Madam Speaker. One of the things that all of the folks at the legislative offices told us was that they have to ask for this money now because, in effect, they have to plan for all eventualities. They said over and over and over again: if it turns out we actually don't spend all this money, the money will return to the government, as money does if it isn't spent.

You know, I just need everyone to think about this \$13 million figure and the reason for it. If all the recall petitions had been viable, we'd be looking at minor election events in a number of

constituencies. That requires people. That requires equipment. That requires time. If any of those recall election events were to have – I don't know – I suppose depending upon who you are, a negative or positive result, then we'd be in a position of having by-elections. There's a possibility, Madam Speaker, of having many by-elections at the same time as having a massive referendum all across the province. This requires time. This requires people. This requires appropriate levels of care.

Certainly, one of the things that the Chief Electoral Officer didn't ask us for – and, quite frankly, when you're talking about referendums, I wish it was in the act itself. I know it's not, therefore it obviously isn't appearing here, but that idea that we're going into a referendum where we know there are going to be nine questions asked, but there is no education component as well. We know that there's lots of mis- and disinformation out there, but this particular office, Madam Speaker, doesn't have any sort of a requirement to ensure that the information that goes out to all of the voters in Alberta is appropriate, is correct. Whether it's misleading or not, there are no penalties and that sort of thing, like exist in other provinces that also have referenda.

If I could wish anything, I would wish that there was actually an additional supplementary expense, so that that sort of education could actually happen for Albertans. If we're going to be asking people nine questions on one ballot, Albertans should be able to go into that ballot box and be able to answer, knowing that they have the information, but not only that, knowing that they have the correct information, not mis- or disinformation.

So while I might support the supplementary supply order on page 3, having to do with the offices of the Legislative Assembly – there is too much, and I'm running out of time. Sorry; I won't be able to talk about the rest of the things that I don't support. Nonetheless, Madam Speaker, while I do support the Legislative Assembly offices themselves, I do not support the rest of those expenses in this bill, so I will not be supporting it.

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

Member Ellingson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise once again and speak to Bill 20. As I said previously, the time spent debating these financial bills is important. It is critical that Albertans are informed of the monies being spent by this government, in this case the funds being spent by this government that were unanticipated at the time of drafting the budget, the funds that this government received from the federal government to cover costs of critical programs, programs such as supporting victims of gender-based violence. In debating Bill 20, Albertans also need to know that it is the misguided actions of this government, the mismanagement of this government, the entitlement of this government that are resulting in us voting on millions of additional dollars being spent to investigate and manage their mess.

Two years ago, Madam Speaker, Albertans became aware of the ministers of this government accepting and failing to disclose skybox tickets at playoff hockey games in Vancouver. Albertans then learned that those tickets came from Sam Mraiche and his employee Sam Jaber. The government then wants Albertans to believe that it is pure coincidence that Sam Mraiche was the sole-sourced recipient of a \$70 million Turkish Tylenol contract, \$50 million of which was never received. It is also apparently pure coincidence that Mr. Mraiche was also the recipient of a sole-sourced bloated private surgical contract to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars that then the government had to back away from.

When this government was unable to sweep this under the carpet, the issue became a matter of investigation by the office of the Auditor General, Madam Speaker. This bill highlights that, among others, that work will cost Albertans an additional \$4 million. Albertan taxpayers

are paying \$4 million to investigate the purchasing processes and procedures of this government.

Albertans also need to be aware that despite paying \$4 million for this work, they decided to release the Auditor General of his position before he could complete his report. He offered to stay on until that report was complete, but the government decided that, I guess, that was not in their best interest. So this \$4 million might be a complete waste, with no report ever being finalized or tabled in this Legislature. Yesterday my colleague the MLA for Edmonton-McClung complimented Mr. Wylie for his work. It is indeed unfortunate that we may never see a final report from Mr. Wylie.

In debating Bill 20, Madam Speaker, we also heard from my colleagues MLA Schmidt from Edmonton-Gold Bar – oh, the MLA for Edmonton-Gold Bar; I apologize – the MLA for Calgary-Buffalo, asking about the \$326 million in supplemental supply to pay for legal settlements against this government, legal settlements by coal companies. Let's be clear. It was the UCP government that overturned the 1976 policy that protected the eastern slopes. It was then the UCP government that reinstated the 1976 policy after public outcry, and it was this UCP government that then overturned that decision again to allow for applications to mine the eastern slopes.

It is the flip-flopping policies of this UCP government that resulted in multiple lawsuits from international mining companies, lawsuits that, as seen in this bill, have already cost Albertans \$326 million. Imagine how many schools we could have already built with \$326 million. Interestingly, only \$238 million of that \$326 million is described in Bill 20. The government is yet to tell Albertans where the remaining \$78 million has gone. And this government wonders why Albertans are asking: where has the money gone?

But the cost of flip-flopping on mining the eastern slopes doesn't stop there, Madam Speaker. Of course, we will never see the government disclose the environmental or economic costs of the decision from these activities that will inevitably and irrevocably damage the water that farmers, ranchers, towns, and cities depend on. But we have seen a citizen-led petition triggered, and citizen-led petitions and recall petitions are costing Albertans an additional \$13 million in this supplemental supply, \$13 million the electoral officer needs to process those petitions triggered by the actions of this government.

It is this government that not only lowered the threshold for petitions but whose actions motivated citizens to initiate those petitions; petitions to protect the eastern slopes, petitions to recall members that weren't listening to their constituents, even a petition that was signed by half a million Albertans compelled to tell the Premier and this government that they are Canadian and they have no interest in Alberta leaving this country. Despite these funds being spent, the UCP government is now dragging their feet in deciding what to do with that petition, Madam Speaker. More money wasted.

Madam Speaker, Albertans don't trust this government, and I will not be supporting Bill 20.

12:40

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others to speak to Bill 20 in third reading? Seeing none, would the minister like to close debate?

[Motion carried; Bill 20 read a third time]

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

Bill 19 Appropriation Act, 2026

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to move third reading of Bill 19, the Appropriation Act, 2026.

Last month, to the day, I tabled Budget 2026, a plan that focuses on what matters most to Albertans in the face of a tough fiscal year ahead. We're at a pivotal moment for our province; global economic uncertainty, volatile revenue sources, and managing massive population growth that puts strain on all of our social services. The Appropriation Act, 2026, is more than just numbers. It is a reflection of our shared priorities and our commitment to supporting Albertans through challenging times. We know this year won't be easy, but we're prepared to face the challenges in front of us. The funding allocations in Bill 19 balance the realities of our economic landscape with the investments required to ensure a resilient and prosperous future for all Albertans.

Alberta's outlook in 2026 is shaped by a shifting global economy and ongoing uncertainty. While growth is moderating over time, Alberta is still expected to lead the country with the highest real GDP growth of the provinces in Canada. The population is forecast to rise by 1.1 per cent, and the unemployment rate is expected to decrease to 6.6 per cent. Oil prices are projected at \$60.50 per barrel, with production at 4.2 million barrels a day.

Some say these are cautious assumptions; we'd say deliberately so. We're planning responsibly in the face of volatility, including geopolitical unrest in the Middle East. Many say the unrest in the Middle East should make us waver and second-guess our projections for the year. To that, we'd say: measure twice and cut once. Our assumptions do not reflect a snapshot in time, but rather months of planning, evaluating, and consulting with industry's best to create careful assumptions that reflect projections for an entire fiscal year.

This budget is not only based on conservative forecasting, but it's also built on strong, realistic investments for the future. Budget 2026 includes \$34.4 billion to support the full spectrum of health services. This investment is focused on expanding capacity, reducing wait times, and strengthening front-line care. The goal is clear: ensure Albertans can access the care they need when they need it and closer to home.

Budget 2026 provides a historic \$10.8 billion in operating expense for education. To address growing enrolment and classroom complexity, we're hiring more than 3,000 new teachers and 1,500 educational assistants over the next three years. We believe in putting forward practical investments to strengthen classrooms today and Alberta's workforce tomorrow.

A strong economy starts with businesses that invest, grow, and create jobs. Budget 2026 supports that growth by providing stable funding to municipalities, investing in infrastructure, and encouraging private-sector investment. This is about building an economy that is resilient, competitive, and diversified, one that continues to attract investment and create opportunities across the province.

Budget 2026 continues to build the infrastructure that Albertans rely on every day. The 2026 capital plan invests \$28.3 billion over three years. That includes key health projects like the Red Deer regional hospital and Cardston health centre. It also accelerates school construction, with 161 projects under way across Alberta, including 40 this year. These investments support growing communities and ensure Alberta is prepared for the future.

Budget 2026 focuses on what matters, makes disciplined choices, and takes decisive action to meet our challenges head-on. It invests in health care capacity, strengthens education, and invests in the industries and workforce to drive our economy forward. Madam Speaker, I ask that all members of the House support this bill so we can continue to support Albertans with responsible fiscal leadership and see Alberta through these challenging times.

Thank you.

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

Member Ellingson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In debate this week my colleagues have made it clear why we cannot support this bill nor the budget tabled by the minister in this UCP government. This budget will forever be known as the never-so-much-for-so-little budget. This budget forecasts a staggering \$9.4 billion deficit and will double Alberta's debt to \$137 billion, breaking their own fiscal framework along the way, all while Albertans ask: where has the money gone?

My colleague from Calgary-Elbow pointed out that renters in his constituency could face rental increases of \$250 a year because of this budget. How? As my colleague from Calgary-Currie pointed out, this budget increases educational property taxes to historic levels, increasing costs for the typical Calgary homeowner by \$340 a year. You'll pay thousands more each year if you live in Mount Royal, Elbow Park, Elboya, Altadore, Hillhurst, Varsity Acres, or, in the constituency of Calgary-Foothills, Arbour Lake estates. The increases in educational property taxes alone wipe out any benefit Albertans would have seen from the personal income taxes introduced last year, never mind the other 30 increases to taxes, fees, and levies that Albertans will see in this budget.

If you want to access apprenticeship programs in Alberta, you'll pay more. If you want to travel to visit your own province, you'll pay more. If you have an elderly family member in continuing care, you will pay more, all while continuing to experience overcrowded emergency rooms and classrooms. This budget reinforces this government's blatant disregard for Albertans when they ask: where has the money gone?

Let's recap, Madam Speaker, where that money has gone. Fifty million dollars in tax dollars were paid to Sam Mraiche and MHCare for Turkish Tylenol that was never delivered; 600 million tax dollars were paid to Sam Mraiche for bloated, single-source surgical contracts, contracts that had to be cancelled because of the corrupt care scandal. Tens of millions more went to – you guessed it – Sam Mraiche for construction and operation of recovery centres. We don't even know how much this government has wasted in blowing up AHS to create 11 Crown corps, each with their own executive teams and boards of directors, which probably one day will be fired given the track record of this government.

Why don't we know? Because this budget, this government doesn't disclose those costs, just like the Premier's filings with the Ethics Commissioner don't show any gifts received or flights on private jets sponsored by a Saudi prince. The entitlement and hypocrisy of this government and this budget is astounding, Madam Speaker.

They claim to be focused on education when my colleague from Calgary-Beddington points out that this government reveals that they hired only half the number of teachers that they hoped for in 2025. No surprise that when you take away the constitutional rights of teachers, they may not be rushing to be hired by this government.

They claim to be focused on health when my colleague from Edmonton-Glenora points out that hundreds of thousands of Albertans still don't have access to a family doctor. My colleague from Edmonton-Decore has pointed out that there is not one dollar from this budget for the actual construction of any of the hospitals or bed towers that have been promised in Edmonton since this government was elected.

Yesterday in this House we were dared to vote against this budget. This shows the misguidance and misunderstanding of this UCP government, Madam Speaker. They see only my colleagues and I on the other side of the aisle. They fail to see the hundreds of thousands of Albertans that we stand for, the hundreds of thousands of Albertans that are tired of the corruption, the mismanagement,

and the entitlement, the hundreds of thousands of Albertans that this government chooses to ignore: aging Albertans, queer Albertans, Albertans with disabilities, everyday working Albertans that this budget fails to help. This government isn't listening, but we are. We stand for them and against this budget. Albertans deserve better, and better is possible.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

12:50

The Deputy Speaker: Any others to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak to Bill 19, the Appropriation Act, 2026. A budget is more than numbers. It's a statement of government values. It's a statement of government priorities. It impacts real people, families across this province. For Albertans it's supposed to reflect and address their issues, their priorities. Sadly, this budget is not just disappointing; it's completely out of touch with Albertans, their values, their issues, and their priorities.

Madam Speaker, the UCP is projecting a deficit of \$9.4 billion and a debt of \$137 billion, and they have nothing to show for it. Oil prices continue to remain at record highs, yet the UCP has wasted an oil price boom during a boom. The government is spending so much, but Albertans are getting so little. We are living in uncertain times, and Albertans are asking for a government that sees them, hears them, and acts in their best interest. Instead, what they have received from this government is a budget that falls short and, in fact, falls very short.

While ordinary Albertans are told to tighten their belts, while food bank usage is at a record high, while people are waiting for cancer surgeries, well-connected insiders of the UCP and relatives continue to profit and benefit. While families are forced to make sacrifices and difficult choices, this government makes excuses, refuses to take accountability, takes private jets and golden cats as gifts, and takes no responsibility for issues that are facing Albertans. Every time questions are raised about their ethics, about their competence, about their financial mismanagement, Albertans are met with deflections instead of accountability. Albertans deserve a full and transparent public inquiry into how these public funds are spent on some of the pet initiatives of this government.

Madam Speaker, the number one issue facing Albertans is the cost of living. That is what I hear in my office in my constituency, at events, and wherever my colleagues and I go across this province. Government is failing to address that very issue.

Families, as I said, are making impossible choices. They're struggling to make ends meet, and instead of any relief they are being forced to pay more across Calgary and across this province. In Calgary alone, as my colleague mentioned, they will be paying \$340 more just in property taxes. That's excluding fees for seniors in continuing care. Then there are more fees for vehicle registration. There are more registration costs for small businesses. There are fees for trade workers to get certified, and there are lots of traffic fines as well. That's adding and piling on costs to already struggling families.

Alberta municipalities, municipal leaders, everyone is asking this government for relief, and what they get in response are more costs through this budget. They are cutting, essentially, on the basics. For instance, they are changing seniors' eligibility for their benefits, making life even harder for those on fixed income. There is no meaningful relief on utilities, on food prices, on insurance, or on housing affordability. The budget simply fails to deliver for everyday Albertans. Life has been and will continue to become more expensive because of this UCP budget.

Madam Speaker, let's talk about education. Our classrooms are more crowded than ever before. It's a fact. Teachers are stretched thin notwithstanding their best efforts. They're overworked and underresourced. Students, especially those with complex needs, are not getting the attention they deserve. Many students in northeast Calgary in my riding, in my quadrants of the city, are being bused to other quadrants for hours. That certainly impacts their learning outcomes, and that certainly makes it difficult for their parents to arrange for transportation and make sure they can get to school and get home safe. This budget doesn't keep pace with enrolment growth or inflation. In real terms it's a cut to opportunities, a cut to the future, a cut to the very foundation of our province.

We should be investing in smaller classrooms, better supports, and modern learning environments. Instead, what we get from this government and in this budget are more announcements of school drawings, school maps, and not actual construction funds in, for instance, Redstone, northeast Calgary. When I started as an MLA, that neighbourhood was getting built, and from 2018, 2019 there was a school site with a board: future school site. People are still waiting for that school to be built. Again, the minister of education and this government are not providing construction funding. I'm not talking about the drawing, design, and colour funding; construction funding for the new schools in our communities.

I think there's another thing, that this government doesn't believe in public education. On this side of the House we think that public education is important. It's an equalizer. It ensures that every single child has a fair shot regardless of where they come from, their parental financial background, and all those things. This government doesn't prioritize, this budget doesn't prioritize public education.

When it comes to health care, it tells a similar story. The Premier claimed that they will fix health care in 90 days. This UCP has been in government for seven years; out of that, four years under this Premier. What we have seen is that health care has gotten worse. People are dying in emergency waiting for the needed and necessary care, and surgeries are getting delayed. Cancer care is getting delayed, and people are struggling to find family doctors. There are parts of this province where no family doctor is accepting new patients. Emergency rooms are under huge pressure, and the UCP, which always claims to represent rural Alberta – many emergency rooms across rural Alberta are often closed.

1:00

What does this budget offer to these problems? Nothing much. Wait times will remain the same in our emergency rooms after this budget as well. Many rural emergency rooms will continue to remain closed. This budget will not change anything for those Albertans who are just looking for the basic and needed care. This budget will not change their experience with the health system, which now this government has split into four different silos. Often, I guess, the ministers even don't know who is responsible for what. Again, this government doesn't believe in public health care, and it's not a priority for them. They would rather see money go to Sam Mraiche, go to private surgical facilities than strengthening the public system, and that is truly shameful.

People in my riding, Madam Speaker, are also concerned about their safety and security. As of late they're worried about extortion. They're worried about crimes and gun violence in their communities. Again, in this budget we will not see any significant effort to curb the crimes, curb extortion or gun violence in our communities. Instead, they would prefer to pick fights with the federal government at the expense of public safety and at the expense of safety in our communities.

Then, above all, there is another issue, this issue of trust in this government. I have not seen Albertans more skeptical of their

government ever before. The reason for that is that time and again Albertans have seen decisions made behind closed doors, promises broken, priorities that don't seem to align with their own, and questions about whether this government is acting in the public interest or only in the interests of a select few, their insiders and their relatives.

Right now the government is preparing for nine referendums. Public money will be spent on some of the most divisive referendums in the history of this country. They are now asking of people that they should weigh in on who should get government services and who should be excluded. Again, that will be based on when you arrive in Canada, the colour of your skin, and all those factors. That is also shameful.

Instead of focusing on the cost of living, instead of focusing on the crisis in our health care, instead of providing for and building schools for education, the government is wasting money on their political pet projects such as referendums, separatist referendums. They are paving, actually, the way to make sure that people who want to do that: it's easier for them. They have lowered thresholds for those referendums. They have extended timelines for collection of signatures for those referendums. Again, those are not the things that Albertans want their government to focus on.

Initially they said that they will not touch Albertans' pensions. As soon as they became government, CPP was on the chopping block. They said that they will not pursue an Alberta provincial police force. As soon as they won the election, that's their project now. They signed a guarantee that they will honour and protect public health care, and we have not seen more proliferation of private health care delivery, private surgical facilities ever before in this province, Madam Speaker.

This budget doesn't help this government to restore trust with Albertans, while on this side of the House we will continue to focus on what matters to Alberta. We will continue to stand up for affordable life in this province and for everyone, and we will continue to stand up for public education, for public health care, and for a government that is accountable to the people it serves.

I can't and will not support this budget, and frankly this budget doesn't help my constituents. This budget doesn't help many Albertans, and I'm sure this budget doesn't help the constituents of the UCP backbenchers. If six or seven of them grow some spine, we can vote against this budget and give Albertans the opportunity to choose a more hopeful future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Member Arcand-Paul: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Nine point four billion dollars in debt with \$137 billion projected debt. What is clear is that the UCP is bad with money, accepting lavish gifts like trips on private jets or skybox tickets while racking up debt on Albertans for ideological pursuits like a referendum on the rights of immigrants in this province, all while blaming . . . [interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. If the two of you want to have a conversation, do it in the back. Right now the only member who has the floor is the hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Member Arcand-Paul: Accepting lavish gifts like trips on private jets or skybox tickets while racking up debt on Albertans for ideological pursuits like a referendum on the rights of immigrants in this province, all while also blaming the public service for increased costs, which is a line I heard in all of the budget debates. Madam Speaker, this government is just showing that it does not know how to prepare for these increases in expected spending, and they wasted a boom during a boom. Leave it to the UCP.

Don't get me wrong, Madam Speaker. It was not just the public servants' much-needed raises that the ministers have referred

to for the increases in their budget. This government also blamed noneconomic immigrants to this province for their lack of investment and support that Albertans have asked this place to provide. This is truly concerning because it is not just the public servants that deserve that raise, but it's the UCP's inability to, quote, measure twice and cut once, as the Minister of Finance just said.

I look at this bill and the associated budget that goes along with it, and I cannot understand how the UCP government has wasted these revenue-rich years on making their buddies richer while Albertans have no relief from the affordability crisis that every single Albertan is feeling. Whether it is the pinching and scraping that folks need to do when they go to the grocery store, which my learned friend from Edmonton-Gold Bar has been rightly calling attention to over the past several days in this Chamber, it is also utilities that have gone up and insurance rates, that are well within the purview of this government. Yet we do not have any meaningful action, whether by legislation or government announcements.

Instead, we see this government announce that they want to go after another group in our province. Shame, Madam Speaker. Instead, this government is hiking up the property taxes for the good people of West Henday, and an increase in fees and fees and more fees, including fees for seniors in continuing care, who I am very much looking forward to speaking with during constituency break in a few weeks.

Madam Speaker, this is not a government that is serious about tackling the problems that Albertans task us with addressing. In fact, it is quite the opposite despite the UCP's spin. I look at the appropriation for education or health care under 6(3) and (4), and I can tell you that in West Henday our eyes widened a bit over this move, not because this government is being overly generous but because we know that the schools that the west end of Edmonton so desperately needs are not anywhere near being close to construction. I look at Rosenthal, and the school that has been identified by the minister of education to be fast-tracked cannot physically be fast-tracked because the land is not suitable. I already know that the UCP is willing to blame someone else for this, but it is the UCP's inability to do its due diligence before making these lofty promises to show that they are perhaps doing something.

How can Albertans trust this government when they have not just Rosenthal as an example, but let's ask Camrose and the Blessed Carlo Acutis Catholic high school. As a reminder for those watching at home, this was a school that was built without a road or access to utilities, that had to be delayed in opening because of this UCP's ineptitude and not doing their homework. Again, how can Albertans trust this government when they say one thing and do another?

Last year the UCP only hired 522 teachers when the goal was to hire 1,045. In that same year we saw one of the largest demonstrations of Alberta labourers, of Alberta workers, go on strike because of the strain on our education system and the educators that spend more time in their classrooms with our children than they get to spend with their own.

1:10

Madam Speaker, I speak from experience. I was raised by a strong single mother, who also worked incredibly hard not only to become a teacher but to also give her students the best possible opportunities, taking from her own pocket to purchase classroom necessities when the school budget would not cover their needs. I remember very clearly report card time and parent-teacher interviews, when I would have to prepare the Hamburger Helper for my little brothers because my mom spent more days in her classroom than with us.

I also spoke with teachers in West Henday during this strike who were feeling abandoned by the UCP. Madam Speaker, how many teachers do we all need to hear from or have crying in our offices,

like there were in mine, because this government has caused such emotional trauma for workers in this province?

When I see this budget, of course, I relay the skepticism that my constituents have while our riding grows. It's interesting that the proposed boundary report was delivered today. I'm looking quickly at the numbers. Edmonton-West Henday is the second most populous riding in this province. I'd be remiss not to mention that for my constituents' sake. What's the largest riding under these proposed boundaries? Our neighbour, Edmonton-McClung. Together we represent over 120,000 people on the west end alone. Madam Speaker, this puts immense strain on our facilities. While the UCP are saying that they're investing in families and communities, I can tell you that rapidly growing ridings are not feeling it.

Yesterday I spoke with the owner of Sew Good in my riding, Rahim Adam, who shared that he is working hard for his three children. They are sharing a two-bedroom apartment. His hope with his new business was to give them a better life, an opportunity. But they're not feeling this investment that the Minister of Finance speaks about. The UCP are failing Rahim Adam and his young ones and several other Albertans.

Madam Speaker, you can see this in other areas, where the UCP is failing Edmonton-West Henday, and that is the main hospital that serves our community. The Misericordia hospital has zero funding for new beds or the support they desperately need for health care professionals to serve the good people of Edmonton-West Henday but also several other rural Albertans that access this hospital. This UCP government is leaving all Albertans behind with this budget. This zero funding for new beds and allocation of planning funding for two towers does not address the lengthy wait times that Albertans experience at this hospital, not because of a lack of hard-working nurses, doctors, janitors, or administrators' efforts, that are doing the best with what they've got.

Madam Speaker, I know these wait times are not just hyperbole. My partner broke his ribs during session break. We waited over 12 hours to be able to get an X-ray and a diagnosis from the hard-working professionals in that hospital. This is not an exception. This is the UCP's Alberta. When Albertans can't access the care they need when they need it in emergent situations, that means this budget is failing Albertans. A few weeks later I had the opportunity to tour the Misericordia, with my partner's visit fresh in my mind, speaking with the hard-working people there. In the emergency room alone – they informally told me that to adequately staff the emergency department, they would need an investment of at least \$2 million to close the gaps and address the wait times. That's just one hospital in this province.

Madam Speaker, this bill and the associated budget do not match this response adequately. I'm sorry; it just does not. This is why I can't support this bill or this budget. Doing so would be a betrayal of the folks of Edmonton-West Henday who have elected me to be in this place but also all of those Albertans from across this province, from Fitzgerald to Mountain View. The Minister of Finance just spoke about accessing services when they need it. Let me tell you that spending an entire day in the emergency department at any of our hospitals in this province is not accessing services when we need it. That's not even touching on the fact that several emergency rooms across rural Alberta are not open for those Albertans to even access health care when they need it. This is not, quote, measuring twice and cutting once. This is cutting twice and maybe measuring, if it is in any of the ministers' opinions or if they need another trip under the guise of a trade mission.

Madam Speaker, when I look at the ministry that I'm the shadow minister for, I'm truly shocked that the Minister of Indigenous Relations spent \$25,000 in January for a trip to India while the minister is not yet justified for this spend under that ministry.

Everyone is asking, "Did the minister use the same map that Christopher Columbus used?" because we've yet to hear how the Minister of Indigenous Relations was necessary for a trip on trade to India. This is more than the capital investment that we are supposed to vote for in this ministry alone, that this UCP is asking us to vote for in Bill 19.

Madam Speaker, it is for these reasons that I will not support this bill for the UCP's incompetence on display with this deficit budget. While they refuse to address any of the issues that they ask us to address in this place, which Albertans have elected us to do, instead they're entitled, accepting trips, skybox tickets, and who knows what else. Most egregiously, they laugh when they vote down good legislation to implement things like reconciliation or support for folks with disabilities or to seriously address the needs of Albertans with cancer. Albertans deserve a government that works hard for them, that addresses the real issues that they are asking us to tackle. Again, it is for these reasons that I just cannot support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Mr. Gurtej Brar: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you for giving me the chance to speak on Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2026. I'm opposing this bill for very real reasons. Alberta families are hurting, and this government keeps missing the mark. Every year when the budget comes out, Albertans hope for real help with their daily struggles. For seven straight years this UCP government has let them down. This year people had very high hopes because oil and gas were strong, royalties were pouring in. But they got a bigger surprise, a \$9.4 billion deficit. Albertans are rightly asking one simple question: where did all the money go?

Right now families across Alberta face a tough time when it comes to the affordability crisis. Everyone knows here that groceries cost more, utilities bills keep climbing, and insurance is through the roof. Drivers saw their auto insurance rate jump 20 per cent just in this January. Many families are cutting groceries, pulling kids from sports just to pay for their car insurance. Electricity and natural gas bills are very painful right now.

What is this government giving them? The solution for auto insurance: wait till January 2027; we will give you another surprise instead of relief. They raised the provincial education property tax from \$2.72 to \$2.84 per \$1,000. For a typical family, like a median home in Calgary, add about \$340 extra every year, and small businesses get hit even harder with the higher rates.

Madam Speaker, this government has the wrong priorities. When it comes to health care, emergency rooms are in crisis. We are discussing in this House every day. We're asking questions on health care. People are waiting in emergency rooms for hours: 10, 20, 30. Who knows? That's why doctors in Alberta are asking to declare a public emergency on this real issue.

1:20

People are dying while they wait. We all know of Prashant Sreekumar, a 44-year-old dad of three from here in Edmonton. He went to Grey Nuns hospital with chest pain. His family waited more than eight hours. They begged for help. And what did he get? He died in the emergency room. That's not a single story of this province; there are so many people waiting in emergencies right now as well.

What it shows is how broken, how crowded our emergency rooms are. But what is this government doing? They cancelled the new south Edmonton hospital. Millions of dollars spent on that project, and this government cancelled it. What they said after: they will not build new hospitals at all. They talk about the tower at Grey Nuns, but there is no construction money in this budget, no shovels

in the ground, no real plans. While Albertans wait and suffer, nothing changes in this Bill 19.

Family doctors are worn out, too. They spend 10 to 11 hours every week just on paperwork. That's red tape. This is more than a full day lost every week that could be spent seeing the patients. In some clinics it's even worse. This means longer wait times for family doctors and more people heading to emergency rooms. This budget does nothing to fix this issue.

The other issue we are discussing in this House every day is schools. Everyone knows classrooms are crowded. Kids learn in hallways, libraries. Teachers are exhausted. In my riding, in Edmonton-Ellerslie, families pay extra to live nearby the school so their kids can walk to school safely. Now those same kids have to win a lottery just to get in. If they don't win the lottery, they will shift far away into the other neighbourhood school. This government turned education into a gamble. We do not have a single new school under construction right now even though we need it badly. They promise projects; those are years away while schools burst at the seams.

Instead of fixing the problem, they blame immigrants. Now, remember again that they are the same people, this government, who called them loudly and proudly and started the Alberta Is Calling campaign to bring people here. They celebrate the growth. People all over Canada and the world came here, worked hard, paid their taxes. Now this government points fingers at the very people they invited. That means this government wants more people to come here. They want them to work here, pay their taxes, but they don't want them to ask for schools for their children or seek emergency care when they need it. So those people are asking now: why did you invite us here? Just to blame us for your own failures. This is not fair, and it is not leadership, Madam Speaker.

The priorities in this budget and Bill 19 are all wrong. We have record-high oil and gas royalties yet a huge deficit. Families pay higher property tax while bills stay painful. A dad died waiting eight hours in the emergency room. Kids enter lotteries for their own neighbourhood schools. No real help for doctors; they're buried under paperwork. No new schools opening when we need them most. And it's going to get worse.

This government has wasted hundreds of millions on scandals instead of helping Albertans. Remember the Turkish Tylenol? Some of my colleagues already discussed this. They spent \$70 million to import pain relief from Türkiye. Only a small part arrived, and over 700,000 bottles expired and were thrown out. We spent half a million dollars to just throw them away. Albertans paid too much for medication that never reached families. The same person, Sam Mraiche, still owes about \$50 million to Alberta's taxpayers.

When it comes to coal mine payouts, after changing the rules on coal mining the mountains – and 86 per cent of people oppose coal mines – this government went to that path which Albertans rejected. Finally, taxpayers have paid, like, \$240 million, \$143 million on one company and \$95 million to another, and more lawsuits are coming.

An Hon. Member: Are you done?

Mr. Gurtej Brar: Wait for that.

This Turkish Tylenol, this medication waste, coal mine payouts, the questions, so many contracts add up to hundreds of millions, maybe close to a billion dollars. That money could have cut utility bills, Madam Speaker, helped with insurance, built a hospital, or opened a new school. Instead, it was wasted while families struggle.

Albertans talk about every day at kitchen tables across the province. They work hard through tough times. They expect real help with the cost, faster health care, and better school for their kids. Instead, they got higher taxes, longer wait time in hospitals, and

broken promises. For seven years, even with the strong revenues, life has gotten harder for most families. Madam Speaker, Albertans deserve better than this and this budget, Bill 19. They deserve a government with the right priorities, and this budget is not addressing the real concern of Albertans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your time.

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

Mr. Ip: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 19. You know, I talk to residents of Edmonton-South West every day, and what they tell me is that life isn't better than when the UCP government came into power seven years ago. We all know that groceries are up, cost of living is up. But let's be frank here. Never have we seen a budget where we spend so much, where this government spends so much and we get so little.

Bill 19 is an admission that after seven years of UCP governance and four years under this Premier this government has no plan to balance the books, no plan to protect our public services, and no plan to respect the taxpayer. The UCP has managed to do something that many economists thought impossible. They have squandered a historic resource boom and left Albertans with a massive deficit and even more debt. Let's look at the numbers because they tell a story of staggering incompetence. Let me say it again. They wasted a boom during a boom.

1:30

The UCP is tabling a \$9.4 billion deficit, yet we're living through a period of near historic resource revenues. To put it in context, six times more than when Rachel Notley was Premier. Any government with a modicum of fiscal discipline would be using this windfall to secure our future, invest in Albertans, build the schools and hospitals we so desperately need, but we're not seeing any of that. Instead, what we're seeing is that the UCP has squandered it. They've squandered it on corrupt care, Turkish Tylenol, and contracts to their friends. They were handed some of the strongest economic conditions in a generation, yet they're projecting ongoing deficits of \$7.6 billion and \$6.9 billion in the years to follow.

By the time this fiscal cycle is through, this government will have overseen a provincial debt ballooning toward \$137 billion. To the Albertans watching at home, this government has accumulated so much debt that the cost of simply carrying that debt, the interest payments alone of \$3.4 billion, will soon equal what we spend on public safety, mental health and addiction and every single environmental project in this province combined. The other side likes to talk about fiscal responsibility, but the numbers in Bill 19 prove that's a myth. They're essentially burning the furniture to heat the house. There is no path to a balanced budget, because they have no plan beyond hoping for higher oil prices to save them from their own mismanagement. And they're not helping their own cause because when government members flirt with separatism or signal openness to it, it creates uncertainty.

We've already heard from Nancy Southern, CEO of ATCO, who has said publicly that stability and national unity are critical when companies are making long-term investment decisions. So when there's even a question about political stability, investment can and almost always does go elsewhere. At a time when Alberta should be strengthening its economy, this kind of uncertainty is risky and unnecessarily damaging.

Let me also point out that the Premier likes to talk about the Alberta tax advantage. She claims that we are the lowest taxed province in the country. But, you know, a tax advantage doesn't put food on the table when your utility bills are skyrocketing and your government is charging Albertans and downloading costs through

the back door, and that's exactly what Bill 19 does. It does nothing to make life more affordable. In fact, it's a blueprint for nickel and diming the very people who keep this province running because what it does is it introduces a suite of hidden taxes and fee hikes.

Let's say it again. Property taxes are up 16 per cent from last year. Seniors in continuing care are seeing their fees go up. Small-business owners are facing higher registration costs. Trade workers, the people who we need to build our province, are being charged more just to get certified. Vehicle registration costs are going up. Auto insurance is now the second-highest in the country.

Madam Speaker, life is worse than it has been in a generation. That's a fact. Wages are stagnant. Youth unemployment is rising. Food bank usage and hunger in Alberta have never been higher. On this side of the House we believe that if you manage the budget and resource revenues properly, you don't have to pick the pockets of seniors and tradespeople to cover for a \$9.4 billion deficit. That's what the UCP is doing. They've forgotten who they're working for. They're not working for the family sitting at the kitchen table trying to figure out how to pay for gas. They're working to cover up their own fiscal incompetence.

My vehicle registration is going to expire soon, and I have to go renew it. For many Albertans, myself included, it's going to be up \$50 to \$100. Business registration fees are up. So many folks in Edmonton, in my riding of Edmonton-South West, and across this province are paying hundreds more in property taxes. For many households it's not, you know, one big increase; it's a series of smaller ones that quickly add up.

I was talking to a constituent who is a senior citizen, who told me that she now tracks every monthly expense because she's on a fixed income. She told me that over the last six or seven months or so she couldn't quite figure out where her money was going, and she was surprised how expensive things have gotten, little by little.

It's no surprise that food bank usage in Alberta has reached record highs, up roughly 12 per cent year over year, according to Food Banks Alberta. That tells you everything you need to know about how stretched people are. People are working harder than ever before, wages haven't gone up, yet costs keep rising, and all families in my constituency are feeling it first-hand. Let's be honest, this budget does not ease that burden.

Madam Speaker, I want to talk about the UCP's pattern of behaviour in our education system. They like to brag about how much they've invested in education, but let me just say that there are lots of photo ops but there's not too much to show for it. We all know that Alberta has added tens of thousands of new students in just the past year, one of the fastest growing rates in the country, but the infrastructure hasn't kept up, and schools and communities like mine are already beyond capacity. We've heard announcements reannounced, reannounced again, yet no shovels in the ground. Like so many of my colleagues, we're hearing from families whose children are being bused out of their own neighbourhoods, not by choice but because there just isn't space where they live, and teachers are managing increasingly complex classrooms without the supports that they need.

The numbers speak for themselves. This government only hired 522 teachers in 2025, far short of the 1,045 target. Over the past seven years, they built or modernized 92 schools compared to 244 in four years under the Alberta NDP. Program unit funding, which once made Alberta a leader in early childhood intervention, was gutted. New initiatives are announced to fix problems that have been obvious for years and, you know, families are left wondering why things weren't addressed sooner.

Some of the challenges that we're seeing in education are the government's own doing. It was this government that cut funding to schools and to classrooms through the weighted moving average formula, basically a shell game designed to underfund school

divisions experiencing significant growth. That's what it did. And for years school boards across Alberta, in Edmonton, and in my riding have been sounding the alarm, pleading for new schools. Let's not forget that for years Edmonton did not receive a single new school. Now suddenly they're saying: "Well, we've seen the light. We're going to introduce a so-called school accelerator program." And they're expecting applause, a standing ovation from the rest of us, but I think we see through that because it was this UCP government that for years invested nothing in education, and we're seeing the reality on the ground. So many students, having lived through COVID and having lived through some of the underfunding that our schools are experiencing, are now bearing the costs.

This government gutted the program unit funding, once the gold standard for early childhood education and intervention, leaving our most vulnerable learners to struggle without support. It's the same story in health care. Instead of hiring more doctors and opening beds, the UCP decides that they're going to dismantle Alberta Health Services, not to improve care but to create more bureaucracy. The reality is that we now have more managers, we have more silos, and we have worse outcomes.

I hear every day from seniors who are waiting months, you know, in some cases over 18 months, in agonizing pain for hip surgeries; families spending 12 hours or longer in emergency rooms because there just isn't the staffing or the beds available; patients being told that there's no more room at the Grey Nuns or Misericordia. And what about the south Edmonton hospital, the hospital that this government promised that they were going to build? Where is it now? It suddenly vanished from the priority list and, of course, replaced with more promises.

1:40

Recently – I find this actually quite interesting – the government announces a youth employment incentive, but let's not forget it was also this government that eliminated the long-standing STEP program. They're now actually replacing it with a much smaller program.

I think what's the most troubling and perhaps the most shameful part of Bill 19, Madam Speaker, is where the UCP does choose to find savings. They're moving forward with AISH clawbacks. They're moving AISH to the new ADAP program. They're cutting seniors' benefits. They're essentially taking away from the most vulnerable among us. How do they justify it? They don't. Instead, they distract, they peddle separatism, they blame immigrants.

Let's actually look at what the Premier and her cabinet are in fact doing, because I think it's a very apt, very good juxtaposition. While everyday Albertans are struggling with their bills and paying the increased costs and fees handed to them by this government, the Premier and her cabinet are taking private jets. They're accepting gifts from friends. They're doling out lucrative contracts to UCP insiders and lobbyists. You know, whether it's a skybox or it's hundreds of thousands of dollars to take a private plane or even a somewhat questionable \$300,000 for a new carpet in the Premier's office, these are things that I think Albertans find questionable and rightly so.

Madam Speaker, we have never seen this level of entitlement. It is, frankly, unprecedented. What Albertans deserve is a competent, compassionate government that respects the tax dollars of Albertans. You know, on this side of the House we believe in an Alberta where you can afford to live, where your kids can go to a school in their own neighbourhood, where you don't have to wait in pain for years for surgery or for the health care that you need.

This budget fails Albertans, and for that reason, I along with my colleagues cannot support it. Thank you.

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

Member Gurinder Brar: Thank you, Madam Speaker. A man dies and arrives at the gates of afterlife. He's told: you can choose between heaven and hell, but you should visit both first. So he goes to heaven. It's calm, peaceful, quiet. People are content. Then he visits hell, and to his surprise, it's incredible. People are laughing. There's music, food, drinks, dancing. It looks like the best party he has ever seen. He thinks: well, this is not what I expected. So he makes his choice. He chooses hell.

The gates close behind him, and suddenly everything changes. The lights go out. The music stops. The place turns dark, harsh, and miserable. He looks around in shock, and says: "Wait, what happened? Yesterday this place was amazing." Madam Speaker, a voice replies: yesterday we were campaigning; today you have voted.

That's exactly what the UCP has done to Albertans. Before the elections the UCP told Albertans there will be no tax cuts, no one will pay out of pocket to access health care, and there will be a more affordable life in Alberta. But once the elections were over, the lights were turned off, the doors were shut, and the music stopped. Then came the conservative cuts. Then came the conservative chaos. Then came the conservative cronyism.

This government has tabled seven budgets since 2019. In the very first one they gave \$4.5 billion to corporate friends, and 55,000 Albertans lost their jobs. They wasted \$1.5 billion to build a pipeline to nowhere. They cut AISH. They cut postsecondary funding. They cut health care funding, Madam Speaker. And in October 2020 the UCP made a horrible decision impacting up to 11,000 AHS jobs – 11,000 jobs – and they are not just numbers; they are our people, our families, our fellow Albertans.

And who can forget how badly this government handled the pandemic? They allowed the antimaskers, antivaxxers, and conspiracy theory voices to grow louder in Alberta. They motivated, allowed, and even joined the truckers' convoy, who illegally blocked the Coutts border, impacting millions of dollars of trade each day. It went so badly that it sent Premier Jason Kenney to retirement.

Then came this Premier, Madam Speaker, who promised to fix health care in 90 days. Ninety days was the promise. We are now past 1,200 days. Either the calendar is broken or the plan was. I have checked my math. To be honest, 1,200 days is not a rounding error of 90. Instead of fixing health care, this Premier tore it apart. We probably have more health care agencies in Alberta than the bulbs on this roof of this Chamber. This breakup from AHS has cost Albertans \$85 million; \$85 million wasted.

On education the pattern is similar. Budget after budget has been sold as a support for students. Budget 2024 promised that more than \$1.2 billion will be spent over three years for enrolment growth, and it also promised to hire up to 3,100 teachers and classroom support staff. But Alberta ranked the last in per-student funding in 2021 up until the last year, and we didn't make a significant change. We are still in the last of the provinces. Since 2020 student enrolment has grown by almost 89,000. Even Calgary's public board said that in its 2025-26 budget funding increases are still being eaten up by enrolment growth, inflation, student complexity, and limited space. This government continues to announce never-to-be-invested dollars in education just to get big headlines. Madam Speaker, not only the education headlines are getting bigger; even the number of students in classrooms is getting bigger each day. Students don't need headlines. They need more schools. They don't just need more schools. They need more teachers,

EAs, and support staff in schools, and they need that now, near to their homes in their communities.

Madam Speaker, on affordability the contradiction is even sharper. Albertans pay the second-highest insurance premiums in the country. The UCP removed the NDP's cap on insurance, utilities, tuition costs. This government is an academy that runs professional courses on how to waste money, how to waste taxpayers' hard-earned dollars, and the advanced course on how to waste a boom during a boom. They have wasted \$22 million on a war room, \$70 million on Turkish Tylenol, and \$280,000 on a red carpet so the golden cat can do a cat walk on it. And, oh, the UCP paid over \$50 million to Sam Mraiche by mistake.

Madam Speaker, one of my constituents asked me: why haven't they paid \$50 million to the remaining 4,999,999 Albertans? Why do the remaining Albertans pay more in property taxes, more in fee increases, and more in everything else, from rent to groceries to insurance? This government asks Albertans to tighten their belts when the times are tough but gives handouts to themselves, their friends, their backbenchers when they get revenue windfalls. This government has no principles except one, privatization of the profits and socialization of the losses.

Albertans deserve an affordable life, Madam Speaker. Albertans deserve health care whenever they need it, wherever they need it, and without having to pay out of pocket. Alberta's next generation deserves schools with smaller class sizes and teachers in those classes.

1:50

All of this is becoming a distant dream of Albertans with continuous increases in fees and fines, continuous privatization of health care, and continuous cruelty against teachers, EAs, and next generation Albertans. Seniors are choosing between groceries and rent. Parents are deciding between extra classes for kids and insurance premiums. Young Albertans are deciding between tuition costs and putting a roof over their head.

Madam Speaker, we are in unprecedented times and we face key questions, and we need strong leadership during these times. The questions we face today are very critical and very imperative. How do we make life more affordable for all Albertans? How do we strengthen the health care system so it is available for everyone everywhere without having to pay out of pocket? How do we build more schools in our communities near to our homes for the next generation of Albertans?

My constituents don't call this a budget. They call it an attack: an attack on their health care, an attack on their education, an attack on affordability. Madam Speaker, there are only three vital ways of defence to this attack. The first one is keeping our health care public, where doctors will check the pulse, not the purse, where patients will be taken care of with a health card, not a credit card, and where illness will be treated as illness, not a profit-making opportunity. This government has launched the attacks on our public health care since day one. They cancelled the health labs, privatized surgical facilities, and halted hospital projects.

In a civilized society health care should be a right for all people, not the privilege for a few. Studies after studies from *The Lancet* to the OECD, the World Health Organization have shown that countries with universal public health care systems achieve better health outcomes, longer life expectancy, lower mortality, minimal financial hardship. Public health care means a healthier society, and a healthier society means a prosperous province, and a prosperous province means stronger families, stronger businesses, and stronger communities. Albertans deserve no less, Madam Speaker. Our public health care system was built on the principle that everyone should get care based on the need, not on the size of their wallet. This is a simple yet powerful

principle. Today let us stand by this principle, let us stand up for this principle, and together let us stand on this principle.

The second way of defence is public education, Madam Speaker. Public education is an equalizer. Public education is the foundation of a fair society. Public education is the promise to every child that a better future is possible, and the UCP has tilted the field in the favour of private schools. The UCP has cracked this solid foundation, and the UCP has broken the promise with the kids of Alberta. Alberta kids, Alberta parents, Alberta teachers deserve better.

If the Alberta NDP can build and modernize 244 schools during the worst financial crisis, why can't this government build more schools during a boom? If the Alberta NDP can sit at the table with teachers, EAs, and staff and negotiate in good faith, what is stopping this UCP government from doing the same thing? If the Alberta NDP can run a government without invoking the notwithstanding clause against teachers, why can't this government respect, honour, and value the very people who not only shape the future of our kids but the future of our province, Madam Speaker? Why is this government so unethical, so incompetent, and so cruel? Public education strengthened this province, and now . . .

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

Member Gurinder Brar: . . . we must strengthen public education.

The Deputy Speaker: A point of order.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Schow: I rise on 23(h), (i), and (j). While I disagree with everything the member was saying, there is one line in particular that I do take issue with, saying that this government is unethical. To suggest the government is unethical or is breaking the law: those would be out of order. Whether you're saying it about a specific member or you're saying it about the government as a whole, that would definitely create disorder in the Chamber.

This government disagrees on how to do things with the opposition, and their job is to suggest other things that we could do and, you know, at least be part of the conversation, not just cast aspersions and, particularly, cast aspersions suggesting we're unethical, which would be implying nefarious or illegal behaviour. That is certainly language that would create disorder, Madam Speaker. I leave this in your hands, but, like, there's a limit, and I think the member has crossed it.

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

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's not a point of order. I think the Government House Leader knows better than this, that you do not refer to the presence or absence of members, and there are TV screens everywhere if you want to really listen to debate. There are many means that you can listen, and I was listening. I don't think the member was referring to any particular individual.

When it comes to ethics, the government's ethics have been called into question by even the Ethics Commissioner. Not long ago the Premier was caught interfering in the justice system. That was in the Ethics Commissioner's report. When it comes to other things like corruption and those scandals, like, it's all over the news that the RCMP is even investigating Sam Mraiche and many other people who are tied to government procurement.

I don't think the member was saying anything that couldn't be talked about in the budget. The budget is an opportunity where you can talk about things that are in it, talk about your constituents' priorities, and that's exactly what the member was doing. It's not a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: I get to rule first, and then you might get to speak.

Well, I actually will not find this to be a point of order. It is certainly not helpful, and this kind of debate ends up in situations in which these types of phrases can't be used in this House any further. If it were on a regular basis, we would be in that situation, I have no doubt, but I know the hon. member knows what I'm referring to and will tailor his remarks to the bill at hand, which is third reading of Bill 19.

You may continue.

Debate Continued

Member Gurinder Brar: Madam Speaker, ethics means saying no to foreign gifts, saying no to seven-star hotels and private jets, saying no to Sam Mraiche. If this government has \$200 million to give to coal companies, why isn't there any money for our teachers? Are foreign coal companies more important than our teachers? If this government has \$280,000 for a red carpet in the Premier's office, why isn't there any money for our EAs? Is a red carpet in the Premier's office more important than our EAs? If this government has \$15 million for Sam Mraiche, why isn't there anything for our kids? Is Sam Mraiche more important than our kids' future?

We must protect, fund, and strengthen our public education system, Madam Speaker. In my riding alone we need eight new schools. This government has not sent a single brick in the past seven years to build those. They said that they were preplanning; then they said that they were planning; then they said that they were designing. Who knows what they will do next? I guess they will send some crayons to my constituents to fill colours in those drawings. Who knows what they are planning to do?

A third important, vital way of defence is building a more affordable province. Insurance is up. Groceries are up. Property taxes are up. After seven years of this government minimum wage has not gone up, youth unemployment has skyrocketed, and the cost-of-living crisis has deepened, all while this government collected record royalty revenues. This government has wasted a boom during a boom. Albertans deserve relief.

People in my constituency tell me that after a hailstorm in 2024 insurance has skyrocketed. Last year they held a press conference where one of my constituents told the press that they have been quoted \$21,000 for home insurance; \$21,000, Madam Speaker. That's more than a yearly mortgage. That's how bad it has gone under this government, and this is shameful.

You know what's more shameful? Blaming immigrants. Blaming people who look like me. Blaming people who have given their lives building this province. Yes, Madam Speaker, this province is not just built with soil, rocks, and oil; it's built with the lives, sweat, and blood of immigrants. Now, instead of giving them a dignified life, this government is wasting money on anti-immigrant referenda and putting citizenship markers on their licences, allowing hate-motivated voices to grow louder. With that, I ask all members to oppose . . .

2:00

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Hon. members, is there anyone else that wishes to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and offer a few comments on Bill 19. Let me first thank my friend from Calgary-North East for his extensive curriculum on government ethics. I always appreciate the reminders of the government's ethical lapses. I want to thank all of my friends here on this side of the House for highlighting again and again the disappointment that

we have with the top lines that we see in the budget; namely, record spending on things like health care and education while at the same time outcomes get worse and worse, a near record deficit, all at times when we're booking record oil and gas revenues in the province. They have rightly said over and over again that many Albertans are wondering where the money is going, and they're frustrated that they're being asked to pay more in terms of property taxes and all those kinds of additional fees that the government is charging yet seem to be getting nothing in addition to that.

I want to spend the time that I have today to really dig into the numbers with three ministries in particular, the ones that I had the privilege to sit in at committee during the estimates process, those being Affordability and Utilities, Environment and Protected Areas, and Infrastructure. Bill 19 books \$106,551,000 in expenses for the Affordability and Utilities ministry, and it was really disappointing to me and to my colleagues on this side of the House to see that of the \$106 million that's being spent in that ministry, not a single dollar is being spent on making groceries more affordable in the province of Alberta.

As my friend from Calgary-Bhullar-McCall has said, grocery affordability is the number one issue that he's hearing in his office and his constituency and when he goes out to events. That's also the thing that I'm hearing from the constituents of Edmonton-Gold Bar. In fact, it wasn't too long ago that I was chatting with a senior who lives in a neighbourhood in my riding. She told me that the cost of coffee has gotten so high that she no longer can afford to buy it for herself and, in fact, goes around to different social events, at the end of the event, with her Thermos, hoping that she can take any leftover coffee from the event home in her Thermos so that she has coffee to drink. That's a pretty sad state of affairs, when people who have worked their whole lives to build this province, build our communities, make them as strong as they can be can't even afford a cup of coffee anymore in their retirement.

Not only is the government not doing anything to make food more affordable in the province of Alberta; they're not even interested in addressing the matter seriously. When I raised some potential policy solutions to the Minister of Affordability and Utilities such as removing restrictive covenants on properties that were formerly owned by grocery stores or investigating price-fixing by the beef packers and the frozen potato companies in Alberta . . . [interjections] I hear the agriculture minister patting himself on the back for giving out millions of dollars in corporate welfare to the McCain family. I'm sure that he'll be proud of the fact that he personally handed a cheque over to one of the wealthiest families in Canada in the form of corporate welfare to open up a plant right next to the potato fields where they would have opened it up anyway. You know, good job to that minister handing out millions of dollars in corporate welfare to the wealthiest . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt, but I feel like it is most appropriate to interrupt because you are getting rather personal. That's certainly not helpful, and we're going to end up down a train in which this leads to some sort of point of order. I'm just providing you with caution right now. Let's get back to talking to the bill at hand and not individuals in this room. You may proceed.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, okay. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Perhaps it wasn't the minister himself who handed over the cheque, but it was his government, his department that handed over a cheque for tens of millions of dollars to the McCain family to open up a plant in a potato field where they would have opened it up anyway. All we ended up with was a plant that would have opened up in any event. It's just that the McCains ended up adding a little bit more of

taxpayer money to the bottom line and the personal fortunes of one of the wealthiest families in the entire nation.

This is the problem here. We have this incredibly passionate defence for companies like McCain and the millions of dollars that we're spending on them to open up their operations here while at the same time they turn around and charge us higher and higher prices for frozen potatoes, and they don't pay their producers any more. That's a bad system for consumers. It's a bad system for potato producers. The only people who profit are, like I said, the McCain family, who are one of the wealthiest families in Canadian history. When I try to point this out, the UCP members across the way get mad. It's like, well, I wish that they would stand up for regular, everyday, hard-working Albertans as passionately and as vocally as they stand up for the McCain family.

But I digress, I guess, a little bit from the topics that I wanted to talk about with respect to Affordability and Utilities. We have no investigation into the effectiveness of restrictive covenants and the possibility of removing those from commercial land titles. We have no investigations into price-fixing by beef packers or frozen potato producers or potentially other food producers in the province. We don't have any investigations at all into potential price-fixing among the major grocery chains here in Canada, five of which dominate the grocery market.

We know that, in fact, they have fixed the price of bread in the past. Right now Loblaws is sending out \$10 cheques to Canadians who signed up to receive some money, a little bit of the money back that they paid to Loblaws over the years, that they were caught fixing the price of bread. One can only wonder where else we're seeing price-fixing in the grocery market, but this government is not doing anything at all to investigate the possibility of price-fixing in the grocery market. One can only assume, then, that the government is completely content with the state of affairs when it comes to the price of groceries skyrocketing out of control, and more and more Albertans don't know where their next meal is coming from.

In fact, they've admitted as much. They put on their affordable advice for life website that rather than being able to afford groceries, Albertans should just be content with what they have. It's pretty offensive given the fact that everybody has the right to affordable, healthy food, but the government is telling people who are growing increasingly afraid that they can't put food on the table that they should just be lucky with the few crumbs that happen to fall off the bread trucks that are owned by Galen Weston.

2:10

I want to move into the Environment and Protected Areas budget. Bill 19, of course, presents expenses of \$452,768,000 for that ministry. I raised a number of concerns with the operations of that ministry, particularly when it comes to overseeing the abandonment and reclamation of coal mines in this province. My colleague from Calgary-Glenmore and I raised a number of questions around the mine financial security program, particularly as it relates to coal mines. This government's own committee, that it struck in response to the repeal of the Loughheed coal policy, recommended that the environment ministry develop a stream of the mine financial security program that's tailored specifically for coal mines. That committee made those recommendations five years ago. As far as we could tell from the answers that the environment minister provided in estimates at the time, his department has done nothing to make any progress on that recommendation, which would be concerning in and of itself.

We know that we have significant coal mining abandonment and reclamation liabilities already on the books, but the government is not taking adequate steps to prevent taxpayers from being on the hook for those liabilities when those companies inevitably pull up stakes and blow out of Alberta. Given the government's intent to open up the

eastern slopes to even more coal mines, we can see that the government is not taking adequate steps to prevent future abandonment and reclamation liabilities from being stuck to the taxpayers as well, and that's incredibly concerning.

I'm also worried a little bit about the environment department's own work opening up the government to liability with respect to coal mining reclamation and abandonment activities. In October of 2025 the environment department scientists released a number of studies that it had conducted in various locations along the eastern slopes and found that even though coal mines had been abandoned and reclaimed according to this government's own requirements, they still emitted selenium into waterways above the allowable limits. The report that the government's own scientists released explicitly said that this government's own abandonment and reclamation requirements were not sufficient for protecting the environment. When I asked the environment minister if this study is going to prompt any work by the environment department to improve the abandonment and reclamation requirements for coal mining, he didn't even acknowledge the question, much less provide an answer.

I'm afraid that Environment and Protected Areas knows that there's a problem and by refusing to fix it is opening up taxpayers to increased abandonment and reclamation liabilities. If we go back to the people who reclaimed those sites and say, "No, I'm sorry; you have to do a better job; you're not meeting the targets that are set out by the effluent regulations," they can turn around and say: well, you knew that this wasn't a sufficient requirement, but that's all you required us to do anyway, so the difference will land on you. That difference in reclamation costs could be hundreds of millions of dollars although we don't even know that because the government refuses to publish any site-by-site abandonment and reclamation estimates for any mines.

That was one thing that I asked the environment minister to tell us as well: what are the site-by-site estimates of abandonment and reclamation liabilities? There was no answer forthcoming there, so I have serious concerns that the environment department is going to be disappointing the people of Alberta with respect to that.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt, but in accordance with Standing Order 64(5) the chair is now required to put the question to the House.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 2:15 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

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

Against the motion:

Arcand-Paul	Hoffman	Sabir
Brar, Gurinder	Ip	Schmidt
Brar, Gurtej	Irwin	Sigurdson, L.
Eggen	Metz	Wright, P.
Ellingson	Renaud	

Totals: For – 43 Against – 14

[Motion for third reading of Bill 19 carried]

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, the House stands adjourned until 1:30 on Monday.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Madam Speaker, I share your exuberance for this exact moment. I do move that the Assembly be adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday, March 30.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 2:27 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 31st Legislature - 2nd Session (2025-2026)

Activity to Thursday, March 26, 2026

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 Sitings.

Bill 1 — International Agreements Act (Smith)

First Reading — 6 (*Oct. 23, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 77-85 (*Oct. 28, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 109-18 (*Oct. 29, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 133-35 (*Oct. 30, 2025 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 184-87 (*Nov. 4, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 250-52 (*Nov. 6, 2025 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force November 26, 2025; SA 2025, cI-3.8]

Bill 2 — Back to School Act (Horner)

First Reading — 26 (*Oct. 27, 2025 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 27-28 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve.*), 29-35 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 35-36 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve.*), 37-45 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Third Reading — 45-46 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve.*), 47-54 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Oct. 28, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on October 28, 2025; SA 2025 cB-0.5]

Bill 3 — Private Vocational Training Amendment Act, 2025 (McDougall)

First Reading — 65 (*Oct. 28, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 135-37 (*Oct. 30, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 187-93 (*Nov. 4, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 215-16 (*Nov. 5, 2025 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 334-37 (*Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 371-73 (*Nov. 19, 2025 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 c17]

Bill 4 — Public Safety and Emergency Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (Ellis)

First Reading — 121 (*Oct. 30, 2025, passed*)

Second Reading — 193-201 (*Nov. 4, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 216-24 (*Nov. 5, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 289 (*Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned*), 323-34 (*Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 408-13 (*Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 447-55 (*Nov. 24, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force November 26, 2025, with exceptions; SA 2025 c18]

Bill 5 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Schow)

First Reading — 271 (*Nov. 17, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 322-23 (*Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 407-08 (*Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 589-90 (*Nov. 27, 2025 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 11, 2025; SA 2025 c23]

Bill 6 — Education (Prioritizing Literacy and Numeracy) Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (Nicolaides)

First Reading — 150 (Nov. 3, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 252-60 (Nov. 6, 2025 aft., adjourned), 289-98 (Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned), 337-39 (Nov. 18, 2025 aft., adjourned), 341-51 (Nov. 18, 2025 eve., adjourned; amendments introduced), 455-65 (Nov. 24, 2025 eve., adjourned; amendments introduced), 504-14 (Nov. 25, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 681-86 (Dec. 2, 2025 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 713-21 (Dec. 3, 2025 aft., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 c19]

Bill 7 — Water Amendment Act, 2025 (Schulz)

First Reading — 121 (Oct. 30, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 224-35 (Nov. 5, 2025 aft., adjourned), 298-307 (Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned), 351-55 (Nov. 18, 2025 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 480-93 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)

Third Reading — 536-43 (Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned), 661-63 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 c27]

Bill 8 — Utilities Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Neudorf)

First Reading — 478 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 663-70 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 737-44 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed with amendments)

Third Reading — 766-71 (Dec. 4, 2025 aft., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 11, 2025, with exceptions; SA 2025 c26]

Bill 9 — Protecting Alberta's Children Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Amery)

First Reading — 319-20 (Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed on division)

Second Reading — 378-91 (Nov. 19, 2025 aft., adjourned), 493-501 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., adjourned), 549-54 (Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned), 676-79 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., adjourned), 815-22 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 855 (Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned), 873-80 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Third Reading — 891 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., adjourned on division), 892-900 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 11, 2025; SA 2025 c24]

Bill 10 — Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (Nally)

First Reading — 271 (Nov. 17, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 374-78 (Nov. 19, 2025 aft., adjourned), 514-21 (Nov. 25, 2025 eve., adjourned), 543-49 (Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned), 670-76 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 728-29 (Dec. 3, 2025 aft., adjourned), 744-45 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 789-94 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2025 c25]

Bill 11 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (LaGrange)

First Reading — 426 (Nov. 24, 2025 , passed)

Second Reading — 555-64 (Nov. 26, 2025 eve., adjourned), 590-96 (Nov. 27, 2025 aft., adjourned), 637-46 (Dec. 1, 2025 eve., adjourned), 808-15 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 856 (Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned), 867-73 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division with amendments)

Third Reading — 913-14 (Dec. 10, 2025 aft., adjourned on division), 916-22 (Dec. 10, 2025 aft., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2025 c21]

Bill 12 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (S) (Horner)

First Reading — 478 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 693-98 (Dec. 2, 2025 eve., adjourned), 731-37 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 745-50 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., adjourned), 850-55 (Dec. 9, 2025 aft., passed with amendments)

Third Reading — 860-67 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 11, 2025) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2025 c20]

Bill 13 — Regulated Professions Neutrality Act (Amery)

First Reading — 404 (*Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 564-73 (*Nov. 26, 2025 eve., adjourned*), 629-37 (*Dec. 1, 2025 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 686-92 (*Dec. 2, 2025 eve., adjourned*), 801-08 (*Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — (*Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 11, 2025*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 cR-13.3]

Bill 14 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Amery)

First Reading — 763 (*Dec. 4, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 794-801 (*Dec. 8, 2025 eve., adjourned*), 844-50 (*Dec. 9, 2025 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 856 (*Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 880-87 (*Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division with amendments*)

Third Reading — 922-23 (*Dec. 10, 2025 aft., adjourned on division*), 924-31 (*Dec. 10, 2025 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 11, 2025, with exceptions; SA 2025 c22]

Bill 15 — Public Safety and Emergency Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Ellis)

First Reading — 943 (*Feb. 24, 2026 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 972-83 (*Feb. 25, 2026 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1141-48 (*Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed*)

Bill 16 — Traveller Protection and Destination Development Act (Boitchenko)

First Reading — 963 (*Feb. 25, 2026 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1065-68 (*Mar. 12, 2026 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1148-52 (*Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1216-19 (*Mar. 24, 2026 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 26, 2026 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on Proclamation]

Bill 17 — Fiscal Measures Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Horner)

First Reading — 1039 (*Mar. 10, 2026 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1210-16 (*Mar. 24, 2026 aft.*), 1241-44 (*Mar. 25, 2026 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1270-73 (*Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1273-76 (*Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 26, 2026 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates]

Bill 18 — Safeguards for Last Resort Termination of Life Act (Amery)

First Reading — 1124 (*Mar. 18, 2026 aft., passed*)

Bill 19 — Appropriation Act, 2026 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 1140 (*Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 1222-27 (*Mar. 24, 2026 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1248-58 (*Mar. 25, 2026 aft., passed on division*)

Third Reading — 1278-88 (*Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 26, 2026 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force March 26, 2026]

Bill 20 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2026 (\$) (Horner)

First Reading — 1197 (*Mar. 23, 2026 eve., passed*)

Second Reading — 1219-21 (*Mar. 24, 2026 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1244-48 (*Mar. 25, 2026 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1276-78 (*Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 26, 2026*) [Comes into force March 26, 2026]

Bill 21 — Interprovincial Trade Mutual Recognition Act (Schow)

First Reading — 1261 (*Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed*)

Bill 201 — Employment Standards (Protecting Workers' Pay) Amendment Act, 2025 (Ganley)

First Reading — 121 (*Oct. 30, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 154-65 (*Nov. 3, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 274-76 (*Nov. 17, 2025 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 202 — Conflicts of Interest (Ethical Governance) Amendment Act, 2025 (Kasawski)

First Reading — 248 (*Nov. 6, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 276-84 (*Nov. 17, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 427-31 (*Nov. 24, 2025 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 203 — Energy Storage Planning for Investment Act (Al-Guneid)

First Reading — 319 (*Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 431-39 (*Nov. 24, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 608-13 (*Dec. 1, 2025 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 204 — Public Interest Disclosure (Publicly Funded Health Entity Whistleblower Protection) Act (Sweet)

First Reading — 534 (*Nov. 26, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 613-20 (*Dec. 1, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 1014-20 (*Mar. 9, 2026 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 205 — Non-Disclosure Agreements Act (Johnson)

First Reading — 1129 (*Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 1169 (*Mar. 23, 2026 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Families and Communities*)

Bill 206 — Accessible Alberta Act (Renaud)

First Reading — 1063 (*Mar. 12, 2026 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1081-94 (*Mar. 16, 2026 aft., adjourned*), 1166-69 (*Mar. 23, 2026 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 207 — Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Dyck)

First Reading — 1269 (*Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed*)

Bill Pr1 — The Ranchmen's Club Ordinance Amendment Act, 2026 (Ceci)

First Reading — 1269 (*Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed*)

Bill Pr2 — Prairie Bible Institute Amendment Act, 2026 (Sawyer)

First Reading — 1269 (*Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed*)

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