



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, April 13, 2026

Day 44

The Honourable Ric McIver, Speaker

# Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

Second Session

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

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Armstrong-Homeniuk, Hon. Jackie, ECA,  
Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UC)  
Batten, Diana M.B., Calgary-Acadia (NDP)  
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)  
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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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Glubish, Hon. Nate, ECA, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UC)  
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(UC)  
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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)  
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Smith, Hon. Danielle, ECA, Brooks-Medicine Hat (UC),  
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Tejada, Lizette, Calgary-Klein (NDP)  
Turton, Hon. Searle, ECA, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UC)  
Wiebe, Ron, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UC)  
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Wilson, Hon. Rick D., ECA, Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UC)  
Wright, Justin, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UC),  
Government Whip  
Wright, Peggy K., Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)  
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC),  
Deputy Government Whip  
Yaseen, Hon. Muhammad, ECA, Calgary-North (UC)

## Party standings:

United Conservative: 47

New Democrat: 38

Progressive Tory: 1

Independent: 1

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Mickey Amery	Minister of Justice
Andrew Boitchenko	Minister of Tourism and Sport
Devin Dreeshen	Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors
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R.J. Sigurdson	Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
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Dan Williams	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Rick Wilson	Minister of Mental Health and Addiction
Muhammad Yaseen	Associate Minister of Multiculturalism

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Chantelle de Jonge	Parliamentary Secretary for Affordability and Utilities
Nolan Dyck	Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous and Rural Policing
Shane Getson	Parliamentary Secretary for Economic Corridor Development
Chelsae Petrovic	Parliamentary Secretary for Health Workforce Engagement
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

## STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

### **Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund**

Chair: Mr. Yao  
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Johnson  
Ellingson  
Kasawski  
Kayande  
Rowswell  
Stephan  
Wiebe  
Wright, J.

### **Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future**

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Dach  
Boparai  
Bouchard  
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Elmeligi  
Hoyle  
Stephan  
van Dijken  
Wright, J.

### **Select Special Citizen Initiative Proposal Review Committee**

Chair: Mr. Lundy  
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Sawhney  
Ellingson  
Nixon  
Pancholi  
Sawyer

### **Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

Chair: Ms Lovely  
Deputy Chair: Ms Goehring  
Batten  
Getson  
Haji  
Johnson  
Lundy  
Sawyer  
Singh  
Tejada

### **Standing Committee on Legislative Offices**

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Wright  
Chapman  
Cyr  
Dyck  
Miyashiro  
Petrovic  
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Shepherd  
Wright, P.

### **Special Standing Committee on Members' Services**

Chair: Mr. McIver  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Yao  
Eggen  
Getson  
Gray  
Metz  
Petrovic  
Rowswell  
Sabir  
Singh

### **Standing Committee on Private Bills**

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Cyr  
Armstrong-Homeniuk  
Bouchard  
Ceci  
Deol  
Dyck  
Hayter  
Lovely  
Sigurdson, L.  
Vacant

### **Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing**

Chair: Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Wiebe  
Arcand-Paul  
Bouchard  
Brar, Gurinder  
Brar, Gurtej  
Getson  
Gray  
Sinclair  
Singh  
Stephan

### **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Chair: Mr. Sabir  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Lundy  
Cyr  
de Jonge  
Eremenko  
Lovely  
Renaud  
Sawyer  
Schmidt  
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### **Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

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

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, April 13, 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 to his government, to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to all in positions of responsibility the guidance of Your spirit. May they never lead the province wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals but, laying aside all private interests and prejudices, please keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

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

**Dr. Horst A.L.C. Schmid**  
April 29, 1933, to April 4, 2026

**The Speaker:** The hon. Dr. Horst Schmid was first elected August 30, 1971, and served until May 7, 1986. During his years of service he represented the constituency of Edmonton-Avonmore. During his terms in office the hon. Dr. Schmid served as minister of culture, youth, and recreation; minister of culture; minister of government services; minister of state economic development and international trade; minister of international trade; and minister of tourism.

Dr. Schmid passed away on April 4, 2026, at the age of 92 years. His family will attend session at a later date, where a fuller tribute will be provided. In a moment of silent prayer I ask you to remember Horst Schmid as you may have known him. Rest eternal grant unto him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him. Amen.

Hon. members, it being the first sitting day of the week, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by Nicole Gray. I invite all to participate in the official language of your choice.

### Hon. Members:

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

### Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

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

Please be seated.

## Introduction of Visitors

**The Speaker:** It is my honour to welcome Her Excellency Geneviève Tuts, ambassador of the European Union to Canada. Hon. members, I had the honour of meeting with Her Excellency earlier today. We had a timely discussion on how Canada and Alberta can continue working with our partners across the ocean. Her Excellency is joined by her assistant Stefanie Rosskopf. I ask them both to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

## Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Two school groups today, starting with the Member for Red Deer-South.

**Mr. Stephan:** Greetings, Mr. Speaker. Very happy to introduce escuela Vista Grande or Mountview school, a bilingual Spanish school. I was fortunate enough to meet with the wonderful students and teachers visiting today. Please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Legislature.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

**Mr. Gurtej Brar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you 60 grade 6 students along with their four teachers from the Jan Reimer school. I ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I have a number of guests in the Speaker's gallery today. It is a pleasure to welcome guests seated in the gallery who either attended or participated in the Vaisakhi ceremony held in the rotunda earlier today: Karnail Singh Bhamra, Surinder Singh Hoonjan, Avtar Singh Gill, Jujhar Singh Bains, Nachattar Singh Mann, and Jatinder Singh Deol. Please rise and accept the warm welcome.

Members, it is my pleasure to introduce members of the public service joining us in the members' gallery today. They are participating in a full-day public service orientation program which explores the legislative, budgetary, and committee processes, enabling each participant to apply their knowledge to their role in the public service. I had the pleasure of meeting with them this morning, and I would now ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Members, Trae Jabs, who should be here somewhere, has been selected to be awarded the Horatio Alger Canada national entrepreneurial award, granted to high school students who have demonstrated integrity and perseverance in overcoming adversity, a commitment to pursue a postsecondary education, a desire to contribute to society, and a good academic record. I'm just tired talking about it. Trae is currently working here on the Chamber floor as team lead page, and today also happens to be Trae's 18th birthday. I ask members to congratulate Trae and wish him a happy birthday.

The Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to welcome local representatives from Medicine Hat who are here in Edmonton to tour the navigation centre: Mayor Linnis Clark; councillors Chris Hellman and Stuart Young; city manager Joe Hutter; Ryan Oscar, addiction counselling co-ordinator; and, of course, my incredible constituency assistant Dani Williams. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**Mr. Ip:** It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you Bryan Mwaka and Tracey Giroux, two respected community leaders who do amazing work supporting Edmonton's unhoused community. Bryan is the recipient of the Queen's platinum jubilee medal, and Tracey received the King's coronation medal. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Chestermere-Strathmore.

**Ms de Jonge:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to the Assembly Avtar Sandhu; his wife, Prabhjot; his daughters Erleen and Keerut; and Amandeep Singh Sidhu; his wife, Aman; his mother, Harjinder; and aunt Kuldip. Amandeep is the founder of Young Bhangra Calgary Chestermere. I ask that they all rise and receive the very warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

**Mr. Wiebe:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you my incredible wife, Mary, my sister Alma, and her husband, Peter. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Red Deer-South.

**Mr. Stephan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to introducing Mike Lalande with the Calgary Police Service, specialized in preventing cybercrime. We're working together on a super-duper project that we look forward to announcing more about very soon. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm so pleased today to introduce to you and through you my lovely wife, Rose, and my amazingly lovely daughter Robin, who used to be one of the amazing young pages here just a few years ago. Please rise and receive the warm welcome.

**The Speaker:** Grande Prairie.

**Mr. Dyck:** Excellent. Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you two amazing people from Grande Prairie, Janet Norman, my constituency manager, and also Chelsea Merriman, my constituency assistant. They're both doing a fantastic job. Very thankful for both of them. They are hands-down the best in this province. I'll fight anybody over that. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today to introduce Professor Faith-Michael Uzoka, president of the African Coalition Society of Canada; Patrick Njapa, secretary of the federation of francophone communities; as well as Jean-Pascal Siewe, who is a valued member of both organizations, along with members of both organizations here in the Assembly. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Banff-Kananaskis.

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce the best constituency office manager in the province, Michaela Jennings. She is the one who keeps me in line back at home in Canmore, and she's here all week doing the same up here. I couldn't be the MLA I am without her and her undying support. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** I think that fell just short of debate, so it's okay.  
Lacombe-Ponoka.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce Gord Wusyk, director of the Rutherford constituency, and Tristan Zapata, originally from Argentina and who chose Alberta as his home and the place to raise his family and build his business. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Are there more introductions? Cypress-Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Wright:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It wouldn't be a day of introductions without a double introduction. I would just like to again acknowledge my good friend Stu Young, newly elected councillor Councillor Hellman, Mayor Clark, as well as Joe Hutter. Please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The minister of health.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you I'd like to introduce some dear friends and representatives of the Alberta Society of Radiologists, Amanda Davison and Pam Cholak. Please rise and be recognized.

## Members' Statements

**The Speaker:** Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

### School Safety and Security

**Mr. Getson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For parents across the province nothing matters more than knowing that their children are safe. Every morning families send their kids to school trusting they'll be protected, supported, and able to learn without being put in harm's way. Teachers and staff deserve the same sense of safety in places where they have chosen to teach our children as a lifelong career. That is why the safety and security of children attending school is a top priority for the Alberta government.

Following the tragic events in Tumbler Ridge this government took a hard look at what more can be done and responded with decisive action to strengthen safety in schools across Alberta. That is why the province is investing \$22 million to improve safety and security in schools. This funding will address both critical infrastructure needs and improve emergency preparedness for students and staff. Of the investment \$2 million will support training for school leaders across the province. This training will help authorities strengthen their preparedness in response to a wide range of safety incidents, including trauma-informed practices, emergency planning, co-ordinated responses, and critical incident management.

In addition, \$20 million will be invested in physically securing and upgrading those schools. These upgrades will include improved locks and doors, security cameras, window coverings, and other practical measures to reduce risks, Mr. Speaker. The province is also developing school safety standards, working closely with school authorities to ensure that students are protected no matter where they live or what school they attend.

Students should not carry any fear into the classroom with them. Safety must not be an afterthought. We will continue to work closely with school boards to make sure that they introduce the introduction of tools and training that are needed to protect students and staff when it matters the most. When children feel safe, they can focus on learning, growing, and building their future. Safe schools protect more than buildings, Mr. Speaker. They protect peace of mind, opportunity, and the promise of a strong and free Alberta forever.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Now Edmonton–Ellerslie.

### Vaisakhi

**Mr. Gurtej Brar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Three hundred and twenty-seven years ago on April 13 the 10th Sikh guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, created the Khalsa. It was a time of deep division. Society was broken by caste. Women were denied dignity. Ordinary people were silenced. Guru Ji changed that forever.

He gave every person a new identity free from caste and fear. Men and women stood side by side. He taught that every human being carries the same rights and the same worth. He taught us to live with courage but also with compassion, to be strong but never unjust, to stand beside those who are weak, not above them. Guru Ji reminded us that the real strength is not in power but in character, that even in the face of injustice we must stand firm with courage, guided by truth and discipline, and he lived every word. He sacrificed everything – his father, his mother, all four of his young sons – but he never gave up on the truth. He never let fear change his path. He stood firm so others could stand tall.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji's message is timeless. Let us become better human beings guided by truth, humility, and service. Let us stand for what is right even when it is hard. Let us protect those who are marginalized, vulnerable, and unheard. This is the path Guru Gobind Singh Ji showed us. [Remarks in Punjabi] The Khalsa belongs to God, and victory belongs to God.

Thank you.

### Coal Development and Selenium Monitoring

**Mr. Rowswell:** Mr. Speaker, selenium is an essential trace mineral that plays a critical role in maintaining healthy ecosystems, livestock, and human health. Much has been said about selenium in relation to Alberta's coal operations, but it's important that we separate fact from fear. Selenium occurs naturally in our environment and is essential in small amounts for all living things, from fish and livestock to people. The key lies in balance.

Much of the public discussion overlooks how Alberta manages selenium responsibly using science, monitoring, and clear regulatory limits. This government ensures that selenium levels remain within safe and sustainable limits across air, water, and soil. Our policies are grounded in evidence, rigorous testing, and transparent reporting to ensure that we are protecting what matters to our communities. At the same time Alberta's approach supports responsible resource development that sustains jobs, investment, and local economies.

Mr. Speaker, it's also important that we recognize that soils in southern Alberta are naturally deficient in selenium. Many farmers must supplement livestock feed to ensure cattle receive enough of this vital nutrient for healthy growth, fertility, and immunity. Without adequate selenium animals experience muscular weakness, reduced reproduction, and compromised immune function. This demonstrates that selenium is not inherently harmful but, instead, essential when properly managed.

Alberta maintains some of the most thorough environmental monitoring and enforcement standards in the world. These safeguards ensure that selenium concentrations stay within science-based thresholds that protect wildlife, agriculture, and human health. Mr. Speaker, responsible resource development and environmental stewardship are not opposing goals in Alberta. By following evidence, acknowledging natural variability, and acting early when issues arise, we achieve both. Let us commit to policies guided by sound science, not misinformation, and a balanced approach that

benefits people, nature, and prosperity. That is how Alberta will continue to lead with confidence.

1:50

### Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, the first question belongs to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

### Alberta Separatism

**Mr. Nenshi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lots to talk about over this last week, but let's start with talking about how Albertans are proud Canadians. Nearly half a million of us signed a petition saying just that, and we don't want to see our country torn apart. Albertans are proud to show their support for Alberta and for Canada. But now that the courts have stayed the independence petition verification by the Premier's supporters, will the Premier admit, after two different judges have stayed this process, that this independence referendum violates Indigenous rights and is, in fact, unconstitutional?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding of the court decision is that they've delayed the Elections Alberta validation of the signatures until such time as they can make a decision, so it is still before the courts. I imagine that we'll get the decision in due course, and we will watch with interest at that time. Being that it has not been decided by the courts, I'll await the judgment.

**The Speaker:** A gentle caution to all sides: be careful about how we talk about what's before the courts.

Go ahead.

**Mr. Nenshi:** Mr. Speaker, Jeffrey Rath was conferring with government lawyers during court proceedings last week. Mitch Sylvestre, who is, of course, a UCP Party president, told people on Friday that he's already spoken with the Premier and says she's going to give them the referendum, regardless of what the court decides, yet the Premier continues to pretend she's just an observer, that the separatist movement is somehow independent of her and her government's actions. Will the Premier admit today that she, her separatist party, and her separatist government are acting in concert with the separatist movement?

**Ms Smith:** No. Our government supports a strong and sovereign Alberta within a united Canada, as does our caucus, and I can tell you what I have done to be able to demonstrate that. We've signed an MOU with the federal government. We're working on a pipeline to the B.C. coast. We are stopping the catch-and-release policy that has happened in our justice system. We're standing up for law-abiding gun owners. We've stood up for our farmers so that they can use strychnine. I have a whole series of things that we've done, Mr. Speaker. What has the member opposite done? He launched a website this weekend. Maybe he should call his leader, Avi Lewis, and do something to get him to stand up.

**Mr. Nenshi:** The Premier really wants me to be Premier, but we want her to do her job. That sovereign Alberta word salad is stolen from the Parti Québécois, and let's remember that Quebec learned the hard way that separatist sentiments set back their economy. That's why business leaders, union leaders, Indigenous leaders, the francophone community, and even former members of this Assembly from that party are strongly opposed to separatism. They stand for Alberta, and they stand for Canada. Rather than standing

up for Canada, why is the Premier pandering to the separatists, who want to tear it apart?

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has to ask the question: why is the rest of the country – why have they lost 13,000 jobs in the last year, and why has Alberta gained 100,000 jobs in the last year? It's because people trust the investment climate in Alberta, especially since they no longer have an NDP government. They have a government that has reduced taxes. They have a government that has attracted business investment. They have a government that is going to continue to support the business community. The business community is our wealth creators, our job creators, and that's the reason we're doing so well.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

### AI Data Centre Projects

**Mr. Nenshi:** But, of course, Mr. Speaker, unemployment is up significantly since this Premier took power, and the government is not doing that well with giant, record deficits. Their only goal for economic development is data centres; however, the so-called wonder valley project has now been exempted from environmental assessments by this government despite the fact that it needs more water than half the lifetime consumption of every Edmontonian, and it could produce as much as double the greenhouse gas emissions of every vehicle in Alberta. To the Premier: where's the quid pro quo? Did she get Kevin O'Leary out of the environmental assessment . . .

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order. One order should do it.

**Mr. Williams:** Point of order.

**Ms Smith:** Well, no, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite should know that decisions of this nature are made in the bureaucracy by directors. This is not a decision that is made by government. They did their assessment. They still have to go through the process. They still have to get the permits. They still have to ensure that they've got community buy-in, and we look forward to them and every other data centre project going through that. We have a concierge service that has been set up through Technology and Innovation to help them navigate through the process, and we expect that they're going to make sure that they do everything correctly.

**Mr. Nenshi:** No Albertan believes that there's anything independent left in this government. This government controls everything, but the challenge is that they are so gullible. They get taken by every conman and every grifter with a ticket to Mar-a-Lago and give them whatever they want. So can the Premier share with Albertans the real financial projections of wonder valley? How many long-term jobs will it create? Is it worth the environmental costs to it, and what independent body assessed these claims before the Premier gave Kevin O'Leary whatever he wants?

**The Speaker:** A point of order was noted at 1:55.

**Ms Smith:** Well, Mr. Speaker, no, I can't give that information. Those are going to be things that the company is going to put forward, but I can tell you why we on this side of the House are supportive of AI data centres and the incredible work that our Technology and Innovation minister has done. I encourage the member opposite to read his Substack. He's going to Ottawa on April 29 to share our AI academy as well as all of the learnings that we have on how we're using AI within our government with the federal government. They're pretty interested in this, too. One more way that we're building Canada. What's he doing? Launching

websites, and he can't even call Avi Lewis to tell him to back off Alberta. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Nenshi:** The Premier is deeply obsessed with what I'm doing, but Albertans want to know: what is she doing? In fact, I'd love to read the minister's newsletter, but in fact I read Bloomberg this weekend, and Bloomberg reported that half of all U.S. data centres have been delayed or cancelled, and those that are going forward require almost entirely components from China. We know very well that the data centres that have been created haven't created any jobs, so can the Premier admit that she doesn't know a thing about data centres before she put all of Albertans' eggs into that basket? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that my ministers have done a tremendous job of creating a policy framework that is not only going to attract investment but is also going to ensure that electricity consumers are protected. We've told them: yes, come and build your data centre, but build your own power so that you can power yourself and have the backup, and if you happen to build excess power, we would like to have that power sold into the grid. [interjections] Wow, I'm hearing the members opposite call down natural gas. They really are just like the federal NDP. They want clean electricity regs. They want to keep it in the ground. Why aren't they standing for Alberta for a change?

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

**Mr. Nenshi:** I should have thanked the Premier, Mr. Speaker, for mentioning our website. Tens of thousands of Albertans have visited [foralbertaforcanada.ca](http://foralbertaforcanada.ca) and signed up, and we encourage more to do so.

### Electoral Boundaries

**Mr. Nenshi:** This weekend the Premier's staff was busy doing other things. The Premier's own staff were showing the maps of the minority report of the boundary commission. They've told people that the Premier is going to reject the report and set up a brand new commission because she doesn't like the results of the old one. Yet again the government is toying with an idea that is likely illegal and unconstitutional. Can the Premier confirm that these rumours are false and she'll put the majority report . . .

**The Speaker:** We all know that we only have 35 seconds. Let's try to adhere to that.

Go ahead, Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Can the member opposite confirm that when he was mayor of Calgary, he voted against their boundary commission not once, not twice but three times? Mr. Speaker, this is going to be a decision of this Legislative Assembly. This is going to be a decision of this body. Members of the Legislative Assembly have received the report. We thank the members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for their work, and we'll look forward to debating it in due course. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Just the hon. member now.

**Mr. Nenshi:** The Premier tries to deflect everything on me because she can't defend her own record. Let's be clear. The government set

up an independent commission. The government tabled legislation with a mandate for that commission. The government appointed three members to that commission, and now the UCP is complaining because that commission listened to thousands of Albertans and didn't allow the UCP to cheat and rig the election. Why is the Premier acting this way? Is she disappointed that her political pressure on an independent commission didn't work, or is her party so scared they'll lose the next election that they feel the need to rig it?

2:00

**The Speaker:** That's about three times in a row here. The Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite has voted against reports that he didn't like, this Assembly is going to have an opportunity to vote for or against the report as it comes forward. This is a decision of the Legislative Assembly. This is not a decision of government. It's not a decision of the Justice minister. It's going to be a decision that's debated here, and as I mentioned, that will happen in due course.

**Mr. Nenshi:** But why is it taking so long, Mr. Speaker? Why is this government continuing to try and figure out a way out of the situation they put themselves in? Shaun Fluker, a professor of law at the University of Calgary, wrote this weekend, "The stage is set for UCP gerrymandering [because the] Commission members, in the strongest words available to them, have advised the Legislature to prevent this from happening." But the Premier hasn't lifted a finger to do that. Given that the commission had one set of maps, one recommendation, will the Premier put that one recommendation before the Assembly?

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the member opposite has had time to read and digest it, as have other Members of this Legislative Assembly. It was received on the 26th. We've had a constituency break. As I mentioned, this is a decision of Members of the Legislative Assembly. It will come forward, it will be debated, and it will be decided upon.

#### Minister of Justice

**Mr. Sabir:** Mr. Speaker, the government has a duty to accept and adopt the electoral boundaries report as it is presented by a bipartisan panel, but now it appears the fix is in. The Attorney General told this House that MLAs will draw new maps before adopting Alberta's next electoral boundaries. This is not how this is supposed to go. Why won't the Attorney General accept the majority report and only the majority report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission?

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

**Mr. Amery:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, it was just answered in a similar fashion. This is a decision of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Every single MLA in this Chamber deserves the opportunity to be able to debate and discuss and review the recommendations and the report in its entirety. The government does not draw electoral boundaries. It does not draw the maps. It is clearly a decision of this Assembly, and that's where we're going to let it pan out.

**Mr. Sabir:** Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General should be introducing fair legislation that implements the electoral boundaries report, and that hasn't happened. Last spring he tabled legislation that restricted Elections Alberta's ability to look into serious

allegations of election fraud. The media reports that he left his own caucus members in the dark about these changes. The Attorney General is in a clear conflict of interest when it comes to investigations about Sam Mraiche. Why has the Premier not fired him?

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, I find this line of questioning quite troubling given the fact that this continues to be a character assassination on a member of good standing in this Assembly, particularly the Minister of Justice and keeper of the seal. This is the same Minister of Justice that has put forth many efforts to protect legal and lawful gun owners in this province, including a motion under the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act that makes it clear that Alberta will not participate in a federal gun confiscation program and ensures that Albertans have the right to use reasonable force to defend themselves and their families. That's leadership.

**Mr. Sabir:** Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General introduced legislation that restricts Elections Alberta's ability to do their work. He has an obvious and dangerous conflict of interest in his long-time friendship and personal relationship with the man at the heart of the corrupt care scandal, Sam Mraiche. But the Premier still takes no action while Alberta's democracy is being eroded. Why won't the Premier do the right thing and fire her Attorney General?

**The Speaker:** The hon. House leader.

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assume that the member opposite is referring to the story in the *Globe and Mail*. But I can tell you that the Justice minister was not aware of any investigation that was ongoing, and the government is not privy to information related to the ongoing investigations. Furthermore, the amendments that were in the Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, did not include any retroactivity provisions, which, in other words, means that the amendments made: the intent is not to impact any ongoing investigations.

**The Speaker:** The next question, the fifth one, where there are no preambles on the supplementals, belongs to the Member for Edmonton-Decore.

#### Hospital Emergency Services

**Mr. Haji:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A stabbing at the Royal Alex hospital emergency department left one person critically injured. Immediate action is needed to protect patients, nurses, and front-line workers from violence in Alberta's emergency departments. That is the plea from the United Nurses association. Most occupational health and safety concerns raised by nurses involve weapons. Patients and nurses express a serious safety concern. Why did it take a patient being stabbed for the UCP government to finally notice that the safety crisis in our emergency departments is at a peak?

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. In fact, we noticed long before this situation, this tragic situation, and we continue to make improvements. It's the reason why, in fact, there was an additional \$11 million added to the overall protective services budget. It now sits at \$130 million. On top of that, we have expedited the weapons screening program at the Royal Alex and in other locations. We're going to also add

additional personnel. There's been an additional eight staff added, from 12 . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Haji:** Given that emergency departments continue to face overcrowding, short-staffing, and long wait times with increasing patients experiencing complex conditions, given that hospitals are operating beyond capacity, increasing risks for patients, nurses, and other front-line workers and given that hospitals have no effective risk-detection systems to keep patients and front lines safe, when will this government prioritize patients by improving staffing levels, working conditions, and safety infrastructures in hospitals across this province?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of health.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, we've added more protective staff. We're adding more dollars to add in more protective screening programs. We're making sure that emergency departments have the training that they need, that those individuals are trained so that they can deal with what's coming through the door. We want to make sure that every health care professional, regardless of where they're working, has that proper training and that they can deal with the situations that come across their doors. And, of course, we also want to protect the patients that are coming through the doors as well. We're going to keep working on it.

**Mr. Haji:** Given that overcapacity is creating dangerous conditions in emergency department waiting rooms, especially at the Royal Alex hospital, which serves many vulnerable patients, and given that Albertans facing homelessness, addictions, mental health care challenges often end up in emergency departments because of inadequate community support, when will this government recognize that underfunded social services are worsening hospital pressures and contributing to those ongoing safety risks?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're continuing to increase in all areas because we also know that the emergency room door should be the last door that people go through. It's why we have added over 3,000 more doctors across this province so that everyone can be attached to a primary care provider. We know that many of those individuals that go to an ER could in fact be looked after by their primary care provider. Right now in Alberta we have over 800 doctors taking new patients and over 50 nurse practitioners taking new patients. All of this will help, making sure that the right provider is providing care.

**The Speaker:** The next question belongs to the Member for Chestermere-Strathmore.

### Bill 25

**Ms de Jonge:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some school divisions have priorities that have nothing to do with academic success, and we have seen way too many examples of personal bias and ideology enter classrooms, that distract from what really matters like reading, math, and science. Schools should teach children how to think, not what to think. To the Minister of Education and Childcare: can he speak to how the act to remove politics and ideology from classrooms ensures that classrooms prioritize learning over politics and ideology?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, Mr. Speaker, Bill 25 will focus, as the member just mentioned, on ensuring that schools are places where students learn how to think and not what to think. When families send their children to our education system, they expect our education system to provide them with the fundamentals of success to help them learn how to read, write, and excel in other areas. That's precisely what Bill 25 will do. It'll ensure that school divisions are focused on academic success, not making statements or taking positions on potentially divisive social or political matters. [interjections]

2:10

**The Speaker:** I don't remember calling anybody's name that's talking right now, but we will hear from Chestermere-Strathmore right now.

**Ms de Jonge:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for his response. Given that teachers deserve to be free from harm in the workplace and given that teachers are facing increased aggression in the classrooms and further given that teachers should have a safe workplace that lets them fulfill their work as an educator, to the same minister: can he speak to what this proposed legislation does to support a safe environment for teachers?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** One of the things the bill will do, Mr. Speaker, is help to ensure that our classrooms are free from violence. We've heard concerning reports over the course of the last several months of an increase of violence and aggression in the classrooms, so the bill will establish new standards when it comes to violence and aggression. Furthermore, the bill will also strengthen student codes of conduct and ensure that teachers are not subject to any kind of violence or aggression. It's something that we've heard directly from the Alberta Teachers' Association and other organizations, and we're happy to respond in this bill.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms de Jonge:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for the important work he's doing. Given that about 25 per cent of students in Alberta require reading, writing, or math intervention and given that reading and math are foundational to academic and lifelong success and further given that Alberta's students deserve a world-class education system that prioritizes numbers and fundamental math, to the minister: how does the act remove politics and ideology from classrooms to prioritize foundational skills in math?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, Mr. Speaker, Bill 25 will make some amendments to the Education Act that will make a legal requirement for school divisions to conduct literacy and numeracy interventions for students that have been identified as requiring additional support. As a consequence of the literacy and numeracy screeners that this government has introduced, we're able to identify a number of students who require additional support, and Bill 25 will make it law that those students must receive additional supports.

### Electoral Boundaries

(continued)

**Ms Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, Albertans expect a government that not only talks about democratic participation but also practises it consistently. They point out that while the government promotes tools like referendums as evidence of its commitment to listening, it has dismissed or minimized the feedback Albertans provided on the proposed boundary redraw. This has raised concerns about why

public input is valued in some democratic processes but set aside in others, so to the minister: as the government says that they will debate the boundary changes in the Chamber instead of just accepting what Albertans have already recommended, why won't they just admit this isn't about listening to Albertans? It's about your own power.

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

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for pointing out that the commission received input from Albertans all across the province. This was the commission with the secondmost written submissions in Alberta's history. Like I said, every single member of the public, every single member in this Chamber, and anyone else was invited to participate. This includes many members of this Assembly who also weighed in on the report, but the reality is that the process is simple. The report was tabled by you on March 26. It'll be debated by members of the Assembly, and we'll take it from there. The members of the Assembly decide this, not government.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that at a hearing before the commission numerous Albertans from rural communities provided submissions outlining their lived experience and governance concerns and given that these presentations consistently conveyed that inclusion within boundaries dominated by large urban centres does not adequately account for rural priorities yet the government has introduced a map that does just that – that is, against the voices of rural Albertans – why is this government ignoring the voices of so many rural Albertan presenters who indicated that shared political or administrative boundaries with large cities will deflect from rural priorities?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's ironic because it was actually this government and this caucus that lobbied when in the interim report one of the northern rural constituencies was deleted. It was members of this caucus who have stood up for rural Alberta each and every single time, and it is this government, this caucus, that will continue to govern for all Albertans, rural and urban. The report will be debated by every single member of this Legislature. They'll all have the opportunity to weigh in on it, Mr. Speaker, and we will go from there.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that Lethbridge would like that same advocacy and given that evidence presented to the commission highlights clear differences between rural and urban Albertans in terms of population distribution, economic activity, and service delivery and given that presenters emphasized that these differences have significant impacts for fair and effective representation, is the government really going to ignore the voices of rural Albertans who represented at the commission in advocacy for rural ridings, not urban-rural ridings? What will it take for the UCP to respect rural Albertans? Are they just taking them for granted just like every other time?

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

**Mr. Amery:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans all across this province know which party truly stands and represents their interests. Members of the NDP said absolutely nothing when the interim report deleted the riding of Lesser Slave Lake, have said nothing about the

other additions and deletions in rural Alberta, and have done absolutely nothing to represent rural Albertans here in this province. This government and this caucus stand by Albertans, rural and urban. The opportunity for MLAs to debate the report will come soon, and all members of this Assembly will be able to weigh in.

**The Speaker:** Lethbridge-West, now it's your turn.

**Member Miyashiro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The final report from the boundaries commission was released just over a week ago, and this UCP government has just shown all of us who they are by having their appointed members suggest an unprecedented minority version of reality, splitting Lethbridge and Red Deer into four ridings, Airdrie into three, and creating as many rural-urban hybrid ridings as they could dream up. Will this government explain why their UCP appointees want to cheat and subvert established legal processes and set up the province's electoral boundaries?

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

**Mr. Amery:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will take a different approach. I would like to thank members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission for all of their work. These are people who volunteered their time, spoke with thousands of Albertans, toured the province to try and get all of the input and the information required, unlike that member who wants to disparage the hard work of these people who volunteered for this. I am going to praise and thank them for the work that they did. The report has been tabled in this Assembly. Once again, members will have the opportunity to weigh in at the right time.

**The Speaker:** A point of order was noted at 2:17.

**Member Miyashiro:** Mr. Speaker, given that the minority maps radically changed the report in ways that do not reflect public feedback and are blatantly unreasonable and given that the commission warns that if the Legislature adopts these minority maps it risks the significant legal consequences of a likely successful court challenge and even more importantly risks jeopardizing faith in Alberta democracy, I ask the Premier: is this government so power hungry that it will risk legal challenges, ignoring the final commission report to support this undemocratic, gerrymandered version of electoral maps?

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, the hard work of the commission culminated in a report . . .

**Mr. Dach:** You have no shame.

**Mr. Amery:** . . . that is before the Assembly. The reality of the matter is that the . . .

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

**Mr. Amery:** . . . Legislature, not the government, not the Premier, not the minister, are the ones that are going to be debating and reviewing the report. Everybody will have that opportunity to discuss it. That's how this process works, Mr. Speaker. I know the members are desperate to intermingle government with legislative members. That's not the reality here. Every single individual in this Chamber will have the opportunity to discuss, debate, and go forward with the report that they think is . . . [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Only Lethbridge-West. A couple people know who I'm looking at here.

Go ahead, Member.

**Member Miyashiro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Member for Lethbridge-East and the UCP want to do for Lethbridge what they've done for health care, create four times the bureaucracy and make it four times harder to actually get anything done, and given that the member will have to challenge sitting incumbents from his own party in every gerrymandered Lethbridge riding in the minority report except the proposed Lethbridge-Little Bow, will the UCP be trying to cheat the citizens of Lethbridge from proper representation by implementing these undemocratic, gerrymandered maps?

**The Speaker:** A point of order was called back at 2:18.  
The minister.

2:20

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I feel like I'm repeating myself over and over again. This is and always has been an independent process. This Legislature is responsible for reviewing the recommendations in the report and its findings. The government does not draw electoral boundaries. Let's just be unequivocally clear about that. It is a decision of the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta who make that decision. It is a decision that is made arising from the report, the debate, the discussions that come forward. Everybody will have their opportunity to do that in a very short amount of time.

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

#### Capital Projects in Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock

**Mr. van Dijken:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For rural communities increasing access to modern, high-quality education close to home can have a lasting impact for generations. Building new schools close to home ensures that every student can learn and build a strong foundation for their future and set them on the path to success no matter where they live. To the Minister of Education and Childcare: please outline how Budget 2026 supports new school development in the constituency of Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Childcare.

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of projects under way in the member's riding that I'm happy to highlight. In 2023 we approved the modernization of the Barrhead composite high school and worked to increase the capacity there to 820. Also in 2023 we approved a replacement francophone school in Mallaig with a 320-student capacity. Additionally, we are working on a replacement K to 12 school in Waskatenau with a student capacity of 189. Finally, in Budget '26 we've also approved the Buffalo Lake Métis settlement school in Caslan with a student capacity of 235.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. van Dijken:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that just as investments in schools help connect students to opportunity, reliable bridges play a vital role in connecting communities across my riding and given that my constituents are interested in both the current and future investments that will ensure safe and efficient travel for both industry and families, can the Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors provide an update on projects in my riding, including those scheduled to open soon and those funded in Budget 2026?

**The Speaker:** I'm not sure if those questions are connected or not, but the minister of transportation and corridors can answer if he chooses.

**Mr. Dreeshen:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Budget 2026 was very good news for rural Alberta and the entire province. When it comes to Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock, in transportation there were a lot of investments in this riding through the tremendous advocacy from that member, whether it was highway 813, the Athabasca River bridge replacement project. There are construction dollars in this budget for that as well as highway 881 between St. Paul and St. Vincent as well as highway 28 and also highway 63, the twinning project between Grassland and Edmonton. All great projects.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. van Dijken:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that it's very important, whether it's school infrastructure or transportation infrastructure, that in rural Alberta it's necessary, given that highway 28 is an essential road in my constituency and safety improvements along this route remain a priority for my constituents and further given that continued investment in road infrastructure is essential to support growth and ensure safe travel across the region, to the same minister: what steps is our government taking to improve safety along highway 28?

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

**Mr. Dreeshen:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to say that we've actually set up an open house with the Northeast Alberta Alliance for Growth and Opportunities group that is made up of communities along highway 28 as well as with MLAs that, obviously, represent constituencies along highway 28 to highlight our government's commitment to build and improve this important highway. There is great news in Budget '26 when it comes to the planning and the design of the land purchases that are needed to twin and add passing lanes on highway 28. We will continue to invest in this very important project and this very important part of the province.

#### Bill 25 (continued)

**Ms Chapman:** The UCP nanny state doesn't respect or trust teachers, and after years of funding failing to keep up with growth, teachers lack the needed resources to ensure students are well supported in the classroom. These are the biggest issues facing Alberta schools today: the UCP's failure to hire teachers, because no one wants to work for them, and classroom size and complexity that has grown out of control. Rather than pick ideological fights about curriculum, why does the new legislation for education not address the real issues facing Alberta classrooms?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Mr. Speaker, in November we requested the largest and most comprehensive data collection exercise in Alberta education history. We collected data from over 89,000 classrooms and were able to get the most detailed analysis. From that information we were able to invest \$143 million to dispatch 476 complexity teams to our most in-demand and needed schools. We've provided record investment in Budget '26, a 7 per cent increase from last year, so that we can hire more teachers, educational assistants, and other specialists.

**Ms Chapman:** Given that Alberta's curriculum tackles history with age-appropriate discussions and given that the only ones scared of difficult conversations about history are usually those who seek to hide the unpleasant truth and given that teachers need resources and lower class sizes to give students the opportunity to engage on difficult topics in human history, why is the education minister focused on inserting more ideology into our classrooms when what students need are more teachers and more education assistants?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was mentioning, the investment that we've made in Budget '26, a 7 per cent increase from last year, will allow us to hire an additional 5,000 collective teachers and educational assistants to support our education system. We know through the comprehensive data collection exercise that we undertook that classrooms today have an average class size of 25 in the province. That doesn't mean, of course, that there aren't hot spots. There sure are, and we're working to address that by dispatching complexity teams and working with our school divisions to hire more teachers and educational assistants where they're needed the most.

**Ms Chapman:** Given that studying the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is an important topic and opportunity in Alberta's social studies curriculum for students to learn about democratic rights and fundamental freedoms and given this government trampled all over the Charter rights of teachers with Bill 2, will the nanny state let teachers use the real-world example of how the government casually discarded the Charter rights of an entire group of people, or would that be, in the mind of the minister, bringing politics into the classroom? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Are your hands sore yet?  
Go ahead, Minister.

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, as I mentioned earlier, we firmly believe that schools should be places where students learn how to think and not what to think. That's precisely what we are focused on, and that's precisely what Bill 25 will help deliver. Bill 25 will help ensure that school divisions are not taking official positions or making official statements on potentially divisive social and/or political issues or causes and instead ensure that they are absolutely focused on setting our children up for success in the future.

**The Speaker:** Cypress-Medicine Hat.

#### Wildfire Prevention in the Cypress Hills

**Mr. Wright:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Cypress Hills provincial park and Elkwater are treasured parts of Alberta, home to families, ranchers, small businesses, and one of our busiest provincial parks. In recent years the risk of wildfire could have threatened evacuations, displacing tremendous amounts of people as well as putting tremendous pressure on emergency responders. Residents deserve to be reassured that help is ready and the community is protected. Can the Minister of Forestry and Parks please share what steps are being taken to prevent forest fires in the Cypress Hills and to prepare for future forest fire seasons?

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

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Alberta's government is committed

to ensuring Alberta's wildfire response remains strong and effective. As part of this we employ various programs like FireSmart and the community hazardous fuels reduction program. We cut a 1.8 kilometre long, 50 metre wide fuel break to help protect Elkwater town site, and we're planning other fireguards and fuel reduction programs. The hazardous fuel reduction program focuses on removing high-risk standing timber that could fuel fast-moving wildfires within five kilometres of vulnerable communities. We are proud to say that we are working to protect the area of Cypress Hills, and even just last October we had FireSmart workers working in Cypress Hills provincial park.

**The Speaker:** Cypress-Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Wright:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. Given that wildfires in the Cypress Hills can spread rapidly due to terrain, vegetation, and weather conditions as showcased in a recent study that warned of risk of major fire in the forest and given that residents, tourism operators, and small-business owners in the region rely on a safe and accessible environment to make their living, can the same minister please explain what measures are being taken to protect homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure in the community of Elkwater from threats of wildfire?

2:30

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Loewen:** Yes. Thanks to the member for the question. In response to the growing frequency and severity of wildfires, Alberta's government developed a comprehensive wildfire mitigation strategy that will co-ordinate and guide mitigation efforts moving forward. As part of the work done in Cypress Hills provincial park, we performed various vegetation management projects such as pruning, thinning, mulching, and burning. Projects like this reinforce Alberta's government's commitment to protecting our communities and forest areas. These projects run complementary to other wildfire mitigation initiatives such as FRIAA's FireSmart and community fireguard programs and forest area wildfire management plans, showcasing our integrated work across the province.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Wright:** Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. Given that effective wildfire prevention depends not just on emergency responses but also on planning, mitigation, and local co-ordination and given that municipalities, park staff, tourists, and residents all play a critical role in reducing wildfire risks, can the same minister please explain how this government is working with partners in the Cypress Hills to improve FireSmart initiatives, emergency planning, and community resiliency so that Albertans can feel confident their communities are protected?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you very much. FireSmart is an ongoing program that requires continuous maintenance to protect Alberta communities. Work takes place each fall and goes into the spring. Wildfires that have impacted Alberta communities showed clear risk factors, which included conifers in close proximity to buildings. As a whole, this work will ensure that the community of Elkwater is significantly more fire smart, reduce risk to cottages, and improve evacuation outcomes in the event of a wildfire. We see wildfire prevention and mitigation as a collective effort, and we're working with industry, communities, other levels of government, and Indigenous partners to reduce wildfire risk and build resilience in communities like Elkwater and others across the province.

### Alberta Separatism and Economic Development

**Member Ellingson:** Last week the mayor of Calgary shared his views on separatism. He talked about the incredible diversity of Calgary. He noted that Calgary is part of the Canadian story and that 1 in 3 Calgaryans were not born in Canada. Mayor Farkas talked about how these Calgaryans come with networks and connections and a desire to start and grow businesses. This was just one example he used to state how Calgary is better in Canada. Does the Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration not agree with the mayor? Does the minister not believe that it is Canada that attracts the talent needed for economic development?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of jobs and economy.

**Mr. Schow:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for that question. We've said multiple times that we believe in a sovereign Alberta within a united Canada, and it's Alberta's work that has led us to attract and create 100,000 jobs year over year. Those numbers just came out. What I can say is that Alberta and the private sector in our province are creating the jobs, and they're driving economic diversification for our province, and the entire country is benefiting. Canada should be thanking Alberta.

**Member Ellingson:** Given that the mayor made the argument that Canada still matters, given that the mayor made the argument that it is partnerships that drive success, given that he made the argument that we shouldn't be retreating from one another but rather working with each other to build a stronger federation, why won't the minister denounce separatism and be clear that legitimate concerns are better addressed through partnership rather than confrontation?

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I love the fact that the member is talking about partnerships. That's why we recently signed, with the leadership of the Premier, an MOU with the government of Canada to get our world-class products to market. It's negotiations like these, deals like these, that tell the country, that tell the world, that Alberta is open for business. As a result, we've seen 100,000 new jobs created in our province year over year. How many jobs do we have to create in this province before the members opposite will say, "Hey, the government's doing the right thing"? Why won't they get onside with us?

**Member Ellingson:** Given that the mayor was clear that the talk of separation is dangerous, given that he made it clear that people are asking him what is happening in Calgary and Alberta, given that he sees the rhetoric on separation as holding us back – we could be better – given that he wants people to know where he stands on separation, will the minister today make it clear to Albertans where the minister stands? From an economic standpoint, will the minister today make it clear to Albertans that he is against separation and stands for Alberta, for Canada?

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's job growth is up 4 per cent year over year compared to the national average of .4 per cent. That's 100,000 jobs. How much better can we be doing before the members opposite respect and acknowledge that we are doing great things here in this province? We're leading the charge with job growth. I don't understand what number we need to get to before the members opposite will recognize that what we're doing

on this side of the House is driving investment. It's creating jobs, and it's leading the country.

### Provincial Fuel Tax

**Mr. Kasawski:** For many Albertans filling up with a tank of gas costs more than buying groceries right now. Your government collects 13 cents a litre from Albertans for every litre of fuel they fill up in their tanks, fuel they depend on to drive to work, to drive their kids to school, to drive to appointments, to live life in Alberta. Oil is trading at over \$100 per barrel, \$40 a barrel above what this government budgeted for. The government is collecting a windfall of revenue, and it comes while Albertans are paying high prices at the pump. Will the Finance minister do the right thing, suspend the fuel tax, and give Albertans a break on the price of gas?

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

**Mr. Horner:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Well, how quickly it changes. A windfall of revenue I'm sitting on now apparently. A lot of criticism over the last month and a half about our budget at \$60 oil. What I can tell you is that we care about affordability on this side of the aisle. That's why we legislated the fuel tax relief program, the only province in the country that has. Second-lowest fuel tax in the country, without a sales tax on it. And all of this is coming from the party that brought you the Leap Manifesto, eco radical, leave it in the ground, you're a caveman if you drive an F-150, or, like Premier Notley said: take the bus. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kasawski:** Given the government makes Albertans pay more for prescription medicine than ever before, given the government also makes Albertans pay more for automobile insurance than ever before and given that oil is trading at over \$100 a barrel – it's about \$3 billion you've collected in the last month and a half. With no end in sight to Donald Trump's wars, while the government is collecting this windfall, at the same time drivers are paying high prices at the pump. Will the minister please start using the Legislature to do some good and give Albertans a break in prices they pay for things that matter for life in Alberta?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, we have a legislated program. The only way to do this fairly and efficiently is the tax needs to come on or come off on the quarter so you have a monitoring period in the middle of the quarter. Albertans can expect, if oil stays at this elevated price, that the tax will come off entirely July 1. I would remind everyone that even if oil dropped substantially the day after, it would stay off for the entire quarter. It works both ways.

**Mr. Nenshi:** Sounds like bad legislation.

**Mr. Horner:** No. It's intentional.

I would also remind everyone: a billion and a half stable revenue line, and we just tabled a \$9.4 billion deficit at \$60 oil. It's a stable line.

**Mr. Kasawski:** Given the government's hands are always tied when it comes to doing anything that actually helps Albertans, given "It's policy" and "It's the rules" are convenient excuses when they don't want to do something that will actually help Albertans and given they're always willing to change the rules to advance the separatist agenda but never willing to make tweaks necessary to give Albertans a break for the things like high costs of gas in

Alberta, why isn't the government willing to give Albertans that are spending a fortune for the fuel tax a break? Is it greed?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, no consistency on that side: you're spending too much; you're not spending enough; oh, there's a deficit. Look at the track record of the other side: running deficits while increasing taxes on Albertans, increasing taxes they didn't campaign on to make life more expensive. That's what you said you did it for. You wanted to change people's behaviour. You wanted them to walk. You wanted them to take a bus. Through the chair, through you to them, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the aisle we care about affordability every day. That's why we brought in this program, and we stand behind it, and we're going to do the right thing for the . . .

**The Speaker:** Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

## 2:40 Health Services in Rural Alberta

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Access to primary health care remains a priority for Albertans, particularly in rural and growing communities. Recent announcements have highlighted that clinics such as the Langdon medical clinic have received \$150,000 through the rural team recruitment grant program to support hiring, expanding patient access, and strengthen locally delivered care. To the minister of primary and preventative health: please explain how eligible clinics and community organizations can apply for this grant and clarify whether this funding remains available to clinics.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of health.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Increasing access to primary health care remains a top priority for our government, particularly in rural and growing municipalities. The rural team recruitment grant program launched its first intake in November of 2024, the second in September of 2025. Interested applicants can connect with my department or myself directly. If and when a new intake is launched, we will make sure to get in touch with them directly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. Given that recruiting and retaining physicians remains a challenge for many rural and growing communities and given that clinics and municipalities often need clear guidance on where to turn for support, to the same minister: can you please clarify who rural communities and primary care clinics should connect with to recruit doctors, including the role of Alberta Health Services, primary care networks, or ministry-supported recruitment programs?

**Member LaGrange:** I'm happy to, Mr. Speaker. Since physicians are independent practitioners, physician recruitment is a collaborative effort. Alberta's government has funded the Rural Health Professions Action Plan since 1991 to support the attraction and retention of physicians and other health care professionals for rural practice. Additionally, Primary and Preventative Health Services has a dedicated rural health branch that can also help find appropriate contacts or programs to support rural communities and clinics. We're always happy to help in any way we can.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. Given that municipalities are often on the front lines of supporting physician recruitment and retention in rural Alberta and given that rural communities rely on locally led physician recruitment and retention committees to attract and keep doctors, to the same minister: can you please confirm whether any funding is set aside to assist municipalities or community-based physician recruitment and retention committees with these efforts across rural Alberta today?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Municipalities are important partners in rural Alberta, and the province has supported communities through targeted, clinic-focused grant programming. For example, the Rural Health Professions Action Plan supports over 170 communities across the province through investment, training, and supports in community-based attraction, integration, and retention committees. We've also invested \$17.5 million from '24 to 2026 to support 132 medical residents through the rural and remote family medicine resident . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, in 30 seconds we will continue with the daily Routine.

## Members' Statements

*(continued)*

### Electoral Boundaries

**Member Tejada:** Trust the process. In the context of our democracy, it means reliable participation and respect for free and fair elections and for the processes that lead to those elections. Every eight to 10 years, an independent Electoral Boundaries Commission reviews and develops electoral maps based on public feedback and thorough analysis of population growth. This commission has five members: two UCP appointees, two from the NDP, and a chair appointed by the Premier. In the fall the commission proposed a map that was unanimously supported by all five of those members, and somewhere between then and now, the UCP-appointed members have come up with a new set of maps that no one has asked for. Did these two commissioners feel pressured by the UCP to come up with them?

The Electoral Boundaries Commission's work is critical for our democracy and should be boring and reliable. For over 30 years the commission presented its report and one set of maps to be implemented, but that's only if the government respects the process and accepts the majority report. Now the final report firmly warns the government that alternate maps are unconstitutional and are nothing short of gerrymandering.

Sadly, as we've seen several times with this UCP government, they don't respect processes, norms, or democracy. They change the rules when it suits them and have come back to the Election Act multiple times since 2023 to facilitate separatist referendums, impose partisanship on municipalities, and choose their voters.

Albertans believe in democracy. They trust democracy. What we've learned is that we can trust the process but we can't trust the UCP. This Assembly should adopt the report as presented. That is what Albertans expect from us as their MLAs to protect our democracy.

**The Speaker:** Calgary-East.

### Vaisakhi

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to recognize Vaisakhi, a vibrant and meaningful celebration observed here in Alberta and by millions of people around the world. Vaisakhi is traditionally celebrated as a harvest festival and the beginning of a new year. It is observed in areas of Bharat, India, such as Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Bangla and across the global diaspora, including places as far as Fiji islands. It is a celebration that reflects renewal, gratitude, and the importance of service in our communities.

For many Sikhs Vaisakhi holds deep religious significance and it marks the establishment of Khalsa in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh Ji, a defining moment that affirmed the values of equality, courage, faith, and service to humanity. Vaisakhi is celebrated through parades, visits to gurdwara, community prayers, shared meals, including langar, which is open to everyone, traditional music, bhangra dancing, devotional hymns, and gatherings bring communities together in a spirit of joy, reflection, and togetherness.

Here in Alberta Vaisakhi is closely connected to the principle of seva, selfless service. Albertans celebrating Vaisakhi practise the principle of selfless service every day through volunteerism, charitable initiatives, and support for neighbours in need. Alberta is home to a vibrant and growing Indian community, and their cultural traditions enrich communities across our province. Vaisakhi celebrations bring people together across backgrounds, beliefs, and reflect the openness and respect that define Alberta at its best.

On behalf of this Assembly, I extend warm wishes to all those celebrating Vaisakhi. May this time bring reflection, gratitude, community connection, and unity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Edmonton-Meadows.

### Emergency Medical Services

**Mr. Deol:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Four months ago, on December 22, forty-four-year-old Prashant Sreekumar arrived at the Grey Nuns community hospital ER suffering severe chest pain. He was triaged, but then he waited for more than eight hours in the waiting room to get help. Family members said that he repeatedly cried out in unbearable pain as his blood pressure rose dramatically. He ultimately died of apparent cardiac arrest.

Tragically, this was not an isolated case. Three patients died in the Grey Nuns ER that same day while under active care, but the situation is not getting better in our emergency rooms. Just last week a 42-year-old patient was stabbed in the emergency waiting room at the Royal Alexandra hospital, leaving the victim with life-threatening injuries. Patients, staff, and nurses witnessed the chaos in the waiting room packed with roughly 100 people in spaces designed for only 40. Witnesses described feeling terrified. Nurses said that the extreme volume has left them increasingly unsafe as staff struggle to remove high-risk individuals while fulfilling their duty of care.

The minister announced the hiring of triage liaison physicians in January to help reassess waiting patients and ease pressure on triage nurses. The promised deadline slipped in February, yet the UCP has still not confirmed any hiring of these positions.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to hear from my frightened constituents who worry whether they will receive timely care when they need it most. This UCP government record on health care stands out as the worst. They wasted public funds on corrupt care and left Albertans suffering. The UCP is living high off the hog. They wasted the

boom during the boom in Alberta and left Alberta health care crumbling, with Albertans paying the price.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans deserve better, and better is possible.

2:50

### Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

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

**Mr. Yao:** Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. As chair of the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund it is an honour to table the committee's annual report covering its activities for the 2025-26 fiscal year. This report fulfills the requirements of Standing Order 55 and section 6(4)(c) of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act. The report will also be made available on the Assembly website.

### Notices of Motions

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give oral notice of Bill 30, Expedited 120-Day Approvals Act, sponsored by the Minister of Energy and Minerals.

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

**Ms Pancholi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give notice that pursuant to Standing Order 42 at the appropriate time I intend to move the following motion.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier to dismiss the Minister of Justice from Executive Council due to his breach of public trust.

### Introduction of Bills

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services.

#### Bill 29

#### Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise and request leave to introduce Bill 29, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

This bill will enable Alberta's government to expand access to preventative health testing, giving Albertans more choice, shorter wait times, and better care. It also amends several health statutes, keeping Alberta's health legislation on pace with real-world needs and functions. This legislation is good for Alberta patients and good for our refocused health care system.

Therefore, I move first reading of the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

[Motion carried; Bill 29 read a first time]

### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** Sherwood Park.

**Mr. Kasawski:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling a table that's titled Carbon Levy Impact on Gasoline in Alberta Was 6.73 Cents a Litre.

**The Speaker:** Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

**Member Irwin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling the requisite number of copies of a CBC story posted on April 10, 2026. It is entitled Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Council, Non-profits Frustrated at Province's Homeless Funding Changes, and they say that they're getting less money since Alberta changed how the funding is distributed.

**The Speaker:** Any other tablings? Go ahead.

**Mrs. Petrovic:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the full Leap Manifesto, of which the newly elected leader of the federal NDP is a signatory, that is calling to scrap our oil production and a lot of other typical left-wing radical ideas.

Thank you. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

I apologize, hon. member. Sometimes people are getting up and down for other things, and I can't always tell whether it's for a tabling. My apologies, Livingstone-Macleod, for being slow there.

Lethbridge-West.

**Member Miyashiro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite copies from the National Association of Federal Retirees who have concerns with Bill 11, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2). This was also sent to members for Lethbridge-East, Cardston-Siksika . . .

**The Speaker:** No. You just get to read the tabling without the whole address list there.

Any other tablings? Seeing none.

Hon. members, I'm tabling today six copies of a letter I received from the Member for Grande Prairie, dated April 8, 2026, considering early consideration of Bill 207, Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes Amendment Act, in Committee of the Whole, and I'll have more to say about that shortly.

We are at points of order. The first point of order was called at about 1:55 today by the Government House Leader.

#### Point of Order

##### Allegations against a Member

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs called the point of order, but I am happy to argue the point of order. Rising on 23(h), (i), and (j), at the time noted, at around 1:55 with my unofficial records, the Leader of the Opposition was saying something to the effect of "where's the quid pro quo" to the Premier. "Did she get Kevin O'Leary out of the environmental . . ." and then the comments go on. Speaker Cooper has ruled in the past that you cannot do indirectly what you cannot do directly. In this instance the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that the Premier is taking kickbacks, a bribe, or something in return from Kevin O'Leary. This is wildly unparliamentary. It's frankly illegal, and to accuse another member, a member of good standing and the Premier of Alberta, of illegal activity is inappropriate, and I believe it's out of order under 23(h), (i), and (j), but I leave it in your hands.

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

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have a copy of the Leader of the Official Opposition's question, and he provided context about the Premier's close confidante Kevin O'Leary, the Premier's relationship with that individual, and then talked about how the wonder valley project has been exempted from environmental assessment. He went on to ask: was there a quid pro quo? I would say that given the context, it's a fair question because Mr. O'Leary is on record.

CityNews posted on January 24, 2025, an interview with Mr. O'Leary where he says regarding the Premier, and I quote, I had to take her to Washington and I took her to Mar-a-Lago. End quote. In a January 25 meeting, that person was present at that meeting in Mar-a-Lago, or that selfie at Mar-a-Lago. That same person also says about this project that we set up a call with her staffers and her, and she said: look, I won a court case, a litigation against Gerald Butts in 2023 where I got back my rights, and I can issue permits for a project like this in the province. End quote. That's a direct quote from, again, Kevin O'Leary. CityNews then says that the Premier's office was asked to confirm the details of the deal, including if Alberta is offering any tax breaks or subsidies, but her press secretary did not respond to repeated inquiries.

The question was simply about a concern that's out there with respect to Mr. O'Leary, a fair question about government business. Was there a quid pro quo? There was no allegation. This was a simple question. The Premier was given the opportunity to clarify the details of this project and the background of these negotiations, so it's a matter of public record, a matter of debate, a fair government business question.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Well, no one seems to be disputing what was said, but I'll say what's in the Blues anyway just to make it triply clear. "Every Edmontonian, and it could produce as much as double the greenhouse gas emissions of every vehicle in Alberta. To the Premier: where's the quid pro quo? Did she get Kevin O'Leary out of the environmental assessment?"

Well, here's the problem. The hon. Opposition House Leader, if all those things that the Opposition House Leader said had been said in the question, one could easily draw the conclusion that the person was referring to the newspaper articles, but as it stands it could certainly be that a person listening at home that doesn't read all the newspapers may well ask about whether the question was about doing something illegal. Because of that, it's a point of order, and I get it. You can't fit all the details in a 35-second question, but you need to fit enough details in that people are pretty sure that someone here hasn't been accused of perhaps committing a crime. Consequently, it's going to be required to apologize and withdraw that remark.

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

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

At 2:18 by the Deputy Opposition House Leader.

#### Point of Order

##### Imputing Motives

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j). At that time my colleague from Lethbridge was asking a question of the Minister of Justice about the Electoral Boundaries Commission report, and in response the minister said a number of things. Then he went on to say, "unlike that member who wants to disparage the hard work of these people who volunteered for this." I think that's a straight-up accusation on the member, that that's what he wants to do. Again, the question was about government business, government policy, and responding with that kind of accusation directly to an individual member: that is offside the rules of this House and should be ruled a point of order.

3:00

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, it would save a lot of time maybe if you could confirm if the quote from the member opposite is correct of what was said on the record.

**The Speaker:** In the interest of moving things along, I don't think the opposition will object to that because I was going to do that

anyways when my time came. “Spoke with thousands of Albertans, toured the province to try and get all [this] input and the information required, unlike that member who wants to disparage the hard work of [the] people who volunteered for this.”

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, given that’s the direct quote, you’ve ruled this out of order in the past, suggesting what someone wants or thinks, so that would be out of order. I’ll apologize and withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. That item has been dealt with and decided.

The third point of order is at 2:19 p.m. by the Government House Leader.

### Point of Order Parliamentary Language

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’ll be quick. At the time noted, the Minister of Justice was speaking and off the record but loudly enough for the Chamber to hear the Member for Edmonton-McClung was heard saying, “You have no shame.” Comments like this have been ruled out of order in the past under 23(h), (i), and (j). That member is commonly known to make wild, sporadic interjections, and I’ll leave it at that.

**The Speaker:** Just keep it . . .

**Mr. Schow:** Certainly, I’ll keep it to the facts here, Mr. Speaker.

I’m mostly pointing to a pattern that has been called out of order in the past.

**Member Ceci:** On you.

**Mr. Schow:** And I have apologized in the past where there have been points of order against me where I have been out of order, so I’d love if that member was to apologize and withdraw himself and show the House the same courtesy I do show.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you. I think the Government House Leader went on for too long. I agree with him that . . .

**The Speaker:** You know what? I kind of chastised him a little bit, and continuing debate here . . .

**Mr. Sabir:** All I want to say is that I agree with the Government House Leader. The member could have said that the government has no shame, but he used words that are out of order, so he will retract and apologize.

**Mr. Dach:** Apologize and withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Okay. That item is now dealt with and concluded.

### Motions under Standing Order 42

**The Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

#### Minister of Justice

Ms Pancholi:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier to dismiss the Minister of Justice from Executive Council due to his breach of public trust.

**Ms Pancholi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to Standing Order 42 to seek the unanimous consent of this House to proceed on an emergency debate and a vote on this motion, which calls on

the Premier to dismiss the Member for Calgary-Cross from his role as the Minister of Justice and from Executive Council due to his breach of the public trust. This minister no longer has the trust of Albertans to continue on in his role, and if the Premier will not take steps to immediately remove the minister from his position, it falls on this House to act.

This motion is urgent and pressing as a result of recent reporting on April 7 from the *Globe and Mail* while this House was on a constituency break. That reporting stated that the Minister of Justice brought forward amendments to the Election Act last year to shorten the amount of time Elections Alberta has to investigate political finance violations, and those amendments directly benefited the minister’s friend and family member Sam Mraiche, who was under investigation at the time by Elections Alberta. By failing to remove this minister despite his pattern of disrespect for Alberta’s democratic institutions and his continued actions to undermine these systems for the benefit of his friend, family member, and associate Sam Mraiche, the Premier is sending a message to Albertans that the UCP is either complicit in this clear conflict of interest or wilfully blind to the misconduct of their own Justice minister.

On April 7 the story was published by the *Globe and Mail*’s investigative reporter Carrie Tait. It revealed that while the Justice minister was pushing through legislation in this Chamber that restricted Elections Alberta’s window to investigate serious election fraud to just one year, the shortest timeline in Canada, the minister’s long-time friend, relative, and travel buddy Sam Mraiche was under investigation for massive, fraudulent political donations to the UCP. In fact, Mr. Mraiche refused to meet with Elections Alberta for an interview until after the Justice minister’s bill was forced through the House, which had the chilling effect of cutting off the investigation into Mraiche and associates mid-process. To put it clearly, Sam Mraiche personally and financially benefited from legislation that the Minister of Justice introduced and forced through the House.

It gets worse, Mr. Speaker. The media reports that the Justice minister left his own caucus members in the dark about these changes and how they would benefit Mraiche. It raises the question of what the Premier knew, and when was she aware that her minister was putting her government’s credibility on the line just to protect Sam Mraiche from Elections Alberta? Fundamentally, it shows that the Minister of Justice may have once again breached public trust by using his position to change laws to benefit his friend and family member.

The fact that the Minister of Justice did not think it was inappropriate to personally introduce these legislative changes, did not disclose this apparent conflict of interest to this Legislature, and did not recuse himself from all debate in this Chamber and at the cabinet table demonstrates, at best, a shocking lack of ethical awareness from this minister. In the past this type of conduct by any minister would immediately lead to that minister being removed from cabinet, and the Premier, back when she was Leader of the Opposition, would have led that charge. It’s absolutely insulting to the intelligence of Albertans for the UCP to suggest that the minister wasn’t aware that Mr. Mraiche was the subject of investigation by Elections Alberta. Mr. Mraiche is an extremely close friend and a family member of the minister, and they’ve spent plenty of time together, especially at playoff games in skyboxes.

This is just the latest revelation in a continued, worrying pattern of behaviour from the Justice minister. His actions show what certainly appears to be a willingness to intervene in Alberta’s independent judicial system and elections watchdog for political and arguably personal benefit to himself and his friends. Twice now he has rushed through legislation that bends the rules of our

democracy mid-game, whether to benefit separatists struggling to push forward with a petition that violates the Constitution and treaty rights or to bail out Sam Mraiche before he can get caught committing election fraud.

When the significant allegations of political interference and corruption by the UCP to award inflated contracts to Sam Mraiche were first made public in early 2025, the Minister of Justice stood in this House as the UCP spokesperson for months without disclosing to Albertans that Sam Mraiche was his close personal friend and family member. The Minister of Justice made decisions around appointing external legal counsel and directing government employees to direct all questions from the Auditor General to that legal counsel, again without disclosing to Albertans his close personal relationship with the subject at the heart of that investigation, Sam Mraiche.

Albertans expect the conduct of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, the chief counsel of the Crown, to be above reproach. Instead, he has changed the rules to make himself above the law, giving himself immunity from professional standards or sanction, unlike any other lawyer in this province. Given that the minister rewrote electoral laws to bail out Sam Mraiche from investigation and then gave himself immunity, it begs the question of what else Albertans will find out about this minister's conduct and actions in his role.

By moving this motion, we're giving the Premier and the government an opportunity to restore trust with Albertans by removing this minister and distancing themselves from these actions. It is urgent that this House take action now and urge the minister's removal. This minister's past behaviour shows that he cannot be relied upon to respond ethically and appropriately to the decisions and challenges Albertans face in the days ahead.

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in response on behalf of the government to the motion moved by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. She proposed the following motion. "Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier to dismiss the Minister of Justice from Executive Council." Yeah. I don't think so.

Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that this is clearly a tactic to malign the character of the Minister of Justice. This is a continued pattern in this Chamber. I'm happy to go through a number of the facts, but it is also interesting that the members opposite are relying upon an article in the *Globe and Mail* from Carrie Tait. Listen, I will take Carrie Tait's writings as seriously as I take dietary advice from Jabba the Hutt, okay?

The reality of this situation is that the Minister of Justice continues to act appropriately as the Minister of Justice. Now, as stated previously, the Minister of Justice was not aware of the investigation in question, and the government is not privy to information related to ongoing investigations conducted by Elections Alberta. Alberta's government has been very clear that the amendments contained in the Election Statutes Amendment Act in 2025 related to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer came into force on July 4 of 2025, and as the Ministry of Justice had said multiple times, it did not include a retroactive provision. In other words, Mr. Speaker, by not making the amendments related to investigations retroactive, the government's intent was to avoid impacting any ongoing investigations. Further, the bill in question amended hundreds of provisions in various acts in order to streamline processes and make our democratic system more accountable and transparent.

3:10

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to state once again for the Chamber and for those who are watching at home that the findings of Judge Raymond Wyant's report are clear. There is no evidence that the Premier, any minister, political staff member, or member of Alberta's public service acted inappropriately. I'm happy to repeat that if necessary. It's been repeated many times in this Chamber. The Minister of Justice has done an incredible job standing up for Albertans, defending our provincial sovereignty, and protecting the rights and freedoms of Albertans, and he will continue to do so while he acts in the role of Minister of Justice.

I do find it a bit ironic that the NDP is trying to accuse the government and its members of breaching public trust when they themselves never held public trust to begin with. Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite sit around there and they talk to Albertans that think that, you know, they're the ones that can be trusted. If they were so trustworthy, if they could run balanced budgets and deal with the many pressures that come to the province, they would have been in government. They've lost two elections in a row. [interjections] Now, what I can also say . . .

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order. Neither of these speeches are real pleasant for the other side, but we're going to hear both of them. Go ahead.

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, I think what's laughable is that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud and the NDP caucus and reality are in what I would call a long-distance relationship. Now, the reason they don't have the public confidence and the reason they're down several points, 17 to be exact, is because they all know that they invent false scandals and frivolous SO 42s to bring up issues that are honestly not worthy of coming before the government business and the private business of this House today.

For that reason I encourage all members of this Assembly to vote no when asking for unanimous consent to move forward with the SO 42 moved by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

[Unanimous consent denied]

### Statement by the Speaker

#### Private Members' Public Bills

**The Speaker:** That takes us to the other section we don't use every day here. Hon. members, I have a matter to discuss with the Assembly that has to do with the tabling that I made earlier this afternoon. The Member for Grande Prairie has requested that his private member's bill, Bill 207, Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes Amendment Act, be granted early consideration and be called in Committee of the Whole this afternoon. Since this is the first such request during the 31st Legislature, I will explain what the request entails. Currently Bill 207 is on the Order Paper with a due date of day 48, which is Monday, April 20, 2026. The member's request is for Bill 207 to be considered in Committee of the Whole today, day 44.

There is a protocol in place that has existed since 1997 in which a member who is the sponsor of a bill may request early consideration of that bill at a particular stage or in Committee of the Whole so long as the bill has passed the previous stage prior to making the request. In this case, Bill 207 received second reading on Monday, March 30, 2026. The protocol also provides that the bill for which early consideration has been requested must not take precedence over another private member's bill that has been adjourned at a particular stage, is being considered in Committee of the Whole but has not been reported to the Assembly, or is due to

be called in Committee of the Whole or moved for third reading in accordance with Standing Order 8(7). Currently there are no private members' public bills on the Order Paper which fall into any of these categories. Accordingly, following the Assembly's practices and precedents, I am granting the request for early consideration of Bill 207, which will be considered in the Committee of the Whole after Orders of the Day is called this afternoon.

For additional information on the matter of early consideration of private members' public bills I refer you to former Speaker Cooper's statement on December 8, 2022, which can be found on page 270 of *Hansard* for that day. I think I could editorially try to shorten all that down. If we don't do this, we basically won't have any private members' business to do this afternoon. It makes the Assembly more efficient if we actually spend the time that is scheduled for debating legislation on debating legislation.

**Orders of the Day**  
**Public Bills and Orders Other than**  
**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 207**  
**Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes**  
**Amendment Act, 2026**

**The Chair:** Are there members that would like to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

**Mr. Dyck:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Really appreciate it. I'm proud to rise to support this bill, Bill 207. I'm a big proponent of this type of bill, and I'm proud to present this, too, as we get into Committee of the Whole. This bill is more than just about curriculum, it's more than about classrooms, and it's more than just policy. This truly, at its heart, is about just bringing the opportunity and the future of Alberta to the whole and also to our students here across Alberta.

Now, a little bit of history here, Madam Chair. For generations Alberta has been built by people who work with their hands, who have risen early, who have braved the elements, and who understand that prosperity does not happen by accident. It is built, it is grown, it is harvested, it is engineered, and it is constructed day in, day out by Albertans who are in forestry, agriculture, energy, and the construction sectors. Yet today we face a pretty significant challenge. Across this province, both in Grande Prairie, in northern Alberta, central Alberta, right across this province, far too many young Albertans are graduating high school without a clear understanding of what these industries do, why they matter, or the incredible careers that they offer. That disconnect is what Bill 207 is really trying to fix.

Alberta's foundation and our industries are also experiencing workforce shortages, too, not because work has disappeared but because there's not always that awareness. We do need to see awareness, and kids need to be given the opportunity to see that in their education. So many students are told, either directly or indirectly, that success only comes through some narrower patterns while our primary industries that collectively drive Alberta's economy, industries that provide stable, high-paying, meaningful careers, are left out of the conversation often. This is particularly troubling when we consider that forestry, agriculture, energy, and

construction together form much of the backbone of our provincial economy. These sectors fuel our exports. They support hundreds of thousands of families, hundreds of thousands of jobs, generate revenue that pays for our hospitals. They pay for our schools and for our infrastructure across our province. Yet, as I mentioned, many students finish school without learning about how our food is grown, about how our homes are built, how our energy resources are developed across this province, and all through world-class environmental standards as well. These aspects are super important and also because innovation and environmental stewards go hand in hand with modern industry here in Alberta.

Bill 207 really does address this challenge directly and responsibly. Now, first and foremost, it does establish age-appropriate instruction in Alberta classrooms that teach Albertan students about the province's primary economic industries of forestry, agriculture, construction, and energy. Second, it ensures that this instruction explains the economic role of these industries, highlights modern environmental standards and innovation, and showcases real career opportunities as well. Importantly, this bill requires the minister to consult with industry leaders when setting curriculum standards. I think that's super important, that we have that real-world connectivity as well. This really ensures accuracy, it ensures relevancy, and it ensures that real-world alignment, not ideology, not theory but lived experience, also comes in. Those are important.

3:20

Once again, this isn't about promotion of certain industries; it's about educating our youth and educating our young people. It's not about telling students what to think; it is about giving them the information they need to make informed choices, and this is very much in line with Bill 25 as well.

Bill 207 also recognizes February 13 as fossil fuel recognition day. Alberta's fossil fuel industry has played a huge role in building this province. It has funded schools. It has funded hospitals and created communities. It's driven innovation both here and across Canada and across the world, all from Alberta, and helped position Canada as a global energy leader. Recognizing fossil fuel day is not about stopping progress; it's about recognizing that history, acknowledging where we came from, respecting the people who built this province, and having an honest, mature conversation about energy, employment, and stewardship. I do want to thank the member for bringing this up. Because he's done a great job of advocating for this, we were able to include this in the bill. We do want to acknowledge contributions made while continuing to innovate, and these two things are not mutually exclusive. They are both put together, and I'm super thankful for the opportunity to do this.

Madam Chair, this bill deeply matters to my region of Grande Prairie and northwestern Alberta, too. In forestry alone tens of thousands of Albertans are employed directly and indirectly, with many of those jobs located right in the Peace Country. Also, agriculture supports thousands of family owned farms feeding Canadians and exporting to markets around the world. As mentioned prior, Canada is one of six exporting nations of food across the world. This is significant, and our agriculture needs to be taught about how we are structuring that and how we're doing that.

Our region continues to see major energy development as well in Grande Prairie, including critical natural gas infrastructure that supports jobs, local businesses, municipal growth, and is able to influence the world as well.

Furthermore, in construction we're experiencing continued demand for tradespeople as our communities expand, housing

developments increase, and infrastructure is modernized. We're always going to need that aspect of construction in the mix.

Also, we're seeing some significant increase in the trades and skilled trades in Grande Prairie. Really proud of what Northwestern Polytechnic has done, expanding their automotive service technicians, expanding carpenters, heavy-equipment technicians, steam- and pipefitters, plumbers, welders, gas fitters. These are all things that, locally, Northwestern Polytechnic has done. They've been a great partner in that as well, and I can't say enough good things about Northwestern Polytechnic, their leadership and their growth opportunities in the area as they continue to build this out and support the trades.

It's an opportunity for young people to work in various industries. All of those industries are represented there, too, our primary industries, so super thankful for them. These upgrades are important, as I said, which do focus on awareness. There is a good building together to create a pipeline. This bill would create a pipeline from classroom to training to careers right here at home. This is also how we keep young people in our communities and how we strengthen rural Alberta, by giving jobs right there at home and being able to build those interests far before just choosing a career path, getting people engaged in this. I do believe Bill 207 aligns squarely with this government's commitment to economic growth, workforce development, and the skilled trades. All of those are vital, as our government is investing over \$3 billion across the various sectors that this bill addresses.

We have over \$421 million invested in forestry, nearly \$1 billion in agricultural investments, continued strategic investment in oil and gas, and approximately \$1.69 billion in construction and infrastructure here as well. These aren't just abstract numbers. These are job sites; they're apprenticeships; they're innovations and paycheques for Albertans, all significant. But investment alone is not enough. If young people are going to see themselves in these trades, they need to learn about them; they need to be educated about them. This is why this is such an important link to this career choice. Understanding what Alberta is built upon: this is super important.

Once again, I just want to continue talking about the trades for a sec. Trades careers are not a backup plan. They are not a second choice. They're essential to building Alberta's future. Electricians, carpenters, welders, heavy-equipment operators, and millwrights, all the people who take part in keeping our province running and running smoothly, all deserve respect, recognition, and representation in our education system as well. I think Bill 207, across the board, across these industries, sends a really powerful message. All paths are successful, all contributors deserve recognition, and Alberta's future depends on understanding some of these economic winds and economic realities.

Madam Chair, I do believe that Bill 207 is a common-sense, forward-thinking piece of legislation. It respects Alberta's history, it responds to today's workforce challenges, and it prepares young people for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow as well. This bill is about pride without apology and strong education as well, and it's about ensuring Alberta's next generation knows not only where they can go but where they also come from. This is why I would urge all members in our Assembly to support this piece of legislation, my Bill 207, and just want to thank the opportunity for this, too. I would encourage all members to support this.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 207 this afternoon and take into account some

of the comments made by the Member for Grande Prairie, the sponsor of this piece of legislation as a private member's bill, who just said a moment ago that this piece of legislation respects Alberta's history. I might remind the member that Alberta's history didn't start with Leduc No. 1. We go back 20,000 years or more, and we look at the history of Alberta First Nations people who occupied this land. Although I'm supporting this piece of legislation, this private member's bill, I wish it did have in it a recognition that Alberta's history started well earlier than the Industrial Revolution.

Indigenous population in this province occupied these lands for approximately 20,000 years. Carbon dating is going even further back into history, Madam Chair, to show that may be even a longer period of occupation. During that time frame, when we talk about respecting Alberta's history and we're talking about the various provincial industries and recognizing them, look at the history of First Nations in this province.

You know, we just had a land acknowledgement this afternoon, as we do on every Monday, yet this legislation and the lens that this government looks through when generating legislation seem to forget that the history of this province doesn't start when Europeans first arrived at it. It starts 20,000 years before then when, of course, Indigenous people in this province were primarily involved in industries that were involving land stewardship and resource management, sustainable land occupation so that when Europeans arrived, Madam Chair, it was a land of plenty. It was a land that didn't have the difficulties of pollution and so forth that we face now. We saw that the First Nations people provided their own medicine from the land. They gathered their own foods for 20,000 years. They had a community responsibility to the land, and that's something that I think this piece of legislation should have incorporated into its history of Alberta, and it doesn't do that.

Now, granted, the member does rightly herald the many significant industries that we've enjoyed having in this province. The energy, agriculture, forestry, and parks industry: it's all been something that we've benefited from. I mean, Madam Chair, I worked in the industry. I know exactly what crude oil smells like. I worked on a service rig. When they have a bit of an overflow at the pipe when you open up the wellhead, you get covered in this stuff. The way to wash that off is first of all with diesel fuel and then with gasoline to get the diesel off, and then you wash three times with heavy detergent soap and you actually might be able to go home. The crude oil is a difficult thing to wash off.

We on this side of the House as New Democrats have always supported the economy, including oil and gas and agriculture, and we respect the fact that there have been multitudes of working people in both these industries, and that is something that we should be proud of and something that we on this side of the House are happy to promote. We are the party, Madam Chair, that actually built a pipeline to tidewater. We're proud of that. It was the first pipeline our province has had in decades, and we look forward to seeing the optimization of the TMX pipeline and perhaps even a secondary pipeline to tidewater along the same route. We celebrate the oil and gas industry but, of course, in a way that is sustainable and respects the land and the responsibility we have to steward the land so that it is, for seven generations forward, there in perpetuity.

3:30

Now, we've just launched our energy plan, Madam Chair, and this plan will bring a robust economic investment and growth to industry, create more jobs, and ensure Alberta's energy economy is responsive to the changing world. That's not something that is antithetical to New Democrats. We are involved in promoting the development of resources in our oil and gas sector, forestry sector,

in the agricultural sector. We're in a position to feed the world, in particular with respect to agriculture and diversifying that, but always – always – keeping in mind the need to make sure that the environment is protected so that generations beyond ours have the same opportunities. When it comes to the development of, say, coal mining, we are very, very concerned that we'll have the pollution of our fresh water from the eastern slopes of the Rockies actually put at risk our irrigated farmland, not to mention our North Saskatchewan River watershed as well.

While this bill properly does herald the achievements of our industries and make sure that students in our province understand the primary roles and significant roles of the major industries in this province, whether it be energy, agriculture, forestry, et cetera, I think that this bill misses the mark by not going back far enough and recognizing the establishment of resource stewardship and stewardship of the land as a fundamental requirement for any future generation of Albertans, including this one, to make sure that the land is there for future generations to work on and to extract resources from and it doesn't get destroyed in the process. I would applaud the member for bringing forward this piece of legislation to make sure that future generations understand the fundamental industries that have caused us to generate wealth and employment over generations, but I implore the member to make sure that included in that instruction is also an understanding of the fundamental requirement that the land be preserved for generations in perpetuity.

With that, Madam Chair, I will cede my time and allow others to pontificate. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Are there others? The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

**Member Kayande:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's my honour to stand on Bill 207, the Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. I want to echo some of my colleague from Edmonton-McClung's statements around: the history of hydrocarbon development in this province did not begin with Leduc No. 1. It certainly precedes that for many thousands of years. In fact, Peter Pond in 1778 wrote accounts of the First Nations folk in the Athabasca River valley who were the first to use the bitumen that outcropped along the river valley, mix it with spruce tree sap and other forms of pitch in order to seal their canoes. It was certainly a resource that was known and existed for a very long time.

Then to extract the oil from it actually took a significant amount of fundamental research work by this government and was really the focus of a lot of Peter Lougheed's work back when oil sands were considered unconventional resources. Lougheed's work on ensuring that Alberta would have a hydrocarbon resource potential in perpetuity was driven by understanding the oil sands physically and putting in place the technological solutions in order to extract that resource. Today, thanks to Lougheed's vision, we can directly account for well over 3 million barrels a day of production that came from the SAGD process that was developed by Roger Butler and others at the University of Alberta.

Before there was Leduc No. 1, of course, there was Turner valley down in my neck of the woods, south of Calgary. Turner valley was discovered in 1914, and it was a wet gas field, which means that it had a significant amount of natural gas liquids. Difficult to extract, and sadly, natural gas at the time didn't have a lot of market because there weren't a lot of pipelines built, so the natural gas was, unfortunately and sadly, simply flared off. At the time Turner valley had the – oh, dear. This is unparliamentary. It had a word describing it referring to the underworld, as the underworld's half acre. Sadly,

it meant that a lot of the productive potential of the Turner valley oil resource, when it was eventually discovered, was unfortunately not able to be realized. When you have an oil resource with a gas cap over top, when you produce the gas cap out, it means that the oil resource unfortunately becomes immobile, and to some extent that happened in Turner valley. There's still a lot of oil there for anybody who wants to figure out how to actually get it out.

Leduc No. 1 in 1946, followed by the play that really made Alberta, I would say. Leduc was a reef. These are Devonian aged, about 400 million years old, reef complexes back when continental drift had Alberta being actually very tropical. These reefs, like the Bahamas, are laid down as a platform over time, and then the little critters that build reefs actually build, like, little pinnacles. The oil was found in those pinnacles like little strands of pearls that just extend along common, what would have probably been at the time, atolls. Very exciting because by understanding what Devonian geology looked like in Alberta, you could get kind of a reproducible return on investment, which is the most important thing.

You know, dry holes are extremely expensive because you spend all the money but you get no oil out of it. To solve that dry hole problem, the Cardium really became Alberta's first supergiant field, maybe by some accounts the only supergiant conventional field that we have. This is a blanket sand that covered a large portion of Alberta. Now, these are much newer. Alberta wasn't at tropical latitudes then, although the climate was much warmer at the time, and before the Rockies had begun construction in the Cretaceous, this was very shallow here. So it was a shallow inland sea that then, as the Rockies mountain building took place, as happens in foreland basins, kind of drove the shales that fed the Cardium downwards into the hydrocarbon kitchen where they could start cooking off oil. And then it was the mountain building of the Rockies, the erosion of sands across into these inland seas that created the sandstones that trapped that oil. An amazing play.

It was my privilege to go into my daughter's grade 6 class many years ago and talk about how the Cardium really created the Alberta that we know today. I'm fully in favour of talking about our hydrocarbon legacy and our hydrocarbon potential and, frankly, our energy potential, which in the future will also include not just oil sands, not just conventional oil, not just unconventional gas but also electricity and renewables, will also include critical minerals.

3:40

Really, what the people of Alberta are begging for is a Lougheed-style focus on Alberta's energy future, and I want to let the people of Alberta know that the Alberta NDP firmly stands with folks who want to develop our resources responsibly. We are in favour of and in fact ended up building the first pipeline to tidewater in 70 years. We are the party that builds pipelines. Other folks just talk about why they can't.

It's also, I think, important when we talk about our legacy and our future as an energy superpower that we really think about how to be a superpower in all forms of energy rather than picking and choosing, really doing the same thing that Lougheed did when he looked at the oil sands and said: there's a resource here, and I'm going to help get the job done.

And that's what I stand for. I have 20-plus years in energy. I helped some of the largest energy investors in the world allocate their energy portfolios. I've done a lot of work on capital allocation in energy markets. Energy has been very, very good to me and good to my family, and I'm fully in favour of teaching children that energy has also been very, very good for the people of Alberta.

Now, just one criticism of this bill, I guess. On this side of the House we brought in a number of bills in this session: one to prevent restaurant owners from stealing their workers' tips; another, the no-

more-skyboxes legislation to clean up government; another to reduce electricity prices by enhancing battery storage; another to ensure that Alberta becomes accessible to all, even those who have disabilities. Those are all bills that address the key affordability challenges that Albertans have, and I only wish that this bill had something that addressed the affordability problem that I hear door-knocking in front of my constituents every week.

With that, Madam Chair, I'm happy to cede the rest of my time. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Are there others? The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

**Mrs. Sawyer:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to speak in support of Bill 207. At this stage of debate it is important to focus on why this bill is necessary, why it is reasonable, and why it deserves the support of this Assembly. The central argument for this legislation is straightforward. Alberta's education system should reflect the realities of Alberta's economy. That is not currently happening to the extent that it should.

We have built one of the most resource-rich and opportunity-filled economies in the country, yet many students move through their entire K to 12 experience without gaining a meaningful understanding of the industries that sustain it. This is not a criticism of educators, Madam Chair; it is a structural gap. Curriculum time is limited, and without clear direction, critical areas can be underemphasized. Bill 207 provides that direction in a measured and appropriate way by ensuring that instruction about Alberta's primary industries is included and delivered in an age-appropriate manner.

Some may ask: "Why is this necessary? Should students not simply discover these opportunities on their own?" The reality is that they often do not. Career awareness is heavily influenced by exposure. If students are not introduced to certain industries, if they do not understand what those industries do or the careers that they offer, they are far less likely to pursue them. That has real consequences. Alberta is currently facing persistent labour shortages in our key sectors such as construction, energy, agriculture, and forestry. These are not temporary gaps. They are structural challenges that affect productivity, project timelines, and economic growth.

Employers are not just looking for workers; they're looking for skilled, knowledgeable individuals who understand the nature of the work and see a future in it. That's key: see a future in it. At the same time we have young Albertans who are uncertain about their career paths, who may feel that their options are limited, or who are not aware of the rewarding opportunities available outside of more traditional academic routes. Bill 207 addresses both sides of that equation. It connects supply with demand not by forcing outcomes but by improving awareness.

Another argument in favour of this bill is that it strengthens informed choice. There is sometimes a misconception that highlighting trades and primary industries somehow narrows students' options. In fact, the opposite is true. A student cannot choose a path that they do not understand or are not even aware of. By providing clear, factual information about these sectors, we are expanding the range of choices available to them. This is especially important when we consider the persistent stigma that can exist around trades and hands-on careers.

For too long there has been an implicit hierarchy in how we talk about postsecondary pathways. University is often presented as the default or preferred option while trades are treated as an alternative. That framing does a disservice not only to students but to the industries that rely on our skilled tradespeople. Bill 207 helps

correct that imbalance. It does so not through rhetoric but through education. By integrating knowledge of these careers into the classroom, we normalize them. We present them as what they are: essential, skilled, and valuable professions that offer strong wages, job security, and opportunities for advancement.

Madam Speaker, I also want to address the argument that this type of content doesn't belong in the classroom. I suggest that understanding one's own provincial economy is a fundamental component of a well-rounded education. We already teach students about history, geography, civics so that they can understand the society that they live in. Teaching them about the industries that underpin that society is a natural extension of that goal. This is not about advocacy. It is about literacy: economic literacy, career literacy, and practical awareness. Students should graduate not only knowing how to analyze a text or solve an equation but also with a basic understanding of how their province functions and where they might fit in within it.

With respect to the fossil fuel recognition day included in the bill, I know there may be differing views. However, the argument in its favour is grounded in historical recognition, not political positioning. Alberta's development has been profoundly shaped by its energy sector. The discoveries in Turner Valley in 1914 and Leduc in 1947 were not just economic events; they were transformative moments that altered the trajectory of this province. Entire communities were built, infrastructure was expanded, and public services were strengthened as a result. Recognizing that history through an annual day is consistent with how we acknowledge other foundational aspects of our past. It does not preclude discussions about the future of energy or the importance of environmental stewardship. In fact, a full understanding of our history can better inform those conversations.

And while we might rightly emphasize energy and the skilled trades as pillars of Alberta's economy, we must also recognize agriculture as a foundational primary industry that deserves the same consistent place in our curriculum. Agriculture is not only a major economic driver in this province; it is deeply tied to food security, rural vitality, and our long-term sustainability. When students regularly learn about agriculture not as a one-off presentation but as an integrated part of their education they gain a clearer understanding of how science, technology, business, and stewardship come together in one of Alberta's most essential sectors.

There's also a growing disconnect between young people and where their food comes from. Many students can navigate sophisticated technology but have little understanding of how food is grown, how it's raised, processed, or transported. Embedding agriculture into the curriculum helps close that gap. It builds food literacy, respect for our producers, who are phenomenal, and an appreciation for the complexity and innovation involved in modern farming and ranching. Programs like ag in the classroom and ag for life do important work, but their impact is strongest when it is reinforced through regular, structured learning, not left to occasional guest speakers or optional programming.

**3:50**

Finally, integrating agriculture throughout the curriculum strengthens career awareness and workforce development while helping to bridge the rural-urban divide. Today's agriculture sector needs far more than just producers in the field. It relies on agronomists, veterinarians, equipment technicians, data analysts, environmental scientists, food and bioproduct specialists, and entrepreneurs who support and strengthen the entire food system. These careers reflect a modern, evolving industry that blends practical skills with science, problem solving, and innovation. By

teaching agriculture consistently, we show students, whether they grow up in a town or on a farm, that this industry offers diverse, high-skill, and future-focused career opportunities. I can tell you that, as someone who comes from a community who had a teacher passionate about it and found a way to put it into our curriculum where she could, where they got to see the businesses, kids had their eyes opened to industry that they did not know was an option. It's important. We want young Albertans to value and participate in our primary industries. Agriculture must be treated not as an add-on but as a core part of how we educate the next generation.

Another important argument for this bill is that it is balanced and practical in its implementation. It does not prescribe rigid curriculum content or impose undue burdens on educators. Instead, it sets an expectation that this knowledge be included and allows for flexibility on how it's delivered. That is an important distinction. It respects the professionalism of teachers while ensuring that key subject matter is not overlooked.

Madam Speaker, if we step back and look at this legislation as a whole, it is difficult to argue against its core objectives. It aims to better inform students, address labour shortages, elevate the status of essential careers, elevate those careers, and recognize the historical foundations of our economy. These aren't controversial goals; they are common-sense priorities. The question before us is whether we are willing to take a modest, thoughtful step to align our education system more closely with the realities of our beautiful province.

Bill 207 answers that question in the affirmative. It does so in a way that is respectful. It's balanced and focused on outcomes that benefit both individuals and the broader economy. For those reasons, I encourage all members of the Assembly to please support the bill.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to rise and to speak to Bill 207. I do find there's a little bit of an irony in this conversation that we're having right now. The reason that I say that is that I do want to go down a little bit of a history lane, as the mover of the bill did as well, around what is actually going on right now in curriculum in Alberta.

[Mr. Rowswell in the chair]

As many people know, the curriculum review started in 2019. The intention of that curriculum review was to do consultation, to speak to teachers, to speak to parents, to speak to communities about how we update and move forward our education system. How are we making sure that our curriculum is relevant to what is going on in today's society? How do we make sure that students are prepared for when they leave their education system, that they're going to be able to work in our workforce, to be able to have that understanding of opportunity and to understand the history of Alberta? That started in 2019. Who was in government in 2019? Oh, I don't know, the current government was in government in 2019.

What's been really interesting is that now we have a piece of legislation that's sitting in front of the House that's talking about curriculum review implementation and ensuring that pieces of the curriculum are speaking to what certain members of the government caucus believe are important.

Now, the other irony of that is that we currently have a bill in front of the House by the minister of education, who is trying to remove, potentially, teachers being able to talk about different things within curriculum and to bring those things into their

classrooms and to talk about those things. Yet we've just heard the member opposite talking about how she had an amazing teacher growing up who had a great passion about agriculture and was able to bring it into her classroom and teach her students about it because she believed in it and it was a passion of hers and she could provide great education to her students.

But it wasn't in the curriculum. If that's a great experience and a great opportunity to talk about the future, to give our students an opportunity to learn about things, to experience opportunities to talk about what they can potentially be looking at as they move forward in their future, why do we have two bills in the House right now that contradict each other? It doesn't make any sense. You can't, on one hand, say that we want teachers to talk about these things and to bring them in and to expose our students to these opportunities and then, on the other hand, have a government saying: but it only has to align with our value; it can't align with anybody else's value, or they can't talk about it. Like, if we're going to say: well a teacher has to be able to come in and be respected and to be able to have the ability for fluidity on what they're talking about and to be able to bring our students out and expose them to these opportunities and we respect that as long as it's under these four categories . . .

**Mr. Stephan:** Yep.

**Ms Sweet:** That was amazing. Thank you to the Member for Red Deer-South to say: yep, as long as it's those four things. In other words, it can't be anything that the government disagrees with. Good to know. Absolutely good to know. That's not how education is supposed to work.

If we go back to the history of how we got here, in 2019 a curriculum review was created. It was to consult with parents and educators and professionals that understood what was going on. Since 2019 we have seen implementation of curriculum changes for K to 9 students. During those consultations with the current government do you know what happened? Forestry came forward and gave recommendations about things that they would have liked to have seen added to the curriculum. Many folks that I know in agriculture came forward and provided feedback about where they thought that bringing the agricultural curriculum into different age groups made sense. I know of many industries that came forward and said: "We're willing to help. We're willing to be part of this process, and we know where it fits." In fact, many of those agencies and those businesses were already doing that work. How many kids went out and planted little seedlings when we were kids? It was forestry. Talking about food and where it comes from: those opportunities existed in the curriculum.

Then the government decided to start doing a review. So if there is a current gap right now, it's not because industry hasn't been trying to do this. It hasn't been because teachers haven't said: we want to teach this. It's because the government – we're now in 2026 – started a review in 2019, for some reason still hasn't finished it seven years later and hasn't implemented any of the recommendations that have been provided. So is oil and gas important? Yes. Is agriculture important? Absolutely. Is forestry important? Absolutely. But why isn't it already in the curriculum? Why has it taken seven years for this government to just start implementing some of the curriculum?

[Ms Pitt in the chair]

Let's look. On the website as of today – really exciting news, friends – in September 2025 the new social studies curriculum for grade 4 to grade 6 was finally introduced to be implemented. The 7 to 9 curriculum is going to happen in three phases – exciting news – field testing this year, '25 to '26; piloting, not sure what the

difference between field testing and piloting is but I guess we'll find out, '26 to '27; and, finally, we're going to implement it in '27-28, the grade 7 to grade 9 curriculum. So sure, we can stand here and talk about the importance of all of this, but why is it taking – it will be 12 years from the beginning of the curriculum review for this government to even start talking about implementation for grade 7s to grade 9s in social studies.

I know why. The government doesn't actually want us to be able to implement these changes. We keep seeing session after session after session this government changing the goalposts for teachers. Now, this session, you can't bring in something that isn't in the curriculum that doesn't make sense. Well, if that's the case, then kids wouldn't be exposed to the amazing things that one of our colleagues just spoke about, wouldn't be able to go do field trips to a farm based on what is currently in the curriculum, because for some reason agriculture was, like, cleaned out for a while there and it's been asked to be brought back in. So based on what the government is doing, it doesn't matter if we vote in favour of this bill or not; the government won't implement it anyway because it's based on one teacher's opinion on whether or not it's important.

And then the best part about it is that we're going to encourage kids to get into these jobs, and then we've gutted postsecondary to the point where they can't even get into an apprenticeship. They can't go to Olds College because some of the programs don't even exist anymore. Lakeland College has had cuts. We see NAIT and SAIT: kids are trying to get in to do trades, and they can't get an apprenticeship.

4:00

Sure. Write a private member's bill that supports talking about the idea of something, but the government is not going to actually implement anything to give our young people the opportunity to do it. You need to bring back the STEP program so that kids can actually get access to employment opportunities so they can gain that experience.

I'm not opposed to the bill, but I just think it completely disconnects from what the cabinet is doing and what the government has decided to do and what this bill is trying to do. At some point I would love to see the government get on the same page with each other and clear a decision about where they want to go and maybe get this curriculum review done.

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

**Mr. Kasawski:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Happy to get up and speak about Bill 207, the Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. You know, the Alberta New Democrats have always supported the economy, including oil and gas, agriculture, construction, and forestry industries, and we're future focused on the industries that are coming. We're the party that built the pipeline to tidewater, from my riding of Sherwood Park to the port of Vancouver and Burnaby, the first pipeline our province has had in over four decades. The UCP has never built a pipeline, so I guess they have to pass bills to say that they really appreciate oil and gas because they don't do anything to show that they appreciate it. Because of Alberta's New Democrats thousands of Albertans have been employed to build, maintain, and run the Trans Mountain pipeline.

We've just launched our own energy plan, which I'll get to, and this plan will bring about robust investment, grow the industry, create more jobs, and ensure Alberta's energy economy is responsive to the changing world.

Side note: house sales in Sherwood Park are doing great, Madam Chair; 18 days on the market for a typical house. Good things are happening in Sherwood Park here, where we're adjacent to the

Industrial Heartland, and we have the Strathcona Industrial Association, which, you know, commonly is called Refinery Row, in part of my riding.

We want to keep those things going. We want to keep things growing. We just don't want to do it with all this talk about the government's separatist agenda. I've had a discussion with members of the Industrial Heartland Association who are working to try and develop more industry in Alberta to try to attract more investment, who are talking to investors from around the world. One told me that they started off a meeting for a \$200 million investment. The second question by the investors: what's going on with Alberta's separatism? It is a massive distraction that is slowing down the excitement of what could continue to happen in Alberta's Industrial Heartland, all this silly talk about separatism.

You know, we know the Trans Mountain starts in Sherwood Park, so I took it upon myself with a member from Calgary. We went and visited ministers in the government of Manitoba to discuss the opportunity for the port of Churchill. Can we deliver natural gas there, bring it from the Alberta Industrial Heartland to the port of Churchill? There is interest and excitement in that opportunity, and it could become one of the major projects that the federal government is investing in.

Coming from Sherwood Park, the Industrial Heartland, the refineries are a part of our identity. You cannot mistake it because we sit elevationwise, geographywise just a little bit higher than Edmonton. When we look as the sun is setting, we can see the refineries, and when we drive back and forth to Edmonton every day, we're driving past those refineries. It is a part of our identity in Sherwood Park. We have a strong understanding of it. We must know that before there was a Sherwood Park, there was just a lot of farmland and a small little town.

**Member Irwin:** Campbelltown.

**Mr. Kasawski:** Campbelltown. Thank you very much for remembering.

The beginning of Sherwood Park was to be a worker town for the Imperial Oil refinery, which we had attracted here during more stable times. It was an exciting thing to be able to bring in that refinery, and we've seen a community grow. That started with the Imperial Oil refinery, but now Sherwood Park has diversified so much more. We're focused on the future.

We have in my riding AltaSteel. Capital Power has operations. Celanese has operations. Enbridge has operations. Gibson Energy has operations. Imperial Oil is still growing and is adding renewable fuel to their operations. Keyera Corporation has got a big presence in my riding; Owens Corning; the Pembina Pipeline Corporation, who are also looking at opportunities for expansion at the port of Burnaby; Rio Tinto; Suncor. Of course, the Trans Mountain is in my riding. We want to look to ways to keep growing and expanding in a healthy, sustainable way so that Sherwood Park can keep on thriving.

Our plan from the Alberta New Democrats will be to optimize the Trans Mountain expansion because it can be found that we can get another 300,000 barrels per day of additional capacity on that pipeline that was created, as I'll remind everybody, with a New Democrat government in Alberta. We want to keep on working with Indigenous communities and other governments on the opportunity for the west coast pipeline options. We think that using that Trans Mountain expansion pipeline right away, that has already been approved with a New Democrat government, will be the best way to get new routes and expanded routes for our products to the world.

We also want to explore new export routes, which is why discussion on the port of Churchill is an interesting one. If Canada

wants to take on a project like the railways of sovereignty, of nation building, an Energy East project is something that would also be interesting. We need to increase our natural gas export capacity to strengthen our domestic energy stability and reach international markets, and we need to get renewables back into the mix. This government took an industry that was thriving, that was providing workers with the opportunity to work throughout the province, and killed it so that 99 per cent of renewable energy projects were killed by this government and are not coming back until there is going to be a change in the government.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

Lastly, I think I'll bring up, Mr. Chair – I want to look at working on strategy for world-class critical minerals. We know that all throughout Canada there's great opportunity, and we need a place to have those minerals refined and prepared for market. I think that the Industrial Heartland is going to be the place to do it.

Bill 207: I think it's fine to recognize the place that fossil fuels have played in our province, but let's stay focused on the future and diversify our economic opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Deputy Chair:** Are there any others? The Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to rise today to speak on this very exciting piece of legislation, Bill 207. This bill, the Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, will establish a province-wide fossil fuel recognition day, and it takes place annually on February 13. It will also establish age-appropriate instruction for Alberta classrooms on the province's primary economic industries. This is long overdue. In many ways the province we know and love today owes its existence to fossil fuels. The wealth that we've been able to extract from below our feet has changed our province from a small agrarian society to the fourth-largest province in the country. With this wealth we've built hospitals, schools, roads, and bridges in every corner of the province. With this wealth we've been able to fund world-class services while keeping taxes low. It is with this wealth that we have been able to build the most livable society in the world despite our climate and geographic isolation.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the oil industry pioneers who risked it all in search of black gold. How did we get here, and what started it all? Well, we've heard a little bit about the history this afternoon, and I'm going to go a little bit more. We have to go all the way back to the spring of 1914. At that time Alberta was not the heavy hitter that it is today. There had been some exploration and drilling activity in the Waterton region before 1905, but it had yielded little in the way of economic activity. The young province, not even 10 years old, was mainly agricultural and rural at the time. Due to our location east of the Rockies, west of the rest we were still the smallest of the prairie provinces.

While growing rapidly, there were only approximately 470,000 people living in Alberta in 1914. That year on May 14 a well bore in Turner Valley hit a major natural gas deposit, becoming the first major producing field in western Canada. A boom quickly followed, and nearby Calgary quickly became the hub for the Canadian oil and gas industry. Over the following decades more discoveries would be found near Turner Valley, and by 1939 there were 70 wells in the area.

4:10

This fundamentally changed the Alberta way of life. No longer limited to cattle and crops, crude now dominated the economy. By the 1940s Turner Valley was producing 95 per cent of Canada's

petroleum production. We had been put on the path of resource extraction, and now that it had been proven that there were riches buried below the ground, more exploration was started. There were many failures. Areas that should have been home to major deposits didn't yield good results, and there was a possibility that extraction might be limited to the Turner Valley region.

That all changed on February 13, 1947. We heard a little bit about Imperial Oil this afternoon. Well, they had been conducting some seismic research across central Alberta the year before, with results suggesting major deposits might exist in the region. They had already drilled 133 dry wells in search of these deposits. Now, think about that: 133 wells drilled without a single drop of oil. Naturally, the company was inclined to hedge their losses and just give up. They didn't. They decided to drill one last well, number 134 if you're keeping track. Starting in November of 1946, they began to drill, and that well has come to be known as Leduc No. 1. After finishing drilling in the new year and with promising early results, there was hope that this would be the one. So on February 13, 1947, in front of a small crowd of locals, politicians, and Imperial Oil staff, the valve was opened, and oil and gas spewed out of that well before being set alight by the crew. The modern Alberta oil boom had begun.

The Leduc No. 1 discovery unlocked a massive new field in the Edmonton region, and the knowledge that was gained helped with the discovery of other producing fields across this province. Edmonton transformed from a small government centre to the beating heart of the oil industry, filled with service companies, refineries, and upgraders. The flood of wealth from oil extraction spilled into other industries, and workers and families flooded into the province to be part of this boom. Alberta would never be the same again. Boom towns sprang up across the province, and Alberta was transformed over the decades to be a major player not only in the country but on the world stage.

We've come a long way from the early days of Turner Valley and Leduc, Mr. Chair, but oil and gas remains the dominant industry in the province. Even if you don't work directly in the industry, oil and gas still affects the lives of Albertans every day and is the cornerstone of our economy, our culture, and our way of life. That's why I'm so excited about this bill, and I thank my colleague from Grande Prairie for bringing this forward.

By celebrating the origins of Alberta's modern fossil fuel industry with an annual day of recognition, we're highlighting their impact in shaping Alberta's economic story for well over a century. We ought to be proud of the contributions fossil fuels have made not only to our province but for all of Canada as well. Oil and gas products are our number one export as a country to this day, and it's vital that we recognize their importance to our economy. This industry is recognized for producing ethical oil under strong environmental protection standards. We need to make sure our students and our citizens are aware of this fact and proud of it. We make great contributions to this country, and much of that is thanks to our fossil fuel industry.

So let us be proud. Let us be the cheerleaders for our industry and the men and women who worked so hard to build this province. To my friends and colleagues in this Assembly: I invite you to join me in supporting this great bill.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you.

I'll recognize the Member for Lethbridge-West.

**Member Miyashiro:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know what? I think that recognizing our industries in Alberta is not a bad idea. I think it's something that we need to celebrate, all the different

things that we do to help our economy grow. I grew up in Taber. We were the heartland of oil field service in southern Alberta. We had hockey teams named, sponsored by oil well companies and drilling companies. In fact, I was on the Bluebird Drillers, so we had the fancy light blue Pittsburgh Penguins' style shirts.

But there's also a point where we need to – because we're all so aware of how important oil and gas is to our economy, and it almost needs to go without saying that we need to actually look at other things that we need to do as well to celebrate in our economy and in our province. If you look at things like diversification, how we need to celebrate, think about renewables. In just three years the Alberta New Democrats brought in \$13 billion of new investment in the energy sector, and we promoted diversification in the economy and actually led the country in renewables investment. There were hundreds of jobs created, and the amount of good that it did, especially for rural communities, in property tax revenue – I think you just need to talk to some of those municipalities to understand what that did for them, to have that kind of development.

You know, I'm going to focus more on agriculture because, again, growing up in Taber and now in Lethbridge, we celebrate agriculture all the time. When you look province-wide, the primary agriculture industries employ about 45,000 people and probably in the broader agrifood industry about another 40,000. Agrifood exports were nearly \$18 billion in '23, making it one of the largest industries in our province. Farm cash receipts alone in '23 were \$23.3 billion. We have to remember that Alberta also leads Canada in beef production. In fact, just outside of Lethbridge: the highest concentration of cattle feedlots in the country, which we call fondly Feedlot Alley. Not so good when the wind is not blowing because there's a little haze over the land. We look at canola and wheat, the largest crops by value by far in our province.

One thing that some of you in this Assembly might not be aware of is that there's a stretch from just outside of Lethbridge to past Taber that's called Canada's premier food corridor. That food corridor is a great, dynamic partnership of communities that are dedicated to advancing the agrifood sector. This region offers unparalleled access to major markets, transportation routes, industry support, creating the ideal environment for business growth and success. You know, that food corridor is also recognized as a leading destination for food processing, home to international food companies, an expanding network of niche innovators and researchers with well-established logistics and supply chains. We look at how seamless their access is to the transportation, distribution, and essential industry infrastructure. We also have federal and provincial research stations there. A number of industry associations are based in southern Alberta.

Economic development organizations provide valuable resources that actually foster collaboration and innovation. In southern Alberta that premier food corridor produces about \$8 billion in GDP, \$4.2 million of farmland, 4,470 farms, 65-plus specialty crops. You're going to know these. I'm going to name off some of the producers and processors in southern Alberta that contribute to that food corridor: dairy processors like Parmalat, Agropur, Crystal Springs Cheese; Black Velvet distilling, which has been in Lethbridge for decades; Broxburn Vegetables, which provides fresh vegetables to restaurants across the province; Cavendish Farms and McCain, Lamb Weston, frozen potato product processors. Cavendish Farms is the largest single private investment in the history of Lethbridge, made possible by the work of the Alberta NDP. As well, McCain Foods, just outside of Coaldale in the Chin area, just doubled the size of their capacity recently, showing that they have confidence in what we can do in this province and in our region for agrifood processing.

You might not have heard of these guys, but Gouw Quality Onions in Taber are the largest single onion producer in western Canada. The Lantic sugar processing plant, which you know better by Rogers Sugar products, has been operating in Taber for about 80 years, and they process more sugar beets for sugar than any other place in Canada. I don't know if you've heard of Let's Pasta Food Services. It's a Lethbridge-based company that produces fresh and frozen pasta products and sauces for wholesale and retail, and they supply products for restaurants as well.

4:20

Maple Leaf pork products: many of you have seen their products in the grocery store. They have a big plant in Lethbridge as well. PepsiCo: everyone knows who PepsiCo is. We have two processing plants in Lethbridge and Taber that produce things like Lays, Miss Vickies, Doritos, Tostitos, the full line of Frito-Lay products made in Alberta. P&H Milling you've heard of. Richardson Oilseed is a canola seed processor that does crushing of canola seeds as well as makes some products for the baking industry as well as cooking oil products. Sakai Spice, which probably none of you have ever heard of, is a mustard powder and kosher wasabi processing plant in Lethbridge that actually exports wasabi powder to Japan.

**An Hon. Member:** No.

**Member Miyashiro:** Yeah. Yeah.

They make things like yellow mustard powder, oriental mustard powder. They're actually the major manufacturer of kosher and halal-certified and gluten-free wasabi powder in the world.

Sunrise poultry: you've seen some of their products in Costco. Sunrise poultry has chicken wings in Costco. Whole Leaf products, which probably none of you have heard of as well, but you've seen the live lettuce in the grocery stores. A lot of those Inspired Greens would have come from this plant between Lethbridge and Coaldale. They also since 2020 are the only processor that produces lettuce for Wendy's, the whole chain, for all of their sandwiches and all of their salads. It's pesticide free. It's all hydroponically grown, so it's all consistent.

Now, one of the components of this bill is about agriculture education. I can't agree more that we need to have more agriculture education for school programs and for people to understand. Some information we have is that according to the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity – they did some research in 2019. They found that 91 per cent of Canadians claim they know little, very little, or nothing about modern farming processes or practices. Fewer and fewer Albertans have a close tie to agriculture or understand the industry and the impact it has on our province. Educational programs are essential to getting Albertans to understand the value of agriculture in our province.

I think tied into that is that we're lucky in our area that we have Lethbridge Polytechnic and the University of Lethbridge. Lethbridge Polytechnic has agricultural-based programs like bachelor of agriculture and bachelor of science in agriculture, an ag science, ag business diploma, an ag science agronomy diploma, agriculture and heavy-equipment technician, agriculture equipment technician apprenticeships, and a preveterinary medicine program. While most people don't think of the University of Lethbridge as something that has a very big focus in agriculture, there are a number of different programs that affect the agriculture sector that the U of L produces graduates that can help: ag biotech; ag studies; biochemistry; biosciences; chemistry; computer science; and geographical information science, or GIS, you know, the geography degree with a concentration in GIS. There have been graduates of that program at the U of L that have gone on to create things like

GIS mapping for tractors so that they can more efficiently plant and fertilize.

That being said, I think we need to focus on other parts of our industrial sector and not just oil and gas.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you.

Are there any others wishing to speak?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The clauses of Bill 207 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair:** Any opposed? That is carried.

The Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I move that the committee rise and report Bill 207.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

**Mrs. Johnson:** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 207.

**The Acting Speaker:** Having heard the report, does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, please say aye.

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

**The Acting Speaker:** Any opposed, please say no. That is so ordered.

## Motions Other than Government Motions

### Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

510. Mr. Singh moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly

- (a) recognize that
  - (i) cancer is the number one disease-related cause of death of children in Canada,
  - (ii) all families touched by childhood cancer need support from their neighbours, teachers and community, and
  - (iii) September is recognized globally as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, and
- (b) urge the government to declare September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. Member for Calgary-East.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce Motion 510, which calls on this Assembly to recognize September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in Alberta. At its core, this motion is about children. It's about families, and it is about making sure that in moments of unimaginable difficulty Albertans facing childhood cancer know that they are not alone. Childhood cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death among children in Canada. That is the reality no family ever expects to face and no child should ever have to endure. For hundreds of Alberta families every year that diagnosis changes everything. It changes daily life,

it changes priorities, and it brings families into a long and often overwhelming journey of treatment, uncertainty, and hope.

This motion exists because awareness matters. Awareness brings understanding, understanding brings compassion, and compassion leads to stronger communities that stand together when it matters most.

Mr. Speaker, families facing childhood cancer do not walk that journey alone. They rely on the strength of relatives, friends, schools, neighbours, and entire communities to help carry the emotional, physical, financial weight that comes with diagnosis and treatment. Support networks are not an option in these moments; they're essential. Recognizing Childhood Cancer Awareness Month is a way for Alberta to formally acknowledge those families, to show them that their struggle is seen, and to reinforce the importance of collective support. Most Albertans will never need pediatric oncology services, but nearly every Albertan knows a child, a parent, a classmate, or a family who has been affected by childhood cancer. This motion brings the reality into the public conversation in a respectful and meaningful way.

Mr. Speaker, September has been recognized globally as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month since 1990. For more than three decades this month has served as a shared moment across countries, communities, and cultures to focus attention on the unique challenges faced by children with cancer and the families who support them. Recognizing September provincially would allow Alberta to align with those global efforts. It creates a consistent time each year for awareness, education, and solidarity. It ensures that Alberta is part of a wider conversation while responding in a way that reflects local needs and values.

4:30

Importantly, this motion builds on the work that is already happening in our province. Many Alberta communities are already making September Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Communities such as Red Deer, Airdrie, Calgary, and Edmonton have shown leadership through local recognition, municipalities' proclamations, community initiatives, and awareness in activities, and Motion 510 does not replace those efforts. It strengthens them by extending recognitions to the provincial level. That matters because when the province stands alongside communities, the message is louder, clearer, and more consistent.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta is home to a world-class cancer centre, including specialized centres that support children and families during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. In Calgary the Arthur J.E. Child comprehensive cancer centre stands as a symbol of innovation, compassion, and excellence in cancer centres. In Edmonton the Stollery children's hospital has been recognized for its expertise in pediatric oncology and its commitment to family-centred care. Across the province health care professionals, researchers, and support staff work tirelessly to treat childhood cancer and support families throughout the journey. Their work deserves recognition, and awareness efforts help ensure that the vital role they play is better understood and supported by the public.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to be clear about what this motion does and does not do. Motion 510 is about recognition and awareness. It does not create new programs. It does not mandate spending. It does not require new legislation beyond the recognition itself. Its value lies in visibility, education, and community support.

Sometimes recognition is a powerful first step. By formally recognizing Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, this Assembly affirms that the experiences of children with cancer and their families matter to all Albertans. It helps reduce isolation, it encourages openness and understanding, and it reinforces the idea

that families facing childhood cancer are supported not just by the health care system but by their province. Mr. Speaker, awareness also supports advocacy. It creates space for conversations about research, treatment advances, and the importance of continued progress in pediatric cancer centres.

While this motion does not address policy or funding directly, it helps ensure those conversations continue in an informed and compassionate way. It also sends a message to children who are fighting cancer right now, a message that their courage is recognized and that the province stands with them. To parents it sends reassurance that their struggle is understood and respected. To siblings, classmates, and teachers it helps explain a journey that can often be difficult to talk about or understand.

Mr. Speaker, this motion reflects values that Albertans share. We value community, we value compassion, and we value supporting families during their most challenging moments. Recognizing Childhood Cancer Awareness Month is a practical and meaningful way to live those values. It also reflects Alberta's commitment to aligning local action with global awareness while responding to the specific realities of our community. When awareness is consistent and co-ordinated, its impact is stronger.

Motion 510 was brought forward to ensure that childhood cancer awareness receives the recognition it deserves. It is a respectful and thoughtful initiative that reflects widespread support across Alberta communities. It's about children, it's about families, and it is about using the voice of this Assembly to bring attention, understanding, and support to those facing childhood cancer.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month will not solve every challenge families face, but it will send an important message: a message that Alberta is paying attention, a message that families are supported, and a message that compassion remains at the heart of our communities. For these reasons, I'm proud to support Motion 510 and encourage all members of this Assembly to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to also speak to the hon. member's Motion 510 that he just motivated. It's a relatively straightforward, pretty simple motion. It says that they want the Legislative Assembly to

- (a) recognize that
  - (i) cancer is the number one disease-related cause of death of children in Canada,
  - (ii) all families touched by childhood cancer need support from their neighbours, teachers and community, and
  - (iii) September is recognized globally as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, and [they]
- (b) urge the government to declare September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

Well, there's really nothing to disagree with in that, Mr. Speaker, and certainly I support that, but we know there are things that are of a significant challenge in our province regarding cancer care, and I think that we need to look at those because those are the important issues. Of course, we want to support children to get appropriate care and that whenever something is designated as, you know, a month, for example like la Mois de la Francophonie or another month, it elevates that, right? It makes it important, and so I certainly wholeheartedly support that because I think this is an important issue.

But there are also many other important issues that the UCP doesn't seem to be paying any attention to. Some of the most egregious issues are that we know that the five most common cancer surgeries are not being completed within the medically

recommended time frame, and we know that since the Premier was elected as the leader of the Conservatives, those percentages of people having those cancers completed in a timely manner, those cancer surgeries, have gone down, and that's all under her watch. I mean, this is a significant issue. It's gone down 17 per cent, and that's a thing to be very concerned about. You know, I would welcome the members on the other side to bring forward members' statements about that, that we do have timely care for people who are diagnosed with cancer.

We know that early detection and treatment is the most important thing to make sure that people get the care they need because we have, you know, quite advanced medical treatment, and people's lives can be saved. People will not die and will not have issues that perhaps will impair their quality of life. It's such a crucial thing.

As a cancer survivor myself I know that timely access to treatment made all the difference for me. I was diagnosed with leukemia in 2018, and it was a type of leukemia that was very aggressive and very rare. Like, only 2 per cent of the population got this kind of leukemia, and they told me I was one of about three people in Alberta who had that kind of leukemia.

The cool thing is that I live in Edmonton. My doctor sent me to the university hospital, and once she suspected that I had this type of leukemia, I got world-class treatment. We know that that kind of leukemia: 40 per cent, which is quite a high percentage, just die. You know, 40 per cent of people with that because oftentimes they're not diagnosed quick enough because it's a very aggressive strain.

4:40

Luckily that didn't happen to me, and I am now 100 per cent cured, which also is quite a rare thing in the world of cancer. [some applause] Thank you. Oftentimes cancer will, you know, come back after it has been treated. But this is a type of leukemia that has a cure rate of 100 per cent, so I'm so grateful. That's because I got treatment and detection a long time ago, 2018. Gosh, that's how many years, eight years ago? [interjections] Seven? Eight? I'm getting different numbers. Six?

**Ms Hayter:** Six, seven.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Yeah. It's six years.

**Mr. Dach:** No. It's eight years.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Six, isn't it?

In this budget the UCP has cut millions of dollars of investment to cancer screening, cancer prevention, cancer diagnosis, so I'd welcome a member's statement about that. Instead, we're having a member's statement that focuses on, you know, declaring a month in September Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, which I don't disagree with, but there are more top-level issues that the UCP should be dealing with.

We know children – actually, the number one kind of cancer they have is leukemia because leukemia doesn't care how old you are. Oftentimes cancers do. It's usually older people who get cancer, but leukemia goes for young people oftentimes. They said to me, even though I was the ripe age of 57 at that time, that I was young to have cancer because a lot of times it's people who are more elderly who have a cancer diagnosis. Leukemia, central nervous system tumours, and lymphomas are the three top kinds of cancer that children commonly are diagnosed with.

We know we have world-class cancer treatment for children in our province. You know, the Stollery children's hospital, which is in my riding, provides excellent pediatric care, but if the government is going to be reducing the investment in diagnosis and

screening and prevention, then that's an issue because we don't want to erode that. We already know that surgeries for people with cancer, having them done within a timely manner, have gone down 17 per cent since just after the Premier was elected. It was January 2023; 53 per cent were completed in time, and now only 40 per cent are. That's kind of disturbing to know, that that's decreased. Maybe that's not the right math either, but anyway that's not my area.

We know that this is very important because we need more focus on supporting, you know, whenever a child is sick in any way and of course cancer because cancer takes lives. If a child's life is taken early, it's very disturbing and troubling. It breaks our hearts because we want children to be able to live full lives late into their adulthood, so it's really important that children do get the proper care and treatment, diagnosis, prevention that they need.

We know some information that about 237 children – when I say children, I mean people under 18 – are diagnosed with cancer annually, and 27 of those children die from cancer annually in our province. This bill: I think what they're hoping to do is really to elevate and to create more focus on this area, and I think all of that is good, and we know that important supports can make a big difference.

[The Speaker in the chair]

I have three sons myself, and if any of them are sick, I mean, obviously it takes its toll on the parents. Obviously, my boys are all adults, but I could imagine. I know my oldest son had pretty significant asthma throughout his life. He still has it, and I ended up in the emergency department with him many times because he couldn't breathe. He was allergic to everything: trees, grass. He couldn't be outside for very long because he would have an asthma attack. That's not cancer, but it's still – you know, children die from asthma every year, so it was a serious condition. It's a very important thing that the families of children with cancer have supports to help them, and I think that this Motion 510 will elevate that.

**Ms Lovely:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to this motion, though “pleased” is not a word one would normally choose when addressing a subject this heavy. This is a difficult conversation, and for that reason alone I will try to be intentional with my words. We all understand the significance of what is before us. Motion 510 is not about politics or procedure. It's about families, children, grief, resilience, and hope. It proposes that September be formally recognized as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in Alberta, and in doing so asks us to pause to remember and to stand together.

There are few losses in life as devastating as the loss of a child. It is an experience that rewrites a family's entire sense of the world. Childhood should be marked by growth, curiosity, scraped knees, laughter, and dreams that stretch far into the future. When cancer enters that space, it takes something sacred and replaces it with fear, uncertainty, and pain no family should ever be asked to endure.

Childhood cancer remains the leading cause of disease-related death among children in Canada, a reality that is as heartbreaking as it is sobering. Behind that statistic are the young lives cut short and families forever altered. For those children who face cancer, the fight itself often demands more courage than we can imagine. Treatments are long and unforgiving. Hospital rooms become classrooms, playgrounds, and second homes. Childhood becomes punctuated by procedures and prognosis rather than birthdays and milestones.

Yet time and again we see extraordinary bravery in these young patients. We see children who laugh through pain, comfort their parents when they themselves are suffering, and show resilience that leaves a lasting impression on everyone that they meet. Even

in the shortness of lives, their strength teaches us something enduring about dignity and perseverance.

The impact of childhood cancer extends far beyond the child. Parents, siblings, grandparents, teachers, and friends are drawn into a journey that they did not choose. Families must find ways to balance hope with reality, exhaustion with resolve. They rely on the kindness of neighbours who deliver meals, schools that provide flexibility and understanding, and communities that wrap around them when words fail.

Recovery, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual, is not linear. It requires immense strength to keep moving forward after loss, and for many families that strength is drawn from the love that they share with a child whose legacy continues to shape their lives. It's important to remember that recognition on its own will never be enough to prevent the loss of a child. A month on the calendar cannot cure cancer or undo grief, but recognition matters because awareness leads to understanding, and understanding fuels advocacy, research, and compassion.

September has been recognized globally as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month since 1990. Countries around the world use this time to educate the public, support families, and partner with hospitals and cancer organizations to push progress forward. Alberta formally joining this global commitment sends a powerful message that these children and families are seen and supported.

Here at home many Alberta communities already recognize September in meaningful ways. From Red Deer to Airdrie, from Calgary to Edmonton, families, volunteers, and health care professionals come together to honour children lost and to stand with those still fighting. A provincial recognition would not replace these efforts; it would strengthen them. It would create consistency across our province and encourage schools, organizations, and communities to work together in shared purpose and solidarity. This motion is about hope, hope that awareness can lead to early diagnosis with better treatments and stronger systems of support, hope that research will continue to advance so that survival rates improve and suffering is reduced, and hope that in our lifetime we may see a cure for cancer.

4:50

The children we have lost leave behind more than sorrow. They leave behind stories of courage, lessons in compassion, and a responsibility for those of us who remain to keep moving forward on their behalf. Mr. Speaker, these young heroes may not have had the chance to grow into adulthood, but their impact is lasting. They live on in the love of their families and the advocacy of parents who turn grief into action and the communities forever changed by knowing them. By supporting Motion 510, we affirm that Alberta stands with these families through and through. We acknowledge their pain and honour their strength and commitment ourselves to a future where no family must endure this loss alone.

I want to thank my hon. colleague for bringing forward this motion. With that, I urge everyone in this Assembly to join me in supporting this motion.

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

**Member Tejada:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in support of the motion, proposed by the Member for Calgary-East, urging the government to declare September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. In response to some of the comments I've heard so far, knowing that this is already globally recognized is important, and I think it would serve us well to follow suit. As a lifelong Albertan and mother I know that this sort of recognition is also important because when we consider that cancer is the number one

disease-related cause of death for children in Canada, it just makes sense that we recognize this. I feel like a provincial recognition is good in that it drives awareness, and then perhaps in that awareness – we already know that there are many not-for-profits and families and communities that are doing the good work of advocacy, but I think that it can further inspire others to join in that advocacy.

My heart goes out to the families that are touched by childhood cancers, who are going through it right now with their children in treatment, or who have lost children to childhood cancers. A dear friend of mine shared her family's story, and we followed along as one of her cherished relatives went through a childhood cancer. Thankfully, that was a good-news story in the end. That child is now a teenager.

I was very touched hearing from my colleague from Edmonton-Riverview about her experience. I feel like we're learning things here even about our own colleagues every day, and I think about how thankful I am that through treatment and through early detection, this province was not denied an opportunity to have a leader such as the Member for Edmonton-Riverview and the compassion that she's shown so many in this province and her leadership as a former minister for community and social services as well and now as an advocate and shadow minister of seniors care.

This motion also speaks to the fact that families who've been touched by childhood cancers need support from neighbours, teachers, and community. I do think that that's important and that recognizing a month, September in this case, for childhood cancers is important. While they need that support from neighbours, teachers, community, and family members, I would add one more: I would say that they need support from their government. While I agree that awareness and understanding is critical to all of these families, I would posit that action is also very important and specifically action from our government.

That brings me to think about another member in the NDP caucus and the work that they have done in trying to elicit that action from government. That would be the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs when she proposed Bill 213, which was the Cancer Care Delivery Standards Act. In that act she was advocating for folks who we know, when diagnosed with cancers, and that's not just children, are waiting three to four times longer than the recommended standards to see a cancer specialist here in Alberta. She talked a lot also about the wait times to receive even, like, a consult with a radiation oncologist and how in Alberta we were performing far lower than our counterparts in Ontario.

I would also bring to light that the Member for Edmonton-Decore, who is now one of our shadow ministers in the area of health, was talking about possible solutions for Albertans in the challenges that they face with cancer and talking about fixing cancer surgery wait times and addressing early detection. When we're talking about childhood cancers and cancers as a whole in Alberta, even this morning, knowing that there was an announcement from Mikisew Cree Nation around alarming rates of cancer for First Nations, this is something that we've been hearing about for quite some time. In essence, I absolutely support any motion that recognizes awareness of childhood cancers, and I would suggest to our fellow members that they also support this motion, of course.

For anyone who's doing advocacy, when we hear about these awareness months and recognitions, which I know that this government is wont to do, which is, you know, a lovely sentiment, I would also recommend to anyone who's working in the advocacy spaces to take these months of awareness as an opportunity to advocate and to urge action from their governments, especially when we're talking about root causes and we're talking about something as big as health care in our province.

With that, I wholeheartedly support this motion and urge other members to do the same. Thanks.

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to speak in support of Motion 510, which seeks to designate the month of September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in Alberta. This motion is about recognition, compassion, and solidarity. It's about standing with children and families who face one of the most difficult journeys imaginable and ensuring that their struggles, their strength, and their courage are seen and acknowledged across our province.

Childhood cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death among children in Canada. While it's relatively rare compared to adult cancers, its impact is profound. Every diagnosis turns a family's world upside down. Childhood cancer does not just affect a child. It affects parents, siblings, grandparents, classmates, teachers, and entire communities. For families facing childhood cancer, the challenge is relentless. There are hospital stays that stretch for weeks or months. There are treatments that cause pain, exhaustion, and fear. There are parents juggling work, caregiving, and medical decisions they never imagined having to make. And there are children forced to grow up far too quickly as they endure experiences no child should ever have to face.

In these moments families rely not only on the health care system but also on the strength of their relatives, schools, neighbours, and communities. Supports come in many forms, Mr. Speaker: in meals dropped off at the door, in rides to appointments, in classrooms that rally around a student, and in communities that refuse to let families face cancer alone. Motion 510 recognizes the importance of this collective support.

September has been recognized globally as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month since 1990. For more than three decades communities around the world have used this month to shine a light on the realities of childhood cancer, to raise awareness, to honour children currently in treatment, to remember those who have been lost, and to recognize survivors whose strengths inspire us all. Recognizing September provincially would give Alberta a shared moment each year to focus attention on these children and their families. It would create a consistent province-wide opportunity for awareness, education, and reflection.

Many Alberta communities are already leading the way. Municipalities such as Red Deer, Airdrie, Calgary, and Edmonton already recognize September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. These local efforts reflect the compassion of Albertans and show the strong grassroots support that already exists. Motion 510 builds on that foundation and extends recognition across the province. By formally acknowledging Childhood Cancer Awareness Month at the provincial level, Alberta would be aligning itself with global awareness efforts while reinforcing the message that children facing cancer matter, families matter, and their experiences deserve recognition.

**5:00**

It is important to emphasize that awareness is not just symbolic. Awareness leads to understanding, understanding leads to empathy, and empathy leads to action, whether that action is supporting organizations that assist families, encouraging participation in community events, or simply being more understanding when a child or parent is navigating treatment. Awareness also helps reduce isolation. Families dealing with childhood cancer often describe how isolating the experience can feel. Friends may not know what to say. Classmates may not understand why a child is absent.

Parents may feel alone in their fears. A provincially recognized awareness month helps tell those families that they are not invisible, that their community sees them, and that Alberta stands with them.

Motion 510 does not impose costs, create bureaucracy, or mandate programs. Instead, it provides something equally powerful: recognition and visibility. It gives families an assurance that their voices are being heard and that their challenges are understood beyond the hospital walls. It also provides an opportunity to remind Albertans that childhood cancer is different from adult cancer. Treatments are often harsher on developing bodies. Research funding has historically been limited relative to adult cancers. Survival, while improving, still comes with long-term physical and emotional impacts for many children and families. Recognizing Childhood Cancer Awareness Month allows these realities to be better understood by the public.

Mr. Speaker, motions like this one remind us of the shared humanity at the heart of public service. They rise above partisanship. They bring us together around values of compassion, solidarity, and care for our most vulnerable. Every ribbon worn in September, every event held, every conversation sparked by awareness helps ensure that children fighting cancer and those who love them are not forgotten. By passing Motion 510, this Assembly would be sending a clear message to families across Alberta: you're not alone, your struggle matters, and your province stands with you. I encourage all members of this House to support Motion 510 and to join Albertans across the province in recognizing September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms Hayter:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am in full support of the motion to recognize September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Childhood cancer remains the leading disease-related cause of death for children in Canada. In Alberta about 237 children and youth are diagnosed each year, and sadly 27 children die from the disease. Even if childhood cancer is relatively rare, for those families living through it, it changes everything. This recognition matters because children and families deserve compassion, support, and to know that they are seen. But awareness is more than just a ribbon. It should mean understanding what the families are actually experiencing when they discover that their child is being diagnosed with cancer. It changes for that whole family.

I have watched a friend go through this with a small child in kindergarten while balancing a toddler. Watching her juggle that fear, her work, juggling the extra sibling, and travelling for the treatment and the appointments, and all those impossible decisions that a parent has to make: it's hard. So I appreciate that we are bringing awareness. Sorry. I'm wearing that special boy's necklace, that he did for a fundraiser later on, and I'm thinking of him right now.

In many families one parent ends up carrying all those roles as the organizer, the advocate, the scheduler. They're the emotional anchor for that whole family. A lot of that labour is unpaid, and it's exhausting and it's unseen. It affects every part of a person's life. It impacts the home, the school. It impacts that child's school development. It impacts the family's finances and their work. It impacts the younger siblings and the older siblings and mental health. The community then needs to come around them, our teachers, our schools, and our classmates. That's when community matters, right? Support cannot begin and end at the hospital. Strong community support can reduce isolation and help families feel less alone when they have to carry so much.

You know, survival rates have improved over the last decade, and that progress is so important and must be acknowledged, and it must be celebrated. But as I said, awareness also has to include survivorship and what happens after treatment. Support cannot end when treatment ends. Many survivors live with long treatment effects, about two-thirds live with at least one chronic health condition, and about one-third of those conditions are severe or they're life threatening. That means that there might be disability supports that are needed. They're a separate issue from childhood cancer, but they're still part of that survivorship. A survivor should not have to deal with the long-term effects of cancer while also worrying that the disability supports might be weaker, harder to navigate, or less secure in a few years.

Our recognition also needs to equal our responsibility. Childhood cancer remains underfunded in research, receiving only 7 per cent of the overall cancer research funding. If we're serious about awareness, we should also be serious about better treatment and reducing long-term harm.

Families facing a childhood cancer need health care systems that they can rely on, that are timely. They're specialized, they're co-ordinated, and they're easy to navigate. Instead, right now the UCP government has spent years breaking apart the old unified AHS model into separate sections and, you know, sectors and agencies. The government says it will improve co-ordination, but cancer care now sits under Acute Care Alberta, while primary care, mental health, and continuing care are handled in separate structures. Childhood cancer is not one isolated service. Families often need hospital care, diagnostics, mental health supports, rehabilitation, primary care follow-up, and long-term survivor support. When this government split those systems apart, more of the burden of navigating the care was pushed onto families.

This upheaval has not come with clear proof that care is improving where it matters most. Alberta's own dashboard data shows timely cancer surgeries worsening from 53 per cent of the five most common cancer surgeries completed within the medically recommended time frame in January of 2023 to 40 per cent in January of 2026. While the government talks about restructuring, patients are still waiting too long for cancer care. We need prevention funding. We need research funding. Children with cancer and their families should not have to fight the system while they're already fighting cancer. Recognition in September matters, but practical supports for the families have to be done all of the other days of the year.

At the centre of this motion are children who should be worrying about going to school, who's going to play with them on the playground, what they're going to eat for recess. Sports: are they going to get to play soccer or hockey growing up? Sometimes, though, that treatment and the scans and the survival rates are what they are. At the centre are also the parents. They're trying to hold all of this together. The families are carrying the fear and uncertainty every day.

I look to even what's happening with the current budget, where there have been cuts to the cancers and the screening and the prevention and the research. The key to fixing this is to invest in it as well as to have a month of celebration. I'm hopeful that with this motion and all of our support – and I urge everybody to support it – that we also look at how we are going to provide Albertans with a clear plan to reduce cancer surgery wait times, how we're going to reverse the cuts to cancer screening and prevention and diagnosis.

I encourage everybody to go do whatever preventative testing you can do, from mammograms to, well, all the other ones that men can do. All of us, please, go do all the testing for the different cancers. I hope that we also, though, as we look towards this, work

on early detection as well as days of awareness so that we can actually go back to serving all Albertans and their families struggling with cancer.

Thank you, and I support your motion. Yes.

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

5:10

**Mr. Rowswell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak in support of Motion 510, a motion that asks this Assembly to recognize September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in Alberta. At its heart this motion is about children, it's about families, and it's about compassion. It's about recognizing a journey that no family ever plans for yet too many are forced to walk.

Childhood cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death among children in Canada. Behind the statistics are real children, real parents, real siblings, and real communities who have their lives forever changed by a diagnosis that comes without warning. For those families time becomes measured not in school years or birthdays, but in treatments, hospital visits, and moments of hope and uncertainty.

Mr. Speaker, when a child is diagnosed with cancer, the impact reaches far beyond the hospital room. It affects families emotionally, physically, and often financially. Parents must balance caregiving with work, siblings must cope with fear and disruption, and children themselves face treatment that no child should ever have to endure. In these moments families rely on the support of relatives, schools, neighbours, health care workers, and the wider community simply to get through the day.

That is why awareness matters. Awareness builds understanding, understanding builds compassion, and compassion creates stronger communities that are better equipped to support families when they need it most. Motion 510 recognizes something important, that visibility and acknowledgement have value. When a province formally recognizes Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, it sends a clear message to families that they are seen, that their struggle matters, and that they are not alone.

Mr. Speaker, September has been recognized globally as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month since 1990. For more than three decades countries around the world have used this month as a shared moment of reflection, education, and solidarity. It provides a consistent time each year for public education, school-based learnings, community events, and conversations to help people better understand childhood cancer and its unique challenges.

Many Alberta communities have already embraced this effort. Municipalities such as Red Deer, Airdrie, Calgary, and Edmonton have marked September through local proclamations, community initiatives, and awareness activities. Motion 510 does not replace that work; it strengthens it. Provincial recognition amplifies those local efforts and ensures a consistent message across Alberta. When our government stands alongside communities, hospitals, schools, and families, the message carries farther and resonates more deeply.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta is fortunate to be home to exceptional pediatric cancer care. Across the province health care professionals work tirelessly to support children and families through diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. These professionals provide not only medical expertise but compassion, reassurance, and stability during some of the most difficult moments a family will ever face. Awareness efforts help ensure that vital work is better understood and supported by the public.

It's also important to be clear about what Motion 510 does and does not do. This motion is about recognition and awareness. It does

not create new programs, it does not require new funding, and it does not impose additional legislation beyond recognizing the month itself. Its power lies in education, visibility, and encouraging a culture of empathy and understanding. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, the recognition itself is a meaningful first step. It creates space for conversations about research, treatment advances, and the need for continued progress in pediatric cancer care. While this motion does not directly address policy or funding, it helps ensure these conversations continue in a thoughtful and informed way.

Most Albertans will never personally experience pediatric oncology services, but nearly every Albertan knows a child, a classmate, a neighbour, or a family who has been touched by childhood cancer. Motion 510 brings these experiences into the public conversation respectfully and compassionately. For children currently fighting cancer, awareness sends a simple but powerful message that their courage is recognized and that their province stands with them. For parents it offers reassurance that their struggle is acknowledged and understood. For siblings and classmates it helps explain a journey that is often difficult to talk about or fully understand. Mr. Speaker, Motion 510 reflects values that Albertans share. We value community, we value compassion, and we believe in supporting families during the most challenging moments. Recognizing Childhood Cancer Awareness Month is a meaningful way to live out those values.

In closing, Motion 510 asks this Assembly to formally recognize September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in Alberta. It aligns our province with global awareness efforts, builds on strong local support, and sends a clear message of compassion and solidarity to children and families affected by childhood cancer. This motion is not partisan. It's not political. It is human. It reminds us that the role of this Assembly is not only to debate policy but to reflect the values and empathy of people we serve. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I urge all members of this Assembly to support Motion 510 and stand together in recognizing Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** I see no other speakers.

Would the hon. Member for Calgary-East like to use up to five minutes to close debate? The floor is yours.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to rise to close debate on the motion to recognize September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in Alberta. I want to begin by sincerely thanking all members who took part in this discussion. The contributions made today reflect a shared understanding that while policy can sometimes divide us, compassion and care for children and families bring us together.

As I said when introducing this motion, at its heart it's about children, it's about families, and it's about ensuring that those facing the unimaginable reality of childhood cancer know they are seen, supported, and not alone. Throughout the debate members spoke about the courage of young patients, the strength of parents and caregivers, and the importance of community support, and those reflections reinforce why recognition matters.

For families living with childhood cancer, the journey does not pause when treatment ends for the day. It follows them home. It follows siblings to school. It reshapes family life in ways that are difficult to put into words. Recognizing Childhood Cancer Awareness Month is one meaningful way for this Assembly to acknowledge the reality. It gives space for understanding, it encourages compassion, and it reminds Albertans that behind every statistic is a child, a family, and a community doing their best in the face of extraordinary challenges.

Mr. Speaker, this motion is modest in scope but important in purpose. It does not create new programs or impose costs. Instead, it offers visibility, education, and it aligns Alberta with the global recognition that has existed for decades while building on the work already being done by municipalities, organizations, health care professionals, and volunteers across our province. When recognition is consistent and public, it strengthens the impact of those efforts and sends a clear message of support.

Mr. Speaker, motions such as this remind us of the important role this Assembly can play beyond legislation and budgets. They remind us that words matter, that recognition matters, and that using the voice of this Assembly to stand with families during this most difficult moment is both appropriate and meaningful. Childhood cancer may not affect every Albertan directly, but it touches enough families that awareness belongs in the public conversation.

For those reasons, I respectfully ask all members to support Motion 510, and I close debate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion Other than Government Motion 510 carried]

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Government House Leader and Minister of Justice and keeper of the Great Seal.

*5:20*

**Mr. Amery:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Member for Calgary-East on an incredible motion that will hopefully touch on and impact far too many families in this province in a positive way.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Assembly be adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 14, 2026.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:21 p.m.]

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