



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, May 11, 2026

Day 56

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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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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Chapman, Amanda, Calgary-Beddington (NDP),
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de Jonge, Chantelle, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)
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Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC),
Deputy Government Whip
Yaseen, Hon. Muhammad, ECA, Calgary-North (UC)

Party standings:

United Conservative: 48

New Democrat: 38

Progressive Tory: 1

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Justin Wright	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health (South)
Tany Yao	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Northern Development

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Deputy Chair: Mrs. Johnson
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Kasawski
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Stephan
Wiebe
Wright, J.

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Select Special Citizen Initiative Proposal Review Committee

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Nixon
Pancholi
Sawyer

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Standing Committee on Families and Communities

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Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

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Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

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Al-Guneid
Armstrong-Homeniuk
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Ip
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Rowswell
Yao

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, May 11, 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, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. 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 Anna Somers. 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 on 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: Hon. members, it is my honour to welcome His Excellency Muhsin Syihab, ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Canada. His honour has the concurrent accreditation as a permanent representative to the International Civil Aviation Organization since 2025. I had the honour of meeting with His Excellency earlier today. Alberta and Indonesia enjoy a strong and growing relationship with many opportunities for future collaboration and increased trade. His Excellency is accompanied by Mrs. Nina Kurnia Widhi, the Indonesian consul general in Vancouver and additional guests. I ask all of them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to stand today to introduce students, staff, and parents from the amazing Calgary French & International School in Calgary-Bow. I ask that they rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to introduce 33 guests from Rutherford school. Rutherford school was saved from closing in 2010 by my friend from Edmonton-Glenora. I ask that my guests from Rutherford please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Airdrie-East.

Ms Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock I'd like to introduce to you grade 6 students from the Boyle school with their teacher, Shelley Roth. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. members, seated in my gallery today is Anna Somers, who sang *O Canada*. Anna has been a member of the page program for two years. She is going into her second year as a political science student at the University of Alberta and... [interjections] Order. She is also a mentor in Inclusion Alberta's youth employment partnership. I ask her to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Seated with Anna in my gallery this afternoon are her proud parents, mother Carmen Somers and father Dana Somers. Carmen is a speech-language pathologist for Kids Included, and Dana is a large-animal veterinarian who cofounded the Leduc Farm Animal Hospital and the Leduc Pet Hospital. I ask that they also rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Mr. Ip: Mr. Speaker, to you and through you it is my great pleasure to welcome members of the Edmonton Skat Club. Skat is a popular German card game, and Edmonton skat members have competed at national and international levels, winning awards. The skat Canadian nationals are held in Edmonton May 27 to 30. I ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Technology and Innovation.

Mr. Glubish: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For those of you who know me, family is everything, and today I'm pleased to introduce the newest member of the Technology and Innovation family. I'd ask Dustin Olsen, my policy adviser, to rise along with his wife, Megan, and their newborn son, Gideon. Having seen how diligent and hard-working Dustin is in our office for the last seven years, I'm confident he's going to be a great dad.

The Speaker: Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you Toluwani Omisore, a summer intern student from the Black youth for social innovation program at the U of A. She'll be working in my office this summer with my office manager and de facto chief of staff, Claire MacDonald, who'll be celebrating her 11th anniversary in my office in June.

Member Batten: Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I would love to introduce you to some of my most favourite people, who've driven up from Calgary today. Can my in-laws Kathy and Edward please stand up and receive the welcome from the Assembly.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you and to all members of the Assembly Scott Watson. He's a constituent of Edmonton-Whitemud, a retired

lawyer, and an advocate for teachers, Albertans' fundamental rights and freedoms, and competent, ethical government. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce two very special guests joining us in the gallery, Morinville town councillor Jayson Wood along with his son Peyton. Jayson is a strong advocate for his community. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Children and Family Services.

Mr. Turton: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly some good friends of mine from Spruce Grove and Stony Plain, constituents Miriam and Rick Abbott. They're fantastic supporters of mine, and they're here watching their daughter Vida serve on her last shift as a page. Please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all of the Assembly 29 of the hardest working, most wonderful staff members from the Department of Primary and Preventative Health Services. We appreciate all you do. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Thank you.

1:40

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you the members of the Sierra Leone Association of Alberta, led by their president Foday Conteh, as they celebrate their 65th independence. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Edmonton-South.

Member Hoyle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of the Member for Calgary-Falconridge to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly Satvinder Singh Ghotra, a Punjabi media professional whose work reflects a strong commitment to cultural connection and public service. Satvinder, please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Member Tejada: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly on behalf of the Member for Calgary-Falconridge Rajeev Sharma, a senior media professional and business executive with over 28 years of experience in marketing, public relations, journalism, recognized for his leadership and contributions across media and corporate sectors. I ask that Rajeev rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Member Boparai: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Azik Masih, a respected community leader recognized for over 20 years of dedicated service supporting individuals and families across Calgary. He is known for his 20 years of professionalism and commitment to excellence at Country Hills Toyota. I ask Azik to rise to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Chestermere-Strathmore.

Ms de Jonge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great honour to introduce a good friend of mine, the amazing former reeve of Wheatland county here today with Jeremy George and Braeden

Lortz from Diode Ventures. I ask that they all arise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Statement by the Speaker

Rotation of Questions and Members' Statements

The Speaker: Hon. members, I would like to inform you that there has been a slight modification of the Oral Question Period and Members' Statements rotation as a result of a recent change in caucus composition in the Assembly. Question 9 on day 4 of the Oral Question Period rotation and the fifth member's statement on Wednesdays in week 3 of the Members' Statements rotations are now allocated to the United Conservative caucus.

Please note that today is day 3 of the Oral Question Period rotation, and this is week 3 of the Members' Statements rotation. I sent a copy of the updated rotations to all members this past Friday, and I will table them for official records of the Assembly at the appropriate point today.

Members' Statements

NAIT Advanced Skills Centre

Mr. Rowswell: Mr. Speaker, earlier today our government was proud to announce a major investment in skilled trades at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. Alberta is built by the trades. They build our homes, keep our lights on, maintain our roads, work in manufacturing, and help power the economy that families across this province rely on every day.

Skilled trades are a huge part of what makes Alberta strong. Today there are more than 80,000 registered apprentices in our province, with thousands of Albertans choosing careers in the trades, and there's a good reason for it. They know those jobs are a real opportunity, good pay, and a chance to build something meaningful.

That is why our government is investing \$384 million to build a new advanced skills centre in NAIT. This will be one of the biggest investments in skilled trades training infrastructure in Alberta's history. The new centre will give students a chance to train in spaces that look and feel like actual job sites, using the same tools and equipment they'll use in the workforce. It will help more Albertans build the skills they need for good-paying careers and help keep the province growing.

Once the centre is complete, it will create space for another 5,500 apprentices every year. That means thousands more Albertans getting the chance to learn a trade, build a career, and stay close to home doing work they can be proud of. For a lot of people there is a real sense of pride from working with your hands, solving problems, building things, and seeing the results of your work at the end of the day.

This investment is about supporting the next generation of welders, electricians, carpenters, heavy-equipment technicians, and skilled workers who will help keep Alberta moving forward. Mr. Speaker, Alberta's economy was built by hard-working people, and investments like this help make sure that tradition continues for generations to come.

Thank you.

Citizen-initiated Referendum Proposal on Alberta Secession

Mr. Shepherd: "Dangerously detached from reality." That's how journalist Richard Warnica describes the Alberta separatist movement and its leader, UCP constituency party president Mitch

Sylvestre. This reporter spent 10 years covering Donald Trump, but after spending a week following Sylvestre as he spoke around the province, he says that he's "terrified" of what he heard and learned. According to his report, Mitch Sylvestre believes King Charles wants to have him killed. He believes "oil spills help trees grow, that Canada has the highest taxes in the world," and that "there are Chinese communist soldiers in Canada" because – get this – he saw six Asian men in new coats at West Edmonton Mall. His conspiracies also include being on record stating that he believes the federal government is working to replace White Canadians with immigrants.

In the reporter's article Sylvestre is devoted to "far-right memes, conspiracies and outright disinformation" and actively spreads it at his separatist town halls. But the scariest part, Mr. Speaker: the power he holds over this Premier and her government. Sylvestre is one of the most influential members of the UCP. He has the ear of the Premier whenever he wants. While over 70 per cent of Albertans are clear that they don't support separation, 55 per cent of UCP members do. So under this Premier what Mitch wants, Mitch gets, no matter how unhinged his ideas, no matter how much it costs or how much damage it does to our economy, our communities, or the stability of our province. They've changed the law three times to support his separatist petition, used our tax dollars to pay government lawyers to defend his interests in court. It's all for something the vast majority of Albertans do not want. It's clear this Premier and government aren't in this for everyday Albertans. No, they're in this for themselves, and they're willing to do anything to hold on to power.

Mr. Warnica ends his piece saying that he's afraid of what all this means for Alberta and for Canada, and I share that fear. But I also have faith that there are enough Albertans who are ready to fight for our province, for our country, and against the Premier and government willing to gamble with our future for their own gain. Mr. Speaker, Albertans and Alberta's New Democrats: we fight to win.

Domestic Violence Prevention

Member Tejada: This weekend many of us celebrated Mother's Day with loved ones, but I know that especially for one mother in her community it was a day marked by unfathomable grief. Last week in the community of North Haven a mother's worst fears came true. Her beloved, precious babies, aged three and five, were taken from her in an act of violence from someone who should have been their protector. As a mother I can barely contemplate the depth of their pain.

Even as the Immigrant Outreach Society gathered the community around her in love, it was clear that this loss will echo for years to come. It will be felt by the Eritrean community, their school and faith community, by neighbours, and all who gathered to remember these precious children. At the vigil one message was clear. More needs to be done to bolster supports for families experiencing domestic violence.

That includes wraparound supports for families, mental health supports, access to justice, and help that is culturally relevant. Supporting organizations that do this work is vital. It could save lives. It is our duty to do better by our families. I know that each and every member of this House can agree that this tragedy should never be repeated. We stand with you in your grief and hold the memory of these dear little ones in our hearts.

If you are experiencing domestic violence, know that you are not alone and that help is available. Organizations like Immigrant Outreach Society, Ruth's House, Canadian Immigrant Women's Association, The Family Advocates all do important work to help

reach every family who might need support. You can call the family violence info line at 780.310.1818, the Alberta abuse helpline at 1.855.4HELPAB.

May God give you strength and consolation. [Remarks in Tigrinya].

The Speaker: Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Supervised Drug Consumption Sites

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For over a decade the NDP have pushed so-called safe supply and consumption sites, and what we're seeing today is a direct result of those decisions. They have taken the idea of harm reduction, once about preventing diseases like HIV and hepatitis, and twisted it into something unrecognizable.

Today it has helped fuel encampments, addiction, and chaos in our communities. Lives are being destroyed, families are being torn apart, and still they continue to defend it. Let's be clear about the reality. These drugs devastate individuals. They destroy the body through organ damage and disease. They strip away dignity, take away jobs, break apart families, and rob people of their minds. And, yes, they shorten lives.

But the damage does not stop there. Families suffer in silence, dealing with shame, financial hardship, and in too many cases the loss of a loved one. Children are left behind in unstable homes, facing neglect, trauma, and abuse. Meanwhile our health care system is overwhelmed. Communities face rising disorder, theft, violence, desperation driven by addiction. Homelessness spreads, criminals profit, and entire neighbourhoods begin to come apart.

This did not have to happen. A serious, pragmatic approach, one that looked at real evidence from other jurisdictions, could have changed that trajectory. Instead the NDP walked away from looking into the issue in a special select legislative committee to study safe supply. They refused to listen. They abandoned Albertans. The fact that the NDP would double down on this issue and continue to push for facilitation sites for drugs, to push for leniency for drug dealers, to enable drugs to continue to be provided despite the evidence of diverted safe supply is absolutely mind boggling.

On this side of the House we have real-life experiences, so we can say with confidence: no to drug consumption sites, no to illicit drug use, and no to the normalization of these so-called recreational drugs. The NDP doesn't just need to apologize, they need to resign, because their policies are destroying our people, our families, our communities, and our society.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: Hon. members, the first question belongs to the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Provincial Response to Electoral List Disclosure

Ms Pancholi: It's been 11 days since 3 million Albertans learned their personal information was leaked to some of the worst actors in the separatist movement, yet neither the Premier nor any cabinet minister has directly addressed Albertans to calm their fears or provide advice on how to protect against identity or financial fraud or offer specific resources for Albertans whose safety is at risk. No stand-alone press conferences. No softly lit videos. Not even a tweet: just awkward answers when forced to answer media questions at unrelated government announcements. Why is the Premier reluctant to actually help Albertans experiencing the largest data breach in Alberta's history?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the House we've said time and again that we take this data breach extremely seriously, but what we also know is that there are a number of independent agencies that are investigating this exact issue. Elections Alberta has commenced a very comprehensive and robust investigation, but the RCMP is also leading an investigation. These independent agencies must have the time that they need to conduct these investigations without government interference. We will not interfere with ongoing investigations.

Ms Pancholi: On Friday the Alberta NDP released resources for Albertans. We shared information and tips from experts for Albertans to protect themselves against identity and financial fraud, as well as resources for those scared for their safety due to family violence. The Information and Privacy Commissioner issued something similar, but not the Premier. Elections Alberta says that 568 people had access to the database with all that personal information and 23 people had the voters list in its entirety. This is an astounding breach of privacy. Is telling Albertans to wait months for investigations to wrap up really the best this Premier can do?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. We know that Elections Alberta is working hard to make sure that those lists are suppressed as quickly as possible. Reports came out where Elections Alberta has issued almost 600 cease-and-desist letters over the past couple of days. They're working extremely diligently to make sure that they're taking care of this issue. The RCMP are looking at it as well. We know that the Privacy Commissioner has also announced an investigation and they're working on it. These independent offices must be allowed to do their job and do it appropriately without any government interference or opposition interference.

Ms Pancholi: Let's be honest, Mr. Speaker. We wouldn't be here if the Premier hadn't made a promise to the most fringe separatists in the province and empowered their bad actors. We wouldn't be here if the Premier didn't seem to believe that keeping her party together was more important than keeping the country together. We wouldn't be here if the UCP MLAs who are not separatists didn't decide that keeping their jobs was more important than their country or their constituents. We wouldn't be here if the UCP MLAs who are separatists weren't willing to break their oaths to Canada. Albertans are judging the UCP by their actions, not their words, so will the Premier admit that we wouldn't be here if the UCP wasn't a separatist party?

The Speaker: The hon. Justice minister.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Theatrics aside, neither the government nor the UCP had anything to do with the leaked data. We know that the allegations are focused against another party entirely, another group that has no connection with the government of Alberta, but once again I'll reiterate time and again that the protection and privacy of Albertans and their data is of utmost importance to this government. That is exactly why the RCMP, the Privacy Commissioner, and Elections Alberta are investigating. In the mind of the CEO of Elections Alberta, that's exactly how we should proceed.

The Speaker: The second question belongs to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: So awkward for the UCP since they knew about the breach but didn't do a single thing about it.

Alberta Forever Canada Citizen Initiative

Ms Pancholi: The separatists claimed to have 300,000 signatures, but every single signature on that petition is now questionable. Another petition was tabled almost six months ago in the Legislature with far more verified signatures. Nearly half a million proud Albertans and Canadians signed the forever Canada petition, and this morning the UCP once again chose to ignore them. The UCP were too scared to even speak to our motion that every MLA in this House should vote this week on the petition question, "Do you agree that Alberta should remain in Canada?" If the UCP isn't a separatist party, why are the UCP so afraid to answer that question?

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, nothing could be less accurate. We've said time and again that we are encouraging and we're very – we want Alberta to remain a very strong entity in Canada. We also want Canada to respect Alberta's jurisdiction and Alberta's lane. A strong Alberta means a strong Canada. A strong Canada means a strong Alberta. Albertans are frustrated with how the federal government has been treating this province. We wish that the NDP would stand with us in defending Albertans against the federal government.

Ms Pancholi: This was all predictable. The Premier opened the door wide to let her party get taken over by separatists. They helped her win the leadership of the UCP after all. Now that she's changed the laws for them and given them everything they want, they take advantage of her generosity and leak the personal information of 3 million Albertans. Why is the Premier siding with the separatists and ignoring the Albertans who signed the forever Canada petition, the ones who followed the laws, played by the rules the UCP kept changing, and put forward a petition signed by more Albertans than her separatist friends on a question that an overwhelming majority of Albertans support? When will the Premier be on their side?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, this morning in committee that member tried to block 400,000 Albertan voices by implying they signed a petition they did not sign while trying to push forward some other agenda that made absolutely no sense in front of the committee. At the end of the day, you've got the NDP: they don't bother to call when they find out that people are being doxed and hold it for political purposes, and they go to committee and use petitions for political purposes. This side of the House is going to make sure that all Albertans who participate in this process are heard and are respected.

Ms Pancholi: Mr. Speaker, it's remarkable that member can still stand after spinning so hard. It's not too late to have a vote in the Legislature before the House rises this week on the question: do you agree that Alberta should remain in Canada? The Premier and the UCP bent over backwards at every turn to let separatists put their version of that question before Albertans. They lit an out-of-control fire in this province, all so that a question on separatism could be asked. Every single UCP MLA with a shred of decency should be willing to stand in this place and answer it, but they are all clearly afraid. Does the Premier have the courage to answer? Does the Premier agree that Alberta should remain in Canada? Anything other than yes is an admission of separatism.

Mr. Nixon: I'm proud to work for a Premier who has been very clear on her position. She believes in a strong Alberta in a united

Canada, but she also believes in letting Albertans have their voices heard, to participate in democracy. This side of the Legislature: not scared of hearing what Albertans think. We're proud to work for the people of Alberta. That side of the House is absolutely petrified to be able to let Albertans have their say; that's why they try to block them. That member today just tried to block 400,000 Alberta voices. Mr. Speaker, through you: shame on her.

The Speaker: The third set of questions belongs to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 1:59.

Investigation of Electoral List Distribution and Use

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, on April 16 the Premier's staff received an invitation to attend a meeting for the separatist Centurion Project. The separatists, led by David Parker, knew who in the UCP caucus to invite because they've been connected for years. On that call Parker exposed illegally obtained private data of 3 million Albertans, and Parker demonstrated how to dox former Premier Kenney. To the Premier: why is it acceptable that government staff did nothing about an obvious data breach?

2:00

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did answer the question last week. I think the member opposite knows that at caucus they always have individuals who monitor the events of opposing political parties and political movements. At this particular meeting there was nothing that appeared out of the ordinary. No one talked about the list being obtained illegally. In fact, the only entity that could know that the list was illegal was Elections Alberta. They were the only one who had the information about what the seeded list contained, and I can tell you they've done their work. They're in the middle of an investigation, and we support their work.

Ms Gray: Let's be very clear that the NDP saw the exact same thing, and we went to the cops because it is not ordinary; it is not okay. The Premier's staff confirmed to the media that they attended the meeting. That leaves only two possibilities.

An Hon. Member: Are you turning yourself in?

Ms Gray: One, the Premier's staff saw a website where anyone could create an account and look up any Albertan's personal private data and they didn't tell anyone, or two, they did inform the Premier and her chief of staff, who chose to do nothing. This was not ordinary. Which is it, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: At 2:01 a point of order is noted.
That takes us to the hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is leaving out an important piece of information. They also knew that a journalist had received a tip about a leak of the Elections Alberta data and that the same reporter had received a notification that it was not going to be investigated. We didn't have that information. It would have been nice for us to have that information, but they kept it secret for political purposes because they wanted to imply somehow that we were to blame for the actions of another political party. Fortunately, Elections Alberta, the RCMP, and the Privacy

Commissioner know who to investigate. They're doing those investigations, and we support them.

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility as elected officials, and the staff who work for us have the same responsibility, to call out potentially illegal behaviour, and that's especially appropriate when someone demonstrates a website where anybody can sign up and they use Jason Kenney as the example. It belies belief. The Premier's caucus has become a place where staff seem to act without ethics or integrity. Or did the Premier knowingly ignore one of the largest data breaches in Canadian history, putting 3 million Albertans at risk for weeks?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, this is a list that is controlled by Elections Alberta. They gave it to a political party. It was seeded. When they discovered that it had been used inappropriately, they launched an investigation and got the RCMP involved. In fact, the only reason the members opposite know that 568 people have admitted to incorrect access and 23 of them got the full access is because of the investigation Elections Alberta is doing. There's a reason we have independent offices. It's so that they can control the data, they can control the investigation, and I hope that they hold people accountable as should they.

Parliamentary Secretaries' Allowances and Expenses

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, on Thursday the Premier signed off on a \$6,000 a year raise for UCP MLAs that she's named parliamentary secretaries. This while Albertans struggle to afford filling up the gas tank, something the Premier and her cabinet repeatedly refuse to help with. The Premier always finds time and money to give her inner circle big raises. Why did the Premier decide to give her parliamentary secretaries a raise now while refusing to give Albertans a break from gas taxes?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. That decision was made some months ago, and the regulations were just affirmed. I can tell you the hard work of our parliamentary secretaries needs to be supported, so they are given an extra, small stipend in order to do things. Like our parliamentary secretary for Affordability and Utilities: go around the province and do a comprehensive investigation into Albertans' attitudes on nuclear power, which we hope we'll be able to add to the grid. We've got parliamentary secretaries for rural health south and north that have been visiting all of our hospitals and giving great advice about how to make improvements. That's the reason. They're doing great work, and we need to support them.

Ms Gray: The Premier allowed her MLAs to increase their housing allowance last year because rents jumped. Did regular Albertans get that same subsidy? No, they did not. The Premier's new raise for her parliamentary secretaries is another example of the UCP helping themselves and ignoring Albertans. Minimum wage Albertans work hard for their money. They deserve to get a raise. But the Premier keeps finding money for her MLAs and not for Albertans. Why does the Premier keep paying her team more while doing nothing for everyday Albertans who are struggling?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The best thing that we can do for struggling Albertans, especially youth Albertans, is to make sure

that they have got a job to go to. That's part of the reason we're keeping minimum wage moderate. When they raised minimum wage by \$5, do you know who got hurt the most? It was those in rural Alberta and those kids 15 to 24 who ended up losing their hours and losing their jobs. That's the reason why in part we have an unprecedented unemployment crisis among our youth today. We are doing everything we can to continue to grow jobs, and we have; 277,000 jobs since I got elected in October 2022. That's a record of success.

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, what the Premier calls an extra, small stipend is life-changing money for an everyday, average Albertan. A \$6,000-a-year raise for the Premier's inner circle of parliamentary secretary MLAs without a dollar more to anyone else is ludicrous. In an affordability crisis, when Alberta families struggle to put food on the table and gas in the tank, the Premier's priorities couldn't be further from what other Albertans are experiencing. Why, when they've run up a \$9.4 billion deficit, is the Premier giving MLAs a raise?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know the members opposite don't believe in rewarding hard-working public servants. They gave zero per cent increases all the way through their time in office, zero per cent to nurses, zero per cent to teachers. We approached our negotiations in a very different way. We knew that there had been an inflation crisis. We knew that our hard-working nurses, teachers, social workers, and other front-line services needed to have a raise, so they got 3 per cent each year for the next four years. We support them in being able to make sure that they can address their cost of living. When people are working for the public service, they deserve to be paid appropriately.

The Speaker: Okay. We've reached the point where there are no preambles on supplementaries.

Alberta Separatism

Member Irwin: It has been many months since we urged this Premier to denounce separatism, to sign a pledge to affirm her commitment to this country, to do anything to show that she's really on Team Canada. She's refused. Worse than doing nothing, she has enacted legislation that explicitly paves the way to breaking up our beautiful country. Albertans do not forget that it was this Premier who, while other leaders across Canada stood up against Trump and his tariffs, well, flew to Mar-a-Lago. So will the Premier today, once and for all, be a leader for all Albertans and denounce separatism? And let's have the Premier answer.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has said time and again that we believe in a strong Alberta within a united Canada because we know that a strong Canada needs a strong, prosperous Alberta, the same Alberta that's created over 100,000 jobs year over year, the same Alberta that continues to put billions and billions of dollars to support the rest of the country so that all provinces have equal social services like education and health care. We're also the only Legislature that has all flags of all the provinces in our Chamber. We believe in supporting a strong Canada, but Canada needs to support a strong Alberta.

Member Irwin: Given that that's clearly a no, let's talk a little bit more about this Premier's track record. Given that she could have

acted early to ensure a united Team Canada approach in her own UCP caucus – as we know, some of her MLAs are on the record as separatists – but instead she's busy trying to keep all her MLAs happy no matter the cost and given that just last week she gave many of them a \$500 a month raise while Albertans on AISH living in poverty get monthly benefits cut by \$200, it feels like this Premier is living in fear of her own members. Will she finally take a stand and toss out the separatists from her caucus?

The Speaker: That was about the most extended preamble I've heard in a long time, I think. Anyways, we'll wait for the next question. [interjections] This isn't debate time. Just make sure there are no preambles in the third.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for reminding the members that there is no preamble to those questions. Sometimes the rules of this Chamber elude the members opposite, but I'm happy to remind that in this place we engage in robust debate, which is for the benefit of the entire province. It's why on this side of the House we also believe for the benefit of the province in attracting billions of dollars of new investment right here to Alberta. In turn, those are creating hundreds of thousands of jobs, mortgage-paying, grocery-buying, sports-fee-paying jobs, the kinds of jobs that help people in this province stay in this province, all the while keeping taxes low on everyone.

2:10

Member Irwin: Given that there's nothing, again, from this Premier and nothing to show leadership on that side of the House and given it's that same Premier who's made it so much easier for those who wish to tear our country apart and her own lack of leadership has led to a massive data leak, putting at risk the private information of millions, and given that Albertans have lost trust in this government and they certainly do not trust this Premier to run a referendum, will the Premier explain to us all today how she plans to make a referendum fair, valid, and secure? If she can't outline her plans, then will she just call an election?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite has brought to light an interesting difference between the members opposite and the leadership style of the government. When they were in government between 2015 and 2019, their leader couldn't even be bothered to go to Ottawa to defend Alberta's best interests against the no-more-pipelines bill. On this side of the House our Premier just met with the Prime Minister to continue to advance the memorandum of understanding, getting Alberta's world-class energy products to new markets around the world and in turn creating thousands of jobs and billions in investment. Shame on the members opposite. They need to get on Team Alberta.

NAIT Advanced Skills Centre

Mr. Wiebe: Mr. Speaker, skilled trades workers help build Alberta every single day. They build homes, maintain infrastructure, support our energy sector, and keep our economy moving forward. Across the province thousands of Albertans are choosing careers in the skilled trades because they offer rewarding and strong opportunities close to home. Alberta's economy depends on a strong skilled workforce and modern training opportunities for them. Can the Minister of Advanced Education tell the House what our government is doing to support skilled trades training and apprenticeship education?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, our government is investing \$384 million over three years to build an advanced skills centre at NAIT, one of the largest investments in skilled trades training infrastructure in Alberta's history. This investment will help create 5,500 additional apprenticeship training spaces every year once the facility opens in 2030. The project will add approximately 625,000 square feet to NAIT's main campus and bring together 29 programs in actual, modern-job-site-inspired learning spaces.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for his answer. Given that skilled trades workers help build our homes, maintain our roads, and support industries across Alberta and further given that more than 80,000 Albertans are currently registered as apprentices, can the same minister explain how the investment announced today will help create more opportunities for Albertans to pursue rewarding careers in skilled trades while supporting industries that rely on a strong, highly trained workforce across our province?

Mr. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, we're nearing an all-time high of 80,000 registered apprenticeships, and this investment will help ensure training capacity keeps pace with growing demand. The facility will provide hands-on training using modern equipment and employer-informed learning environments designed to reflect real-world job sites. This investment will help strengthen Alberta's skilled workforce pipeline in sectors critical to our economy including construction, manufacturing, transportation, and energy.

The Speaker: The member.

Mr. Wiebe: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for his great work promoting the trades. Given that Alberta relies on skilled trades workers to support housing construction, infrastructure projects, and energy development and given that as our economy grows, industries will need modern training spaces and hands-on learning opportunities, to the minister: why are we making investments in apprenticeship education and skilled trades training, and why is it a priority for our government and Alberta's economy and workforce?

Mr. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, supporting skilled trades training is an investment in Alberta's future workforce, future infrastructure, and future economic success. Investments in apprenticeship education help ensure Albertans can access rewarding careers while giving employers the workforce needed to deliver projects across the province. Facilities like NAIT's advanced skills centre provide modern, hands-on learning environments and prepare apprentices for the realities of the workplace. Our government is making these investments because apprenticeship education directly connects training with workforce demand and supports long-term economic growth.

Electoral List Disclosure and Consumer Protection

Mr. Deol: Albertans have witnessed something unprecedented in the history of this province. A separatist group leaked the personal information of nearly 3 million Albertans in a massive data breach. Albertans are worried. They are afraid their identities could be stolen and their finances destroyed. My Bill 210 would give Albertans stronger tools to protect themselves from identity theft and credit fraud before damage is done. Albertans deserve action,

not silence. Will the UCP government support this bill and stand up for Albertans at risk?

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

Mr. Nally: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to that member for the question. Nobody deserves to get ripped off, which is why Alberta has strong protections in place related to credit reporting and consumer fraud. We agree this is a serious issue, and that is why our government is already engaged with Albertans, industry partners, and consumer groups on potential additional protections that we can bring forward. We want to make sure that any future changes are practical, effective, and work for both customers and businesses.

Mr. Deol: Given that fraud remains one of the most serious crimes in Alberta and given that nearly 3 million Albertans had their personal information exposed in this massive breach, people across this province are deeply worried and given that Albertans are contacting our offices asking how they can protect themselves and their families from identity theft and financial fraud, Albertans deserve leadership during a crisis like this. Will the Premier finally act and support our real protections for Albertans now facing serious risk because of this unprecedented data breach?

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, the intent of this proposal is good, but many of these concepts overlap with work that's already under way. Alberta already limits when credit reports can be accessed, and in many cases Albertans must provide express consent before their information can be released. Consumer protection is about finding the right balance between protecting Albertans and ensuring that legitimate businesses continue operating effectively.

Mr. Deol: Given that Alberta's Information and Privacy Commissioner has warned Albertans about identity-related fraud after this massive breach and given that identity theft can destroy credit, savings, and peace of mind for years and given that my Bill 210 gives consumers practical and proven tools to stop fraud before it happens, which are common-sense protections that could save families from financial hardship and distress, why is this Premier refusing to support this bill and failing Albertans facing this serious and growing threat in this province?

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue, especially for victims of identity theft, financial exploitation, elder abuse, and coerced debt. Our government is currently reviewing protections in other jurisdictions, including credit-freeze measures used in places like Quebec and Ontario. We want to make sure there's time to engage properly with Albertan lenders and industry partners to make sure any additional protections are thoughtful, workable, and effective in practice.

Provincial Response to Electoral List Disclosure (continued)

Mr. Kasawski: It's been over a week since Albertans learned of the largest data breach in our history, but no one from the government has even held a press conference to explain to Albertans the situation, the risks they face, and what the government is doing to deal with this serious situation. No one in the government has stepped up to a mic to communicate to Albertans about what has happened, how it will impact them, and what measures will be put in place to protect our identities. Why hasn't the government done anything for Albertans to manage the largest data breach in our

history? I'm not asking about an investigation. This is a disaster; it demands leadership.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We continue to say time and again that this is an incredibly important issue, and we understand how extreme it is. We do understand that, and we certainly are working with the agencies that are tasked with investigating and working towards resolution. We will allow Elections Alberta and the RCMP to complete their investigations, and we further welcome the investigation of the Privacy Commissioner, who has just announced that they will be conducting an investigation as well. We want to get to the bottom of this just as much as the members, for the sake of Albertans.

2:20

Mr. Kasawski: Given we're only starting to hear about the impacts the data breach is having on Albertans, given Crown prosecutors, law enforcement, public figures, people in hiding are all on high alert – some are already relocating – given I know at least one person who is terrified because their address has never been listed anywhere since they started their career 27 years ago, given all these responses come with costs and expenses, what will the government be doing to help these Albertans deal with their names, home addresses, and phone numbers being stolen?

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member brings up a very good point. We agree with the hon. member that every single Albertan should feel safe in their homes and their communities, and protecting that personal information remains of utmost importance to us. We want those that are involved, we want those that were responsible to be held accountable, and we also want to make it known to all Albertans that there are support services in place, of course, to provide services for people who feel immediate threat, especially those that are suffering or escaping domestic violence and otherwise. If you're in urgent need, call 911.

Mr. Kasawski: Given the risk of being scammed, defrauded, and robbed by online pirates is incredibly high due to the voter list data breach, given if Albertans are scammed and defrauded of money by criminals that access the government data, the government of Alberta could be held responsible and liable for the losses Albertans suffer, given the government is doing nothing to mitigate the negative outcomes from the data breach, what is the Alberta government's legal exposure to being sued by Albertans defrauded by the voter list data breach?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're not going to speculate on scenarios that the hon. member said. What we will say is this. Every independent agency that is tasked with conducting investigations of all types that relate to these types of issues is doing everything they can. We have faith in the RCMP. We certainly have faith in Elections Alberta and the Privacy Commissioner to complete their investigations, to hold those individuals who were responsible accountable. We'll make sure that those officers are funded and supported with all of the resources that they need to do what they need to do.

The Speaker: The next question goes to Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Continuing Care System

Mrs. Sawyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills many people remember growing up on the farm, picking rocks, setting gopher traps to earn a few nickels a tail, or shovelling out grain bins alongside parents and grandparents. Life was simple as a kid surrounded by the ones we love, and we wish we could stay that way forever, but aging is a fact of life. For many families the baby boomer generation is hitting that age of retiring and needing assisted living accommodations. To the Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services: what is Alberta's strategy to address our province's aging population?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've committed to fixing the NDP's mess when it comes to continuing care in this province, the NDP who just recently heckled in this place to tell fixed-income retired seniors to get a job, which probably explains, when they were in government, why they never built any new continuing care homes, why they never invested in appropriate ways to keep care of our seniors. This government is investing \$6.6 billion this year alone in our senior population and investing in the largest continuing care capital program in the history of the province to overcome the deficit that we inherited from the Official Opposition.

The Speaker: The member.

Mrs. Sawyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for standing up for rural seniors. Given that like people, buildings are also getting older while technology keeps improving and further given that those modern advancements in patient care have left us needing to upgrade some of this province's continuing care homes, can the same minister please explain how the continuing care home quality-of-life initiatives grant program will benefit the good people of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right. The leader of the Official Opposition actually recently made fun of people who own pickup trucks, so obviously we can't depend on him or his party to be able to keep care of rural Albertans. They left a pretty significant deficit when it came to senior lodges inside rural Alberta.

Just recently we announced millions of dollars, including in the hon. member's riding. They're going to be able to make sure that we can improve and bring back online 4,000 units for rural Alberta seniors to make sure they can remain in their communities and remain with their friends, families, and be able to age in the best way possible inside their communities right here in rural Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. Sawyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again thank you to the minister. Given that many seniors have a hard time giving up their personal spaces and admitting they need support and further given that our aging population is spread many kilometres apart, especially across rural parts of the province, to the same minister: how are you working to ensure these rural assisted living spaces still have a little country charm that still feels like home while treating our seniors with the dignity and respect they deserve?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, we again continue to invest in capital maintenance and renewal dollars to make sure our rural lodges can be brought back up to the level that they should be at. Again, they were treated very, very poorly underneath the NDP government who does not care about rural Alberta. We're also at the same time making sure that we are investing in units all across

the province, including in rural Alberta. Unfortunately, the NDP never built one new unit of continuing care when they were in power. This side of the House has already increased our continuing care capacity by 10 per cent because we do care about seniors, unlike the Official Opposition.

Energy Industry Surface Rights and Property Tax Payments

Mr. Schmidt: Recent media reports show that the Minister of Finance has collected almost \$100,000 in surface rights compensation ordered by the Land and Property Rights Tribunal since 2021. The latest data from Municipal Affairs indicates that approximately 40 per cent of the thousands of applicants to the tribunal are still waiting for decisions on their applications, yet the Finance minister seems to get paid on time. Did the Land and Property Rights Tribunal give the Minister of Finance favourable treatment and issue decisions on his applications while thousands of other Albertans are still waiting in line behind him?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, we think it's incredibly important to make sure that applicants of the Land and Property Rights Tribunal get their fair say and money back as it comes forward. We're continuing to work. We've made great progress on working on backlogs, and we're continuing to support folks who have surface rights and to make sure those rights are honoured by the Land and Property Rights Tribunal. We take those rights very seriously.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, given they take the minister's rights more seriously than everybody else's and given that payments ordered by the tribunal become debts owing to the Crown and given that debts owing to the Crown are to be collected by the Minister of Finance and given that media reports that less than 1 per cent of payments ordered by the tribunal are ever collected, meaning the Finance minister's surface rights payments are almost all public dollars, what will the Finance minister do to collect these debts, or is he happy to see public money keep lining his pockets while some of his friends in oil and gas get away without paying their bills?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, oil and gas companies have the same obligation every other citizen does. Whether you're an individual or corporate, you have an obligation to pay your taxes, pay your debts, and part of that grand bargain we have are surface rights that belong to those landowners, just as municipalities are entitled to the taxes that they are owed for the work that municipalities do to make sure that we can continue operating and developing our resources in the world-class way Alberta does in partnership.

The AER has strengthened teeth now after our announcement with the PTAS group and the working group that is now coming forward so that we can make sure we can enforce all of that and have a fair deal for Albertans.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that apparently the minister is fine with collecting public dollars and letting oil and gas off the hook and given that cabinet makes many decisions affecting the operation of oil and gas wells, from closure policies, tax holidays, royalty breaks, lease payments on public lands to name but a few and given that cabinet is currently considering its so-called mature asset strategy, which proposes using even more public dollars to deal with oil and gas sites and given that the minister has personal financial consequences for these decisions, which create an obvious conflict of interest, will the minister recuse himself from all future decisions about this matter?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to mature assets, we understand that we want to continue extending the lifespan of

those assets so they can continue to provide jobs and revenue in those municipalities and make sure that we continue to have a path forward for a strong rural Alberta to make sure that the taxes are paid and that the oil and gas industry that has built so much of this province and the infrastructure continues to thrive across this province for generations to come. We take seriously mature assets. We take seriously their obligations to municipalities and that they continue to get their fair share. It's that co-operation that we've seen in announcements like the PTAS co-operation together that is going to drive success in this province, in industry, and . . .

The Speaker: When I stand up, that's the end of it.

The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

2:30 Urgent Care Centres Capital Plan

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Urgent care centres are an important piece of the puzzle as they bridge the gap between primary care and emergency rooms. While this government recognizes the importance of bridging this gap, it is committed to building a new urgent care centre in Cold Lake to serve my constituents, which is desperately needed. To the Minister of Hospital and Surgical Health Services: is the required funding for the Cold Lake urgent care centre in Budget 2026?

The Speaker: The hon. the minister of hospitals.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to that member, who's been a huge advocate for an urgent care centre in his region. Each year our emergency departments see over 2 million visits, with nearly one-third classified as less urgent and potentially treatable in an urgent care setting. That's why our government is investing in urgent care centres across Alberta, so Albertans can receive the right care in the right place at the right time, ideally closer to home. Budget 2026 supports this with \$39 million invested over three years for planning and land acquisition related to eight new urgent care centres, including in Cold Lake.

The Speaker: Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for that response. Given this government is committed to improving health care access for all Albertans, including rural Albertans in my constituency, and further given that increased health care capacity in the Lakeland will allow my constituents to receive care right near and next to their homes, to the same minister: why is urgent care so important, and what does this investment do in health care, and what does it mean for Cold Lake and the surrounding areas?

Thank you, Minister.

The Speaker: The minister of hospitals.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member for his advocacy. Albertans do deserve access to timely, high-quality health care regardless of where they live. The proposed urgent care centre will serve a catchment area of more than 37,000 Albertans, helping meet local demand. Emergency health services responds to over 1,600 events each year in Cold Lake, many of which could be appropriately treated in an urgent care setting. By expanding access to the right level of care, we can reduce congestion in hospitals, ensure patients are treated faster, and allow emergency departments to focus on more critical cases.

The Speaker: The member.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again thank you to the minister for that response. Given that this new facility will deliver better access to health care for my constituents and further given that increased urgent care capacity will reduce strain on the local emergency rooms, freeing up resources for patients who desperately need it the most, to the same minister: what can my constituents expect as far as a timeline for this important project, and when can this new centre be treating patients in the Lakeland region?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We are currently in the functional planning phase for the Cold Lake urgent care centre, which will determine timelines for construction and opening. This is essential to ensure the facility is designed to meet the long-term needs of the community. In the meantime we're investing about \$13 million over three years through the capital maintenance and renewal program to optimize the Cold Lake health care centre, ensuring it will continue to meet the current needs of the community. This multipronged approach strengthens a more responsive and resilient health system for patients today and into the future.

Thank you.

Alberta Separatism

(continued)

Mr. Ip: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are still reeling from the shocking news of the Elections Alberta data breach. They're concerned that their personal information was made available to any bad actor, foreign or domestic, who had an e-mail address and a desire to access it. Many are concerned for their safety. If that wasn't enough, they're concerned that this UCP's separatist friends could have improperly used their data to inflate the Stay Free Alberta petition numbers. Free and fair? How can the Premier and members of this government make that claim with a straight face?

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know by now, since this is probably the third or fourth round of this, that Elections Alberta has employed a very robust policy in verifying signatures. They've stated publicly that they're going to implement an even heightened way of assessing signatures that will ensure the accuracy and validity of those signatures. Elections Alberta has done a remarkable job of making sure that all of the petitions that have been submitted forward are verified properly. They've announced that they're going to do more to make sure that these signatures are verified. We'll have faith in that office to continue to do the job that it does best.

Mr. Ip: Given that this government bends over backwards to make life easier for the separatists who are trying to take over their own party, given that they've changed the rules every which way to ease the path for a separatist referendum and given that at least one of the Premier's own staff members knew that the personal data of over 3 million Albertans had been illegitimately obtained by separatists – but the Premier did nothing about it – their actions only point in one direction, Mr. Speaker. How can Albertans trust that this government will work to stay in Canada?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words. That's why the Premier has continued to act like a true leader of this province by meeting with the Prime Minister to continue to advance the interests of our province, including getting our world-class resources to new markets, something that we've been doing for a

long time but we'll continue to do as we push against those who would try to fight against Alberta, the same people who are across the aisle, who think Alberta should just capitulate to Ottawa no matter what happens. They did it for four years when they were in government. Their leader failed epically. It's why she's out of government, and it's why they're going to stay out of government as long as we can tell.

Mr. Ip: Given that this government continues to pave the way for the separatist cause, all while putting up roadblocks for the millions of Albertans who want to stay in Canada, given that today the UCP cut off debate in committee rather than let the forever Canada petition question go to a vote in the Legislature and given that the UCP knew about the data breach, did not report it, and still refuses to acknowledge the obvious potential for fraud with the separatist petition, when will this government quit the charade and admit they're actively working to break Canada apart?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, what an absurd assertion. We believe in a strong Alberta within a united Canada. We couldn't say it more and the more again. We're still the same province that continues to generate billions of dollars for the rest of Canada for the benefit of residents across this entire country. While the members opposite call public consultation a sham, we call it direct democracy. It's why we've had the what's next panel, led by the Premier and members of caucus and the public, to get a better idea of what Albertans care about most. That's our job. They missed the assignment.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Riverview.

Provincial Response to Electoral List Disclosure

(continued)

Ms Sigurdson: Alberta seniors were harmed by the voters list data breach because they rely on routine, paper-based systems and are trusting. Exposure of names, addresses, and voting history heightens risks of identity theft, fraud, and targeted scams that already disproportionately affect seniors. We know that the data breaches that used stolen personal information may be used to open credit accounts, redirect pensions, or commit tax fraud. Sadly, this may occur without being noticed for significant periods of time. What is the minister of seniors doing to protect seniors who've had their information made public?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, we take the data leak very seriously. Unlike the Official Opposition Leader, who sat on that information for weeks for political purposes, instead we are making sure that we work with our outside agencies and officers of this Legislature to make sure that we protect seniors going forward. Unlike the NDP, who continue all day through question period to ask for political interference, we reject that. Instead, we are going to depend on and work with the officers of the Legislature to make sure that we get this right.

Ms Sigurdson: Given seniors are most vulnerable because they have high levels of trust in authority, live on fixed incomes, have lower digital literacy for spotting online harms and reluctance in reporting scams and given that since the UCP has not strengthened the Privacy Commissioner's authority to regulate political parties despite the commissioner's advocacy, thus making the UCP culpable in creating this fiasco, when will the UCP protect Albertans' personal information from being used by illegal third parties like the separatists?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, that member, who spent her entire legislative session this spring voting against supports for seniors, probably should not be up lecturing this side of the Legislature. Again, we work with our independent officers. We have processes in place for elder abuse that we stand with and invest in. Unlike the NDP, who continue to call for political interference, we know what would happen if they ever got the reins of power. Thank God they won't, because clearly they're prepared to politically interfere each and every time. On this side of the House . . .

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Sigurdson: Given those responsible for the data breach are members of the UCP and given that a senior staff member did nothing when the illegally obtained information of Albertans was shared and given the Premier has done nothing to reassure Albertans that our personal information is being safeguarded and those responsible are being held accountable, when will the Premier take meaningful steps to ensure this never happens again, or is this kind of ethical violation just par for the course for the Premier?

2:40

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The absurdity of that question is obvious. Nobody from the government, nobody from the UCP, was responsible for this data leak. It was a completely different entity that's been alleged to have released this information. What I can tell you is that the RCMP and Elections Alberta and the Privacy Commissioner are all investigating. That member should know that all those organizations operate independently. We do not investigate the investigator. We allow them to have the opportunity to look into what they need to do and assess the situation, lay charges where appropriate. We're going to let them do their jobs. That's a ridiculous question.

The Speaker: Calgary-East.

Alberta Immigrant Impact Awards

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's culture is rooted in the resilience, hard work, talent, and community spirit of those who choose to call this province home. The Alberta immigrant impact award highlights the achievement of newcomers who contribute across sectors such as business, science, arts, and community service, enriching both our economy and society. To the Associate Minister of Multiculturalism: can you please share with the Assembly the importance of these awards and how they recognize the contributions of newcomers across Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. Associate Minister of Multiculturalism.

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. The Alberta immigrant impact awards celebrate the many contributions newcomers continue to make to our province through entrepreneurship, innovation, artistic expressions, volunteerism, and community leadership. We are proud of the culture and the heritage that make Alberta the best place to live, work, and raise a family. These awards recognize individuals who continue to strengthen our economy, our communities, and help make Alberta a better place to call home.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that the Alberta immigrant impact awards recognize individuals

based on criteria such as leadership, impact, originality, and community contributions and further given that a fair, transparent nomination process ensures that deserving individuals are recognized, to the same minister: can you please outline for this Assembly the nomination and application process and how candidates are encouraged to apply?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are eight categories recognizing contributions in areas such as entrepreneurial spirit, young leaders, arts and sports, career and academic contributions, immigrant excellence, inclusive workplace, small community enhancement, immigrant women's impact. These awards celebrate the meaningful contributions that newcomers make across Alberta, and all nominations go through a very fair and thorough process of evaluation. Award nominations are now open and can be submitted through alberta.ca/alberta-immigrant-impact-awards.

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

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that celebrating the achievements of newcomers helps foster inclusion, inspire others, and highlight the value of their contributions to our province's future and further given that these contributions support innovation, community development, and economic growth across Alberta, can the minister please clarify how the Alberta immigrant impact awards are helping to strengthen newcomer community integration and showcase the value of immigrants across our province?

The Speaker: The Associate Minister of Multiculturalism.

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. The Alberta immigrant impact awards highlight the important contributions newcomers continue to make in shaping Alberta's future through leadership, innovation, charitable work, business development, and community service by strengthening our economy and enriching communities across our province. Alberta is stronger because of the people who choose to make this province their home. I encourage all members of this House to promote these awards in their communities and submit nominations before the extended deadline of June 12.

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

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Alberta Mid-sized Cities

Mr. Lundy: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In early February I had the pleasure of attending the Mid-Sized Cities Mayors' Caucus annual general meeting. The Mid-Sized Cities Mayors' Caucus represents 24 municipalities across 28 provincial ridings. This caucus has made a deliberate decision to join together and advocate in a unified voice.

It's easy to see the benefits. After all, mid-sized cities are home to over 1 million Albertans, nearly 25 per cent of Alberta's population, and are among the fastest growing communities in our province. From the communities in my riding like Leduc and Beaumont to other mid-sized cities across Alberta, these municipalities play an essential role in supporting economic growth, strengthening regional ties, and maintaining a high quality of life for all Albertans.

Mid-sized cities are where families lay their roots, where businesses expand, and where innovation happens every day. They serve as regional hubs for health care, education, transportation, and employment, supporting not only their residents but also the surrounding rural communities. In many ways these cities bridge the gap between rural and urban Alberta, helping ensure every Albertan has access to the opportunity and prosperity that our province has to offer.

Across the province mayors and councils are focusing on their communities' priorities by working together. They're tackling issues that affect all Albertans, like infrastructure, housing, public safety, and sustainable growth. I was encouraged by the dialogue between these municipal leaders and our government and by the commitment to partnership, fiscal responsibility, and long-term planning. By working together, we're protecting essential services, managing rapid growth, and building resilient communities for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta mid-sized cities are not just growing. They're leading. They're the powerhouses of regional economies, they're leaders for innovation, and they're the communities where Albertans can build their futures, pursue new opportunities, and contribute to a thriving Alberta.

To the mayors, councils, administrators, and community partners who keep this momentum going: thank you. Your work strengthens families, supports local businesses, and keeps our province moving forward together.

The Speaker: Lethbridge-West.

Lethbridge Fire and Emergency Services

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are seven municipalities in Alberta that rely on the outstanding care provided by integrated fire-ambulance services, systems where firefighters are also fully trained paramedics. This includes Lethbridge. When you call 911 in my community, trained paramedics respond whether in an ambulance or a fire truck. Even when ambulances are fully deployed, care still arrives. Without this model red alerts with no available ambulances are common.

Our world-class emergency response system is now under threat as the province wants to force renegotiation of Lethbridge's ambulance contract, which will again download costs onto the city. At Lethbridge's last Community Issues Committee meeting the officials showed that these forced changes could add \$3.7 million in costs next year, growing to \$4.2 and \$4.6 million the following years, which will increase taxes.

Emergency medical care is not a bargain bin service. No one calls 911 asking for the cheapest option or longer wait times, but EHS has said that without the city taking on additional costs, they'll be changing how emergency services are provided. The province created the situation, and they must realize that their disregard for Lethbridge residents is unacceptable. I wonder what the Member for Lethbridge-East thinks about this.

I'm also deeply disappointed by the disregard of the effects of this process on our firefighters and paramedics. Brent Nunweiler, president of the Lethbridge Firefighters, IAFF local 237, stated: "The last month and a half has been especially hard. Our mental health is already iffy on a good day. When we're looking at whether we have job losses, mortgages to pay, and all of those things, you can add that onto the calls, the trauma we see every day. It has not been easy for me or for our members."

The integrated model is a strength. The UCP government needs to stop downloading costs onto municipalities and fully fund a superior life-saving service.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: Calgary-Varsity.

Dr. Metz: Thank you. I have a letter that I'd like to table. I have five copies. This is a letter written by a Calgarian that is demanding that there be a full public inquiry of the data leak from Elections Alberta.

2:50

The Speaker: Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Haji: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table a report from Friends of Medicare. It's Filling the Gap: Examining the Downloading of Health Care Costs onto Alberta Municipalities.

The Speaker: Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mrs. Sawyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table five requisite copies. It's of an article by Don Braid of the *Calgary Herald* published June 30, 2025, titled Alberta's pro-Canada Forces Scoop Separatists, Set Referendum Question.

I also have five copies of the citizen initiative application by the proponent, Thomas Lukaszuk, which states: "Therefore we as represented by the signatory and applicant below propose a referendum on the following question: Do you agree that Alberta should remain in Canada?"

I also have the five requisite copies from numerous tweets by Mr. Lukaszuk: "Everything you need to know about the #ForeverCanadian referendum petition."

The Speaker: Are there more tablings? Seeing none.

I have a couple. Hon. members, I noted earlier this afternoon that I will table the requisite copies of the revised Oral Question Period rotation and the revised projected sitting days calendar, both of which I am tabling right now.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of hon. Mr. Nixon, Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services, pursuant to the Advocate for Persons with Disabilities Act the Advocate for Persons with Disabilities annual report 2024-25.

On behalf of hon. Mr. McDougall, Minister of Advanced Education, pursuant to the Veterinary Profession Act the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association 2025 annual report.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we are now at points of order. The first one was called at 1:59, I think, by the Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order Insulting Language

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes. Under 23(h), (i), and (j) I called the point of order when the Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services said to the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, "Shame on her," using very specific language. In the debate leading up to that the minister also mischaracterized the member's actions in a really strange way, but specifically the language "shame on her" is the reason that I have raised this point of order.

A direct reference to an individual telling them that they should be ashamed or feel ashamed has been ruled unparliamentary in this Legislature multiple times, including on May 9, 2024, and

November 22, 2023. I believe this should be a point of order in this House. From the November 22, 2023, ruling I would just like to paraphrase what the Speaker at the time said. He said:

I do want to, in the strongest way possible . . . [referring] directly to the member in the way that she handled that and that she should feel shame . . . I have provided many, many, many comments with respect to referring to individual members and what they may or may not intend to do, and if you refer to a caucus or a government or an opposition, this is significantly less personal in its nature.

He found the minister's direct reference to the individual to be a point of order at that time. I believe this should still be a point of order in this Legislature under 23(h), (i), and (j).

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to oppose that point of order suggestion. I don't think it is a point of order. Rather, it is all part of the parliamentary debate.

It wasn't that long ago that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud in referring to the Minister of Justice and Keeper of the Great Seal said, quote: that member is a lawyer; that member should be ashamed of himself. That was not ruled out of order at the time as far as I can recall, because I subsequently used the line myself and it was not ruled out of order.

Mr. Speaker, through common debate things do get a bit heated. That doesn't mean that it is a point of order. I understand that some of the feelings may be a bit damaged on the members opposite, but that also does not constitute a point of order. Hurt feelings are not what we're here to debate. If the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud feels strongly that this is a point of order, maybe that just isn't the kind of debate the member needs to engage in, or maybe it's just not necessarily a debate that member is prepared for.

"Shame on you" and "shame on that member" are things that member has said. I find that often members of the opposition say things that are considered by our members unparliamentary. We don't call points of order, and then when you use that language in reverse on them, they call a point of order. We can go tit for tat all day.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you have the Blues in your hand and you're prepared to rule, but in my opinion it's not a point of order, and if you rule as such, I think it'd be a concerning trend that we can no longer engage in spirited debate in this Chamber.

The Speaker: Okay. I have the Blues, and I'll read to you what it says. "[That's] why they try to block them. That member just tried to block 400,000 Alberta voices. Mr. Speaker, through you: shame on her."

Let me say that the Opposition House Leader is right, that "shame" or "shame on you" has been ruled a point of order. There are other times when it hasn't, which puts all of us in an odd spot. I'll admit that. One example of not is October 29, 2025, on page 98. I think that was this Speaker talking.

[I] will say, as the Deputy Government House Leader said, that context is important . . . [that] 'shame on you' or 'shame' . . . is a pretty common parliamentary thing to do, [largely because] it's acceptable because it's better than a lot of other things [you] could . . . say.

There were interjections, and then it says here that I said:

And you're all laughing. Okay. I think that's an indication you recognize that.

I think context actually in this particular case matters. I've got to call it a point of debate. I will say to you that the part that probably makes it at least where I have to think about that is that while the hon. member did say, "Mr. Speaker, through you," which is kind of

in his favour, he then said, "Shame on her," and not "shame on them," which at least makes you have to think about that.

It's been called both ways. We're going to call it a matter of debate and with an encouragement to – while vigorous debate is allowed and dare I say encouraged in here, trying to upset the House probably isn't. I don't think this is a case of that, but again, with this particular phrase which has been ruled both ways a number of times, I would just caution everybody to be somewhat cautious as we go forward. This matter is dealt with.

The next point of order is at 2:01.

Point of Order Allegations against a Member

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes. A point of order was called at 2:01 under 23(h), (i), and (j).

Just as a comment on the previous point of order, I will only say that I am the person who has called points of order. Talking about other members and their feelings as if they have hurt feelings would be inappropriate, and I did not appreciate that from the Government House Leader.

In this case, Mr. Speaker, as I was speaking about an issue that I would suggest is of great importance and a matter of debate, the data breach, the same minister, the Minister for Assisted Living and Social Services, heckled to me, "Are you going to turn yourself in?" Under 23(h), (i), and (j), suggesting that I need to turn myself into law enforcement is directly accusing me of having committed criminal acts. Inappropriate for this place. I believe this is a point of order, and I would ask that that member apologize and withdraw.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, admittedly, it was a raucous moment in the Chamber. I did not hear the comment. I'm not able to make an argument in one way or the other, but I will leave it in your hands.

The Speaker: Okay. Having heard the submissions, I have the Blues. I'll read them to you. The Opposition House Leader finished with: "[The] Premier's staff confirmed to the media that they attended the meeting. That leaves only two possibilities." Here's where it gets awkward. The Blues say an hon. member, without saying which one, says, "Are you turning yourself in?"

I would agree with the Opposition House Leader that had a member been named saying this, I think it would have been a point of order because of the longstanding pattern here. If you accuse or suggest that somebody has broken the law – and certainly "turning yourself in" would be a suggestion that somebody has broken the law because that's the kind of thing that you turn yourself in for – it would be a point of order.

But having no record of who said it and conflicting accounts of who might have said it, I can't call it a point of order. Had the person been named or admitted, it would be, so this is a good time to caution people on both sides of the House that that's not phraseology that is welcome here. Had the microphone picked up who said it, they'd be on their feet apologizing now or have somebody apologizing for them, and that puts this matter to rest.

3:00

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, absent a name, I am happy to inform the House that I will talk to my caucus about use of that such language.

The Speaker: Since that wasn't further debate, I'll accept that, and hopefully both sides will with gratitude, based on the nature of the comments.

Privilege Obstructing Members in Performance of Duty

The Speaker: There are no new points of privilege today, and that takes us to the Speaker ruling, which I shall now read to you.

Hon. members, I'm prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised by the Government House Leader on Wednesday, May 6, 2026. In terms of the administrative requirements for a question of privilege my office received a notice from the Government House Leader on May 6, 2026, at 11:12 a.m. of his intention to raise a question of privilege under Standing Order 15. As such the member has satisfied the requirement in Standing Order 15(2) for notice to be given to the Speaker at least two hours before the opening of the sitting. I would also note that the debate on this matter took place on both May 6 and May 7, and that these arguments can be found on pages 1738-1739 and pages 1790-1791 of *Alberta Hansard* for these days respectively.

Hon. members, a question of privilege is a very serious matter and should arise infrequently and be taken seriously. As to the facts of the matter before the Assembly, the Government House Leader's question of privilege has to do with, in his words,

the failure of the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona to inform the Assembly of his knowledge of the recent unauthorized distribution of the electoral list and [the] misleading and inaccurate statements in the Assembly regarding this matter.

The Government House Leader purports that the Leader of the Official Opposition's inaction in terms of not notifying the Assembly of a data breach of elector information has led to the compromising of the "rights of individual members of the Assembly to be free from obstruction, interference, intimidation, and molestation," and has put Members of the Legislative Assembly at risk. He states on page 1739 of the May 6 edition of *Hansard* that through his inaction, the Leader of the Official Opposition has "put members and their privacy and their families at risk by making them vulnerable to threats, attacks, insults, and intimidation."

The Opposition House Leader, in submissions made on Thursday, May 7, did not contest the claims made by the Government House Leader as to the actions of the Leader of the Official Opposition. However, she questioned the claim that the inaction of the Leader of the Official Opposition led to members being obstructed and interfered with in the performance of their parliamentary duties. She also notes that the Government House Leader, "in his arguments did not describe any member who was obstructed from performing their duty in this Chamber." These comments can be found on page 1790 of the *Alberta Hansard* for Thursday, May 7.

Now, hon. members, this is the first question of privilege to be raised during the second session of the 31st Legislature. The key issue has to do with the privilege of members to be free from obstruction in the performance of their parliamentary duties. As per *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, fourth edition, on page 104, it explains this particular privilege as follows:

members can... be subject to all manner of interference, obstruction and influences. Assaulting, threatening or insulting a member during a [procedure] of Parliament, or while the member is circulating within the parliamentary precinct, is [indeed] a violation of the rights of Parliament.

This procedural authority goes on to argue that in order to find a prima facie breach of privilege, the Speaker must be satisfied that there is evidence to support the member's claim that they have been impeded in the performance of their constitutional functions and that the matter is directly related to a [procedure] in Parliament.

Therefore, the parliamentary privilege in question, the freedom from obstruction in the performance of a member's duties, must relate to an interference or obstruction in the performance of a member's deliberative or legislative function. This means that the interference is not with respect to any function or duty, example, constituency office work, but rather only as it pertains to the member's parliamentary duties in connection to a parliamentary proceeding, that is a member's role as a legislator or committee member.

Hon. members, it is important to note that the purported obstruction or interference must be "real," that is to say that it has to "have occurred" and it must "not be hypothetical," as Speaker Bosley of the House of Commons ruled in 1986.

Now, as we know in this Chamber, much is expected of our leaders in society. This certainly extends to Members of the Legislative Assembly. It is incumbent on all of us to do the right thing, to be examples to our constituents and to Albertans at large, and this means reporting wrongdoings and illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, whether that be law enforcement or other organizations.

Speaker Jerome of the Federal House of Commons "observed in a 1978 ruling that society demands much of members but not all demands strictly impose a parliamentary duty" since the duties for which a member can claim privilege are his parliamentary duties.

Furthermore, in looking into this matter over the past few days, I have not found in my research any instance of a question of privilege being raised that is based on the failure of a member to disclose certain information to an Assembly. Indeed, there appears to be no precedent for this type of question of privilege.

On the matter of whether the Assembly should have been informed of the breach and, in not doing so, members were impeded in their duties, the Government House Leader did not provide insight on how this inaction has affected members in the performance of their parliamentary duties. Further, he does not offer any evidence that a member or members have been obstructed in the performance of their duties; as such, there is no evidence that such interference has occurred. Therefore, on the matters as to whether any members of the Assembly were obstructed in the performance of their duties, I can find no evidence of this.

In closing, I cannot emphasize enough the seriousness and gravity of the data breach, which is impacting millions of Albertans. However, there is no evidence to demonstrate how this breach might have affected members of the Assembly in the performance of their parliamentary duties; nor could I find any precedent for such a question of privilege. As a result, I cannot find a prima facie question of privilege on this matter, and this concludes the matter.

Orders of the Day

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 209

Consumer Protection (Affordability Measures) Amendment Act, 2026

[Adjourned debate May 4: Mr. Shepherd]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre. Nothing to add or say.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Dr. Metz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased today to rise and speak to this bill that is here to help every Albertan, in a little

way, try to balance the money that comes in with that that goes out. This is being brought forward from my colleague, the MLA for Calgary-Currie. It is private member's Bill 209, the Consumer Protection (Affordability Measures) Act, 2026.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

While the Premier and the UCP are making everything more expensive for Albertans, the Alberta NDP are proposing these little ways that can make life a bit more affordable, in this case by addressing some unexpected charges and exploitative fees. This bill will protect Albertans from being taken advantage of by some unfair business practices that are intended to squeeze more money out of their customers. There are very few businesses that are carrying out these unfair practices, but we know that we need ways to curb this.

What exactly is this bill proposing? One thing is that it will require businesses to make you aware right from the start what you will be paying for a good or a service. This is called transparent pricing. This prevents the business from adding on any last-minute charges or fees.

In thinking about this, I looked up what it would cost to buy tickets to The Guess Who concert that's coming here to Edmonton in June. There were four different ticket sellers, all different in what they tell you upfront. Different prices, slightly minimally different seating. None of them really talk about the taxes that are applicable, but, even aside from that, wow. One of them – Ticketmaster, by the way, has the highest prices – has a warning that there will be an order-processing fee of up to \$6. Okay. That sounds good. But then you get to check out, and there's also a huge service fee, which is about 30 per cent of the ticket price.

3:10

Leisure time is important to all of us. We shouldn't have to be spending all of our time comparing prices all the way to where we give our credit card to find out what the actual cost is going to be. Albertans have enough on their plate. We need to protect Albertans from these unfair practices. People will either just pay that price or go back to the start, waste their time, or maybe not go at all and we're missing out on opportunities.

This is a scam. The only reason not to inform buyers up front is to mislead them. Why else would people not be told, especially in this case, when they already have a warning about a little \$6 fee, to say nothing of a fee that is several times that that's going to be added at the end? Who is this government trying to protect by declining to support this bill? Honest businesses don't do this. Stop protecting scammers. Start protecting Albertans.

Then there is the issue of trying to cancel a subscription. Many of us have had the experience of buying something only to find that either we don't need it anymore or there's some change or something that we have to do and we need to cancel the subscription. I've certainly had this experience more than once. I love to read audiobooks. I get most of them from the Calgary public library. Shout-out to our libraries. But sometimes I don't want to wait on a wait-list; I want the book right away, so I have an Audible account.

Well, when I started with this, little did I know that there was both audible.ca and audible.com. I fell into this trap where I had the audible.com subscription, and the only way to cancel that – well, actually, I really just wanted to change it to audible.ca, but it's the same process – was that I had to phone somebody. You could sign up online, but you cannot cancel in any way other than calling. They have very limited customer service. You can't e-mail them and arrange a time. You can't e-mail them and have a conversation. You have to phone them. They're in a different time zone. They have

business hours; same time I was working. Of course, nobody answers the phone when you call. This took well over a month of trying to get through and trying to have somebody give me a call back just to get the darn subscription set up right.

I've had similar problems with my Dropbox account. I needed to change it because it was tied to an e-mail address that I no longer had. This took months of trying to figure out. There's nobody really to help you. It just takes a workaround and my credit card ending and not renewing it to actually get rid of that account.

In contrast, there are very honest businesses that don't do that. I have had excellent support from a company named Plaud, P-L-A-U-D, who immediately helped me through an e-mail exchange, organized what I needed, and cancelled one of my subscriptions because I ended up with two of them. Sometimes you don't need that extra subscription.

Now, we need some changes to make it so that people can get out of a subscription as easily as they get in. This bill would allow Albertans to cancel their subscriptions with a click. If these companies want to trap you, then they should be very clear at the beginning what you're signing up for and how you can get out of it. It shouldn't need you to have to think about cancelling your credit card or being happy that you've got a new one and you're not going to give them the new number before you carry on with your subscription. Businesses that provide ongoing value instead of trapping Albertans are what we need and what we want to support.

Why is this government against this protection for Albertans? Well, based on their record, which is to never ever pass an NDP private member's bill, I believe they simply oppose this because it came from the NDP. This is to the detriment of Albertans, just to be belligerent. Is it really hard to work together? Yes, obviously it is because we bring forward good ideas, and they are blown away or thrown down simply because they come from us. This is just to satisfy a principle of taking nothing that we suggest and working with it. To repeat the words of the minister of social services: if they suggest something, we will do the opposite.

We need a government that is willing to collaborate for the sake of Albertans. Albertans deserve strong consumer protections that ensure fairness and put people first by giving them more control of their own money. This is not a bill about ideology. This should be an easy yes for this government. I really hope that the members on the opposite side will reconsider the way they plan to vote for this bill and support Bill 209.

Another thing that this bill does is prevent ticket reselling fees. If you have a paper ticket, you could transfer it easily by giving it to someone, to your neighbour, to a friend, but when you buy them electronically, you get charged a fee to transfer that ticket that you already paid for. Here's another story. My husband recently bought tickets to attend an upcoming concert in Edmonton. They're for us, but now he can't go. So he has to transfer those tickets to me with . . .

The Deputy Speaker: I've got one minute left before I'm going to ask the mover to close the debate. Does anybody want to contribute for one minute?

If not, I will ask the hon. Member for Calgary-Currie to close the debate.

Member Eremenko: Thank you very much. I am the mover to close the debate, and I just want to thank all of my colleagues, most recently the Member for Calgary-Varsity, for all of their terrific comments on private member's Bill 209. I have enjoyed this debate a great deal to hear about the numerous and myriad ways that individuals on our side at least are trying to make life just a little bit

more affordable for Albertans at a time when I know everybody could use some more of that.

In my closing comments – I won't take too long, Madam Speaker – I just want to emphasize a couple of things. In my view, and certainly I think it's that held by all of us in the opposition caucus, not only has the UCP government not done enough to reduce the cost of basics of everyday life such as groceries when we've talked about shrinkflation or the possibility of addressing restrictive covenants, numerous opportunities for the government to make a small shift in legislation that would allow for gas tax relief that is absolutely clobbering people at the pumps – the first bill that we introduced in this session was around some changes to rent legislation to put some caps on the increases to that and, of course, to utilities, just a number of examples of things that we have put forward for this government that I think should have been an easy yes in many ways to bring a little bit of relief and keep a bit more money in people's pockets.

Not only have they not taken those opportunities to reduce the costs of the basics to everyday life; they've also made it actively and somewhat bizarrely intentionally more expensive: cutting \$200 from AISH, increases to auto insurance, increases to dozens of fees, and increases to property taxes, particularly in the city of Calgary.

Private member's Bill 209 would have helped to leave a little more money in Albertans' pockets and certainly a little more time, something I know everybody could use some more of. It's a simple, practical solution that should be an easy yes for government: click to cancel changes, transparent pricing, limits on fees to withdraw your own money from nonbank ATMs, and a ban to transfer a ticket that already belongs to you.

3:20

Private members' bills are the scalpel to legislation that I think we have as a tool to make small changes that can actually really add up over time for Albertans. I certainly encourage the government members opposite to vote in support of continuing debate on Bill 209. I think it is a little thing that, at the end of the day, will impact every single Albertan in the near future. We will be grateful to have these amendments brought into legislation and to the Consumer Protection Act to keep a little more money in people's pockets.

Thank you.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for second reading lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:21 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Al-Guneid	Dach	Goehring
Arcand-Paul	Deol	Ip
Batten	Eggen	Irwin
Brar, Gurinder	Ellingson	Metz
Brar, Gurtej	Elmeligi	Sigurdson, L.
Chapman	Eremenko	

Against the motion:

Amery	Johnson	Sawhney
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Jones	Sawyer
Boitchenko	LaGrange	Schow
Bouchard	Loewen	Schulz
Cyr	Long	Sigurdson, R.J.
de Jonge	Lunty	Sinclair
Dreeshen	McDougall	Singh
Dyck	Nally	Turton

Fir	Neudorf	Wiebe
Getson	Nicolaides	Williams
Glubish	Nixon	Wilson
Horner	Petrovic	Wright, J.
Hunter	Pitt	Yao
Jean	Rowswell	Yaseen
Totals:	For – 17	Against – 42

[Motion for second reading of Bill 209 lost]

Bill 210

Consumer Protection (Fraud Prevention Measures) Amendment Act, 2026

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

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to support my Bill 210, the Consumer Protection (Fraud Prevention Measures) Amendment Act, 2026. At its core this bill is about protecting Albertans. It's about giving people practical tools to defend themselves against identity theft and credit fraud before financial damage is done. It is about prevention, peace of mind, and helping families during a time of growing economic uncertainty.

Mr. Speaker, this issue could not be more urgent. Last month Alberta experienced something unprecedented in the history of this province. Nearly 3 million Albertans had their personal information exposed in a massive data breach. Home addresses, phone numbers, and personal information were leaked publicly. The office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner warned Albertans to remain vigilant about identity-related fraud. Commissioner Diane McLeod described the breach as very serious and warned that there is a real risk of significant harm to Albertans whose information has been exposed.

Mr. Speaker, thousands of Albertans are terrified. Constituency offices across this province are hearing from people who are deeply worried about identity theft, fraudulent loans, stolen credit, and financial ruin. Those fears are not hypothetical. Fraud and identity theft are rapidly growing across Canada according to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre. Canadians lost more than \$638 million to fraud in 2024 and over \$704 million in 2025. In the past four years, since 2022, it is reported that losses have surpassed over \$2.4 billion.

The government of Canada has identified identity fraud as one of the top three most reported forms of fraud in the country. A February 2026 Leger poll found that 1 in 4 Canadians reported being victims of fraud or extortion, and nearly 75 per cent expressed concerns about becoming victims themselves. Among seniors aged 55 and over concerns were even higher.

Mr. Speaker, fraud is no longer rare. It is no longer isolated. It is becoming normalized in our society, and governments have responsibilities to respond. Jennifer McLeod Macey, senior vice-president of public affairs at Leger, stated that fraud isn't a niche problem and is hitting Canadians across age groups, across regions. Equifax Canada has also warned that fraudsters are no longer targeting only specific groups. Carl Davies, head of fraud and identity at Equifax Canada, said that fraudsters are now indiscriminately striking across the credit spectrum and warned that a surge in credit card fraud requires vigilance from lenders, policy-makers, and consumers alike.

Mr. Speaker, behind every statistic is a human story. CBC recently highlighted a story of a 23-year-old Edmonton engineer, Zoe Lorenz-Boser, whose identity was used to fraudulently open accounts with Telus, Shaw, and PC Financial. By the time she discovered the fraud, nearly \$20,000 in debt had been accumulated in her name. Imagine being a young person just starting your career

and suddenly discovering that your financial future has been damaged by someone you have never met. Imagine being a senior citizen who suddenly cannot access credit because their identity has been stolen. Imagine spending years repairing your credit score, fighting collection agencies, and trying to prove you are not responsible for debts you never incurred.

Mr. Speaker, identity theft and credit fraud can devastate lives. The emotional toll is enormous. Victims report anger, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, and shame. The financial consequences can follow families for years. That is why Bill 210 matters. This bill introduces two practical, proven consumer protection tools, security alerts and credit freezes. Under a security alert individuals can request that additional identity verification measures be attached to their credit profile. If a lender receives a report containing a security alert, they would be required to take extra steps to verify identity before approving credit. If the individual is present in person, their identity must be verified. If they're not present in person, the lender must make a reasonable effort to contact them directly. This does create an additional layer of protection for consumers.

3:40

The second tool is a credit freeze. A credit freeze would prevent reporting agencies from releasing an individual's credit report for the purpose of opening new credit accounts unless the consumer temporarily lifts the freeze themselves. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the strongest tools available to prevent identity thieves from opening fraudulent loans, credit cards, or financing agreements in someone else's name. Importantly, this bill ensures that no fees can be charged for requesting a security alert or a credit freeze. That matters because financial protection should not depend on someone's income level or affordability.

The bill also ensures that consumers retain control over their own information. Albertans would have the right to update contact information, suspend a freeze temporarily when applying for legitimate credit, and terminate a freeze or security alert whenever they choose.

Mr. Speaker, these ideas are not radical. They're not experimental. Other jurisdictions across Canada have already moved in this direction. Quebec introduced similar protections following the massive Desjardins data breach that affected nearly 3 million Canadians, and unfortunately I was one of them. British Columbia introduced comparable legislation in 2025, and Ontario is implementing similar protections this year. In British Columbia Minister Diana Gibson stated that "these changes will give people stronger control over their credit information and the ability to make confident financial decisions."

Mr. Speaker, if other provinces are giving their residents stronger tools to protect themselves from fraud, Albertans deserve those same protections. Let us be clear. This will not reverse the damage already suffered by victims. What it will do is that it will help prevent fraud before it happens. It will reduce risks, it will help people feel safer, and it will provide Albertans with practical protections during a time when many already feel financially vulnerable, a time of rising costs, housing pressures, economic uncertainty, and families who cannot afford the unexpected financial devastation caused by identity theft.

This bill is about prevention, it is about consumer protection, and it is about restoring confidence and security for Albertans. Mr. Speaker, protecting personal information and protecting consumers should never be a partisan issue, and I urge all members of this Assembly to support Bill 210 and stand with Albertans in protecting them from identity theft.

Thank you.

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

Member Ellingson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise and speak to Bill 210, the Consumer Protection (Fraud Prevention Measures) Amendment Act, 2026. The financial security and peace of mind of Albertans should be a priority for us in this Legislature, especially now that the personal information, including name, address, e-mail, and phone number, of some 3 million Albertans has been compromised. We know that cease-and-desist letters have already been sent to more than 500 individuals in relation to this data breach, the largest in Alberta's history. This bill is an excellent opportunity for the government to take proactive steps to protect the financial security of Albertans.

To vote against this bill when the personal data of 3 million Albertans has been made public is in and of itself a breach of trust. It's a breach of trust that the people have placed in us to protect them from fraud, and that is what this bill does. It strengthens existing legislation in a very important way, Mr. Speaker. It moves Alberta from being reactive to being proactive with respect to fraud protection.

This government, Mr. Speaker, speaks consistently about how they want Albertans to be more in charge of their future through petitions, although they are choosing to ignore the forever Canada petition signed by 400,000 Albertans, or through taking health into their own hands even though they're introducing measures that are probably in contravention of the Canada Health Act. This legislation would empower Albertans to take control of their personal data, including placing a freeze on their credit file and requiring credit reporting agencies to place a security alert on their consumer credit report. These measures would prevent new credit accounts from being opened without consumers' consent. Additional steps to verify the applicant's identity would reduce the risk of fraud and identity theft.

Mr. Speaker, fraud is not a hypothetical risk. It is growing and it is a systemic threat. In a CBC article posted the 22nd of March 2024 it was noted that losses to victims of fraud in Alberta have increased fivefold in the four years from 2020 to 2023: \$11.3 million lost in 2020, \$62.5 million lost in 2023. That is significant, and it should be alarming to all members of this Legislature. With the growth of artificial intelligence these incidents of fraud are increasingly common, increasingly sophisticated, and increasingly damaging.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The questions before us are straightforward. Should Alberta continue with a reactive approach to consumer protection, or should we adopt proactive tools that prevent fraud before it happens? Alberta's legislation is written to respond after the damage is done: after a fraudulent credit card is opened, after a loan is taken out in someone else's name, after a credit score has been damaged, after collections agencies start calling consumers. At that point, even if the consumer eventually prevails, the damage to finances, to credit history, to mental health has already occurred. Madam Speaker, this bill moves us forward. Rather than compensating people from harm that has already been caused, this bill talks about how harm can be prevented.

Madam Speaker, this government also loves to emulate Quebec. Right after following the guidance and advice of Donald Trump, they want Alberta to follow Quebec, having its own pension plan or using the notwithstanding clause pre-emptively. So let's look at how Quebec is leading the country on this file. Quebec has implemented one of the most advanced frameworks in Canada for fraud protection. Since 2023 residents in Quebec can place a credit freeze blocking access to their credit file, and they can add a security alert requiring lenders to verify identity. This means a

fraudster cannot simply take stolen information to open an account. The system itself creates a barrier.

Now, we know that this government will never take advice from the NDP in British Columbia, including how they deliver auto insurance to their residents at half the cost that Alberta residents pay for auto insurance, but in 2025 B.C. also moved to implement a more proactive model for fraud protection. Through recent legislative amendments B.C. is introducing free credit freezes, free fraud alerts, mandatory identity verification triggers, stronger regulation for credit bureaus. B.C. has recognized what we must acknowledge here in Alberta, that in the digital age consumer protection must include control over one's credit identity.

Where does Alberta stand today? We rely on general prohibitions against deception, after-the-fact enforcement, complaint-driven processes. We do not provide a statutory right to freeze one's credit file, a right to demand heightened identity verification through alerts, or a proactive shield against identity threat. In effect, we ask Albertans to defend themselves after fraud occurs rather than giving them tools to stop fraud before it happens. We already know that this government is doing nothing to protect Albertans against the largest data breach in our history.

3:50

Madam Speaker, this bill could be a positive step forward, allowing Albertans to proactively protect themselves from fraud. Let's talk about what these tools actually do. They allow for a credit freeze to block access to a consumer's credit report, prevent lenders from approving new credit in that person's name, stop fraud at the point of application. It flags files for security alerts and requires lenders to take extra steps to verify identity. These are not radical ideas; they are simple, targeted consumer-controlled safeguards. Isn't that what we have always been talking about here in Alberta? Consumer controlled, giving people their own agency to make their own choices: they are particularly important in an era where personal data breaches are common.

Again, we've just seen the largest data breach in provincial history with the personal information of 3 million Albertans made public. Information circulates globally in seconds. While cease-and-desist letters may have been sent to over 500 individuals, we know that that data is everywhere, including in the hands of people who are not resident in Canada.

Fraudsters can act faster than victims can respond. A credit freeze turns the system from open and less challenged to closed and less authorized. This is a fundamental shift from vulnerability to control.

We know that some businesses out there are going to say that this creates costs and unnecessary regulatory burden in doing business, but let's talk about the costs that can be avoided. Fraud costs consumers millions – millions – more than it would cost businesses to prevent fraud from happening in the first place, and these measures don't stop business from happening. Credit freezes can be lifted for applications. Security alerts don't stop transactions, but they require additional verification to protect people. Protecting Albertans is the priority here. The priority is to protect Albertans, not to manage modest and manageable administration for financial institutions.

Madam Speaker, let us move from reaction to prevention. Let us modernize our consumer protection framework. Let's give Albertans the tools they need to protect themselves in today's economy. Let's vote yes to Bill 210.

Thank you.

Mr. Nally: Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill 210, the consumer protection amendment act, 2026. Let me begin by saying this. Nobody deserves to get ripped off. Identity theft, fraud, and

financial exploitation can have devastating impacts on Albertans and their families. We know that. Whether it's a senior being targeted by scammers, someone having their identity stolen online, or vulnerable Albertans being forced into coerced debt through abuse or exploitation, these situations can leave financial and emotional damage. That is why consumer protection matters, and that is why our government is already actively working on these issues.

Madam Speaker, while I believe that the intent of this bill is good, I cannot support it in its current form. This bill falls short on engagement, it falls short on analysis, and it duplicates work that is already under way by my department. The Consumer Protection Act already establishes a range of protections and rights for Albertans related to credit reporting and consumer information. For example, reporting agencies are prohibited already from providing reports except for purposes specifically permitted under the act, and in several circumstances expressed consent from the individual is already required before a report can be furnished. This includes things like entering into or renewing a tenancy agreement, employment purposes, underwriting insurance, or other situations where the individual has explicitly consented to the release of their information.

Madam Speaker, our government is also currently engaging with industry partners, stakeholders, and Albertans on broader credit protection measures. This is important because we know the NDP doesn't do that work. They don't do that consultation. As part of that work we are examining issues like identity theft and coerced debt, including situations involving human trafficking, elder abuse, and financial exploitation. We're also reviewing approaches in other jurisdictions, including Ontario and Quebec, where credit freeze measures have been implemented to help prevent unauthorized access to credit reports and fraudulent account creation.

These are serious and complex issues. When we're talking about changes that impact consumers, lenders, reporting agencies, and businesses across Alberta, we need to make sure that we get it right. Consumer protection is a balancing act. We need to protect Albertans from fraud and exploitation without creating unnecessary barriers, unintended consequences, or administrative burden that makes life harder for the businesses and organizations that are trying to do the right thing. That requires careful consultation, detailed policy work, and meaningful engagement with the people directly impacted. Madam Speaker, our government believes in taking the time to do this work properly, to get it right the first time, not rushing forward with legislation before that work is complete. Albertans deserve protections that are practical, enforceable, effective, and informed by the people who actually use them and implement them.

Again, I want to acknowledge that the intent behind this bill is understandable, but once again it reads like a high school book report: not fully thought out, sounds good on paper but lacks the work essential in making these protections more effective. Our government is already actively working in this space. We believe that ongoing engagement and policy development is the better path forward at this time. For those reasons, I encourage all members of this Assembly to oppose Bill 210.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Member Gurinder Brar: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In May of 2024 I got a phone call saying that I owed them \$8,373 in unpaid loans. I hung up. I thought it was a spam call. The next day I got the call again. Same thing. They were asking for the money that I owed

them. I thought I should ask for more information. I tried to ask for my address on their file from whom I took the loan. I did not recognize any of that information that the person provided to me, and I told him that it was not me. Maybe they were calling the wrong person. He said that I was who he had on his file. I stopped arguing, and I hung up. He called for the third time, and I did not pick up. He left a voicemail with a number to call back.

I called that number. A lady picked up the phone and asked me to provide my name, my address, and some other information so that she can verify my identity to provide me with more information. When I provided my information, that didn't match with what she had on her side. She refused to talk to me because she could not confirm the identity. I thought the matter was settled because it was not me who they were trying to find or reach out to.

Another day I got the call again. Now I was frustrated, angry, and upset, and I did not pick up the call. I added that number to the blocked list.

In November of the same year, 2024, I got another call. A lady said that I need to pay the balance on a President's Choice credit card. I said that I do not have a PC card and nor have I ever had it before, so I do not owe any balance. The lady advised me to call the fraud department and report it, which I did, but the fraud department never picked up the call and never returned my call.

After some days I got the call again. I told them: I do not have your card, and I do not owe you any money. I was once again told to call the fraud department. I did, and again no response. Being stuck in this loop of getting calls to get money and calling them back to tell them, "I do not owe you any money," could upset, frustrate, and bother anyone, Madam Speaker. I was bothered, too, and I also blocked their number.

4:00

After two years of these incidents, last month I and my wife planned to buy a new house. We did our math and I called my mortgage adviser. I sent him all the documents that he asked for, and we began to explore some options for our new home. On Thursday on my way back to Calgary I got a call from my mortgage adviser. He told me that lenders were willing to cover only 65 per cent of the amount of my total home price because I have a low credit score and collections of around \$8,000 showing under my name. Madam Speaker, I'm someone who keeps a close eye on my credit score, and I keep checking it on my banking app on my phone, and make sure that it's up to date and I'm in a safe range. I was surprised and shocked and even confused when my mortgage adviser told me that I have a low credit score.

I told him that he might have got some wrong information because my phone app shows that my credit score is above 800. I logged on to my TransUnion account, checked my report, and it matched exactly what my banking app shows on my phone. It did not show any collections. I took the screenshots, even downloaded the report and sent it to my mortgage adviser. He was also surprised to see that report and told me to check Equifax. I created an account there, and I was shocked to see that Equifax had my wrong date of birth, wrong address, wrong employer, wrong phone number. It shows a PC credit card under my profile, which I never had. It shows an unpaid loan under collections of \$8,000, which I never took. They had a Volkswagen loan under my name, which I never signed up for. The report from Equifax was completely different from what TransUnion had and what my banking app shows me.

I called Equifax to report it. They sent me an e-mail, and I submitted the documents. They told me that it would take three to five weeks to fix this mess. I informed my mortgage adviser, who told me that he won't be able to proceed with the mortgage until he gets the updated report with the updated credit score. I'm not sure

how it will be fixed and if it will even be fixed or not and how much more time it will take and how many more documents I will have to provide to prove that these collections should not be under my name. This incident of fraud has delayed our plans to buy our home. Now even if we get it fixed, we don't know how much the house price will go up. What if it doesn't get fixed? What if I'm asked to pay for the loans? Which I will fight back. What if the house price goes up?

Madam Speaker, it is stressful, and it didn't just happen to me. It happens to millions of Canadians every year. Stats Canada data shows that 2.5 million, I think 2.9 million, Canadians are subject to ID fraud each year. Many of them are newcomers with English as not their first language, and they're not familiar with using technology. They don't even know how to fight back and how to fix it. Canadians have lost over \$638 million to fraud in 2024 and over \$704 million in 2025. Reported losses to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre since 2022 have now surpassed \$2.4 billion. One in 4 Canadians report having been a victim of fraud or extortion.

In Alberta it is even more important to have stronger protections, especially after the data of millions of Albertans have been leaked to separatists. Who knows what they're going to do with it? Who knows if their data will be used to get loans to fund their separatist agenda? Who knows if the data of Albertans will be used to create some fake accounts and websites that can even further steal the data of millions of Albertans?

We live in dark, scary, and horrifying times in Alberta, Madam Speaker. People are scared. One of my constituents called me yesterday, and he texted me right now about two, three minutes ago and asked me: why is census Canada asking for extra information? He told me that he heard in the news that Jason Kenney's data was leaked, and he told me: if Jason Kenney is not safe in Alberta, how can I and my family feel safe here? His questions are valid, his feelings are genuine, and his fear is real. We have a moral duty to address his fears.

This bill brought forward by my colleague from Edmonton-Meadows will give people peace of mind, will address their fears, and will make them feel safe. It will give two tools to Albertans to fight fraud. The first one is a security alert. If a person requests a security alert, any report about them must include notice of the alert, including any additional identity verification requirements and contact information for verification. Before entering a credit agreement, lenders receiving such a report must verify the individual's identity if they are present in person or make reasonable efforts to contact them if they're not present in person.

The second tool is a credit freeze. If an individual requests a credit freeze, reporting agencies must refrain from giving a report for that individual to anyone requesting a report for the purpose of entering a credit agreement. Many other provinces have these tools, and with these tools in hand Albertans will be able to protect their identity, have peace of mind, protect their hard-earned money, and fight fraud.

I support this bill because I do not want anyone else to go through what I had to go through to protect my data. I support this bill because I do not want anyone working 10 hours a day, paying their fair share of taxes, paying their bills on time even during these times of affordability crisis to come home to call these companies and these agencies to fix these credit reports. I support this bill, Madam Speaker, and I request all members to do the same.

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

Member Batten: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and join debate in favour of this very smart and necessary and

timely protection being brought forward by the Member for Edmonton-Meadows. As we've just heard, this is definitely something that needs to happen now. We're hearing promises from the government that things, you know, are coming. Maybe sometime we'll see help, but the reality is that Albertans need help right this minute, and this bill brings forward some very smart and, well, seemingly easy solutions to support Albertans when they encounter situations such as fraud.

Now, we just heard a very troubling story from one of my fellow members about identity fraud, and I wanted to share my own personal experience with it. The contrast in the two stories is actually a little bit telling. Why I say that is because in my experience – 2004 was the year. Memphis, Tennessee, was where I was living. I had lived there for fewer than six months, and I noticed something on my bank account. I, like I said, had barely moved there. I don't know anyone who may have spent some time in Memphis, Tennessee, but in 2004 it had the highest crime rate in the U.S., or something to that effect. I had just moved from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; you can imagine it was quite the shock generally. Then finding out that there were some weird transactions on my very small bank account – like I said, I had just moved there – was terrifying.

Now, 22 years ago, when this happened, Memphis had a whole thing set up. That could be speaking to the level of crime that they were frequently seeing, so therefore they had this set up. I don't actually care why it was, but it was already there, things like, yes, freezing your credit while things are figured out. Yeah. That was happening 22 years ago in the United States, Madam Speaker. In addition, the alerts that are also brought forward in this bill: that was part of a very seamless situation that Memphis, 22 years ago, could enact. Easy peasy. So why in, you know, 2026 are we having to actually debate – why are we having to convince this government that these are smart and timely supports for Albertans? It just boggles the mind a little bit because – I'm sorry – like, Memphis, Tennessee, is known for a lot of things, but being ahead of its time in terms of consumer protection is not one of them.

4:10

Now, the fear that the prior member had shared with us of what's going on inside his own space, his own family, and how this fraud has affected his life: well, it actually reminds me very strongly because, like I had started saying, there are parallels between these two stories. I had moved to Memphis, Tennessee. I was a foreigner inside of, like – yes. Granted, Memphis, Tennessee; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: I thought there were things in common. There are not. Very, very different. I remember being scared. I remember being incredibly terrified that the few dollars I had in my account were not only disappearing faster than I could do anything about it but that I had zero control over it.

Having this set up in Memphis 22 years ago, where all I had to do was report the fraud and then I was navigated through the system, even having all those supports, Madam Speaker, it was scary, and I had the safety alert, and I had the credit freeze. Then it took months upon months upon months – maybe a year; I don't remember how long it was – going in and signing affidavits saying that I did not purchase this, because, again, it was 2004 and technology was different. That changed how I do everything, because when your credit – especially when you're in a precarious situation like that. I had just moved there. I was establishing credit, and to have it messed with in that way: it wasn't an awesome experience.

Again, I do not understand why we are having to try to convince this government to do the right thing. This could happen now. I understand there might be plans for plans. We hear a lot about plans

for plans from this government, but this just makes sense. This could support Albertans right now, and in light of the massive personal data breach this could not come forward at a better time.

Now, I know there are other folks over here who would like to engage in this debate, so I'll just end by sharing one last piece in reference to the data breach. One of the scariest parts of having my identity stolen was that folks, in order – how my identity was stolen was through cheques. Granted, I understand: 2004. Cheques, which meant that in order to use the cheque, they had to make a fake ID. That meant that someone was walking around with a driver's licence with their face on it and my name. They knew where I lived, and they had access to my bank account. Right now Albertans are facing a massive data breach where their personal information was allowed out into the world. There are some very simple, fast solutions that this government could be doing for Albertans. This particular bill is one. I hope that everyone supports this bill.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill 210, the Consumer Protection (Fraud Prevention Measures) Amendment Act, 2026. I would like to thank my colleague from Edmonton-Meadows for bringing this forward. I'm proud of the work that our team on this side of the House has done when it comes to engaging with Albertans, listening to what their current needs are and what their wants are when it comes to real help and real support, and with so many struggling and being impacted by the affordability crisis, I think this piece of legislation could really make an impact.

I think that what this bill will do, in general, will give Albertans better tools to protect themselves from fraud. I know that recently 3 million Albertans had their personal information leaked by separatists in a massive data breach, which is the biggest in Canadian history. I think right now people are talking about what they need. They want to feel protected. They want to make sure that their credit, their data, all of that is safe.

When we're putting forward information as a private member, you know, there are a few things that are restrictive to us. We can't put forward anything that's financial. Like all of the procedures in this Assembly, we need support in order to get it passed. Unfortunately, for those that are paying attention at home, we have watched every single one of the Alberta New Democrats' private members' bills and motions be defeated. It's disappointing because that hasn't been the same story for when a private member that sits in government puts forward a piece of legislation. That tends to proceed in varying ways. I think this Bill 210 is something that Albertans could really benefit from. I think the credit fraud that can happen, breach of information, those types of things can have absolutely devastating and long-lasting impacts on both the individual and then the family that that fraud happens to.

I think right now, if we were to listen to the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, they've been doing a lot, as has the Alberta NDP, to inform Albertans about identity-related fraud. Unfortunately, we haven't seen anything from government in terms of protecting Albertans. This piece of legislation gives them an opportunity to really do something that's going to help. I think that when we look at the legislation that's come forward, it gives consumers practical, proven tools to stop fraud before it happens. Unfortunately, with the 3 million Albertans that have had their personal information leaked, it's too late. It is out there. This small piece of legislation, Bill 210, creates opportunities to stop the fraud before it happens.

I think that when we have a government that is not addressing the affordability crisis – you know, just recently we watched them increase their own members' pay if they are a parliamentary secretary. They're not doing anything to protect the average Albertan or to help reduce affordability. When we look at how many members on that side of the House have a financial benefit on top of being paid for being an MLA, our numbers – me and a few of my colleagues were looking. There are only eight members on the side of the government that don't receive a pay increase. When we're watching an affordability crisis and discussing a piece of legislation that protects Albertans, I think it's a little bit rich that we're looking at a government that pays themselves a lot more but isn't doing things to address what Albertans are asking for. I think Bill 210 gives everyone in this Chamber the opportunity to assist Albertans in practical ways, proven tools to help prevent fraud before it happens.

With that, Madam Speaker, I really encourage every member of this House to please support Bill 210. I know there's been tradition of not supporting it, but I think this is one that really could have an impact, and I hope to see this bill pass.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Mr. Gurtej Brar: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to support Bill 210, the Consumer Protection (Fraud Prevention Measures) Amendment Act, 2026. This bill protects Albertans from fraud. It safeguards their names, their credit, their savings, and their future. It gives people a simple tool to stop harm before it happens.

4:20

Let me share a real story from one of my constituents, as my colleague from Calgary-North East mentioned his story. My constituent and his wife worked hard for years. They worked long hours, made sacrifices. They saved every dollar they could. Their dream was simple, to buy their first home. They were careful with money. They avoided debt. They kept saving. After years of effort they finally had enough for their down payment. They searched for months. They visited many homes. One of the houses they loved. They pictured their future home and felt excited and proud. They applied for a mortgage finally, and they had confidence that they had steady jobs, saved money for a down payment, and had done everything right. But they came with a shock. Their mortgage was denied. They asked questions, checked their record. They discovered this truth. Someone had stolen his identity. Fraud had been committed in his name. His credit score was ruined, and no one had warned him before.

Madam Speaker, this family's dream was destroyed through no fault of their own. They followed every rule. They worked hard, yet the identity theft stole their chance to have a home. This is not an isolated case. It happens to seniors. It happens to students. It happens to every young family, newcomers and workers saving for a car or better life. Fraud steals more than money. It steals peace of mind. It wastes time, creates stress, fear, anger, and shame. It can take months to fix, not to mention those credit rating companies only know how to ruin your credit score but not to fix it.

That's why Bill 210 matters so much. This bill gives Albertans practical tools, a security alert that places a warning on a person's credit file. If someone tries to open new credit in their name, the lender sees the warning right away. The lender must take extra steps to confirm the person's identity. If the applicant is there in person, the lender verifies who they are. If not, the lender must make a reasonable effort to contact the real person. This simple step can stop fraud right away, before a new credit card is opened, a loan is

taken, a credit limit is raised, a car is leased, or services are signed up for under someone else's name.

This bill also puts a credit freeze that gives stronger control. When a person requests it, credit reporting agencies cannot release their credit report to lenders for a new credit card or agreement, and scammers cannot easily use stolen information to get credit. When the real person needs credit, they can lift the freeze temporarily. It is straightforward, Madam Speaker. This is common sense. If someone feels their information has been stolen, they should be able to lock their credit right away. They should not have to wait until the damage is done. They should not wait for a denied mortgage or surprise bill for debt they never created.

Prevention beats repair every time. Bill 210 makes these tools free. No fee. Protection should not depend on how much money you have. A senior on fixed income deserves the same safety as anyone else. So does a student or a low-income worker. Every Albertan should have this right. This will also require credit reporting agencies to post clear, easy-to-find information on their websites. People can only use tools they know about.

Madam Speaker, fraud is a growing crisis in Canada. Canadians lost more than \$638 million in 2024 and \$704 million in 2025, a total loss of \$2.4 billion since 2022. Identity fraud ranks among the top three fraud types in Canada. Behind every dollar lost is a real person whose life is abandoned. We also remember the major data breach that hit 2.9 million Albertans. The Information and Privacy Commissioner warned us about the heightened risk of identity fraud. Warnings are not enough. People need real tools. Telling people just to be careful does not protect them. Bill 210 gives them real power to act.

Other provinces have already acted. Quebec, British Columbia, and Ontario have brought in similar protections. Albertans must have this tool. They should not fall behind. Our people deserve the same strong safeguard. This bill is reasonable and focused. It gives people basic control over their own credit information. It requires the lender to take extra care when warnings appear. It requires agencies to honour a credit freeze. People can start, update, suspend, or remove these protections as needed.

Madam Speaker, in closing I would just say that good ideas should not just be rejected because they came from the opposition benches. This is not how healthy democracy works. Albertans expect us to put people first before politics, especially when safety, money, and the future is at stake. Bill 210 is a good, practical bill. It will help protect Albertans from fraud. I urge every member of this House to support it. Let us do the right thing for Albertan families.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Seeing none, would the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadows like to close?

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I really wanted to thank all the members for participating in debate and specifically all my colleagues for speaking up for Albertans and speaking in favour of this bill. Fraud is very serious. The worst thing is that this is continuously growing very fast in Alberta, specifically after the massive voter data breach that exploits the personal information of nearly 3 million Albertans.

Experts have been warning the Legislature office. The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta has been warning Albertans, after that massive data breach, of the potential credit frauds. Canada's Anti-Fraud Centre, pollsters, media – there are so many stories. The

biggest proof: more than \$2.4 billion lost in online credit frauds in the country just in the past four years.

4:30

What Bill 210 proposes: it introduces two new tools. The tools help prevent credit card fraud before someone else experiences it. Same issue. The tools right now do not exist in this province. This bill proposes a few things. Only two, actually, new tools: credit freezes, which allow, I want to reiterate, someone to lock their credit file so credit reporting agencies cannot release their information or open new accounts without their consent. That is what is happening right now in this province. My colleague the Member for Calgary-North East actually shared his own story right here. The second thing this bill introduces is security alerts. When a security alert is placed on a credit file, lenders are required to take extra steps to verify identity before approving credit. That was the very case the member actually shared here. Those extra checks can stop fraud before any damage is done.

These tools are simple. They are effective and already in place in other provinces, including Quebec, Ontario, B.C. With millions of Albertans' personal information exposed, protection is no longer optional, but I'm very sorry to hear what the minister actually said. Seems like they're not serious. Even after weeks of data breach and so many complaints and real cases the minister stood up, it seemed like, shutting his caucus down, not to think about anything being proposed to protect Albertans.

This should have been very easy. This should be very easy for every MLA. The protection of safety is not a partisan issue. That's why we are asking every MLA to support Bill 210, and for that reason we kept this bill very simple. Private members have very limited tools at their disposal. If the government had anything else to add, we are always willing for discussion, or they could bring a proposal, but we didn't see anything like this.

Once again I will encourage every single member of this House to please support this bill to provide those very tools to Albertans facing these challenges. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for second reading lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:33 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Al-Guneid	Deol	Goehring
Arcand-Paul	Eggen	Gray
Batten	Ellingson	Ip
Brar, Gurinder	Elmeligi	Metz
Brar, Gurtej	Ganley	Sigurdson, L.
Chapman		

Against the motion:

Amery	Jones	Sawyer
Armstrong-Homeniuk	LaGrange	Schow
Boitchenko	Loewen	Schulz
Bouchard	Long	Sigurdson, R.J.
Cyr	Lunty	Sinclair
de Jonge	McDougall	Singh
Dreeschen	Nally	Stephan
Dyck	Neudorf	Turton
Fir	Nicolaides	Wiebe
Getson	Nixon	Williams
Glubish	Petrovic	Wilson
Horner	Pitt	Wright, J.

Hunter	Rowswell	Yao
Jean	Sawhney	Yaseen
Johnson		

Totals: For – 16 Against – 43

[Motion for second reading of Bill 210 lost]

Motions Other than Government Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Rural Crime

513. Mr. Dyck moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly

- (a) recognize that residents of rural communities and farm owners in Alberta face unique challenges related to crime, including property theft, vandalism, and personal safety, and
- (b) urge the government of Canada to introduce legislation to provide more legal certainty for individuals who are required to use reasonable force to defend themselves, their families, and their property.

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start by just remembering a phrase our Premier has made a few times recently: if you don't want to get shot, don't break into people's houses. Violent crime has soared in parts of Canada recently thanks to the bail-not-jail policies of the Liberal federal government. We are seeing policing agencies in Ontario advising people to just leave their car keys near the front door so thieves won't pose a risk to the family inside. Bribing criminals with a car instead of protecting homeowners is bad policy in Alberta. We will not stand for this for our citizens.

This issue hits home even more for our rural communities. A decade ago we didn't need to lock our Quonsets, our fuel tanks, our trailers. A heck of a lot of people didn't even lock their homes. But as we know, Mr. Speaker, crime doesn't know borders, whether you live in a major centre or in rural Alberta, and that is what's leaving a lot of people worried, worried about their kids, worried about their spouses, their four-legged friends, their ATVs, farm equipment, you name it. It has them worried. We have an obligation to protect the vulnerable. In rural communities when the revolving door of the justice system spins faster than the wheels on a patrol car, catch-and-release isn't a policy; it's a public safety failure. This challenge is not new, but its effects are felt even more dramatically now.

Most crimes are crimes of opportunity. It is not always targeted, but someone sees a chance and they take it. So how do we deter these crimes? Usually, in a community you would build relationships with your community, your neighbours. You build a bond because, if a criminal is caught siphoning fuel, for example, he wouldn't be able to show his face in town again. For rural Albertans reputation really matters. People recognize the value of that reputation. The value of that reputation is much more than a few litres of fuel, which is why most of the home invasions are done by people who have no connections to the communities they are breaking into. Other ways that work are visual deterrents: cameras, locks, no trespassing signs, or a big dog.

Now, let's say that none of that works. These criminals don't care about reputation, don't care about the cameras or the signs. Mr. Speaker, my home is my stronghold and my wife is my queen, and if you break into my sanctuary, I will do whatever is necessary to ensure no harm ever reaches her or my family. To do that, I will use whatever means are necessary in the moment because my family's

safety is nonnegotiable. We should not punish lawful homeowners for stepping up and defending their loved ones when their lives are threatened. But across Canada homeowners are still facing charges. In moments when you and your family's lives are at risk, hesitation could be a life-or-death difference. In the few seconds you worry about defending your family due to the risk of being charged, the burglar could produce a weapon and turn the situation potentially deadly. Ottawa should stand up for their law-abiding citizens and not protect these criminals.

This motion is about legal clarity, fairness, and, hopefully, clearing up the grey area of justifiable force. The arguments we hear often bring up vigilantism. Let me be clear. Alberta's government does not endorse or suggest this. If you feel you're at risk or in danger, call 911. That being said, this government has taken steps to ensure that when you call 911, a trained police officer arrives. We've established the Alberta Sheriffs Police Service to augment and support all law enforcement agencies from across the province. No matter where you live in Alberta, whether it's Calgary or Lethbridge or rural Alberta, you should expect a trained officer to arrive within a reasonable amount of time.

4:50

That being said, Albertans should expect clarity when it comes to a reasonable use of force, when it comes to defending themselves. I must also add that it is promising to see some in Ottawa advocating for homeowners. The MP for Newmarket-Aurora, Sandra Cobena, introduced Bill C-270, the Stand on Guard Act. The bill would create a legal presumption that when someone unlawfully enters a dwelling, the protective force used by a homeowner is considered reasonable unless evidence shows otherwise. Its purpose is to ensure that victims of violent break-ins that use reasonable force are not automatically treated as criminals and forced into lengthy legal battles to defend their families. Similar to Motion 513, this federal bill aims to restore clarity, to restore fairness and confidence in our law and the legal system. Confidence is something that has been lacking recently in Ottawa, so I hope that they take these concerns seriously because it's not only rural Alberta that is affected but rural communities from coast to coast.

This debate has been a hot topic recently after a man in Lindsay, Ontario, woke up at 3 a.m. to find an intruder in his home armed with a crossbow. A struggle ensued, and the intruder ended up needing to be airlifted to hospital with life-threatening injuries. Mr. Speaker, the homeowner was charged with aggravated assault, an assault with a weapon, but thankfully common sense prevailed and charges were eventually withdrawn. The home invasion happened in August, and charges did not get withdrawn until February. For half a year this man had to stress about his life being torn apart defending his family. What would have happened during that struggle if he did not try to defend his family? What would the armed intruder do to the people in that house? I think it's reasonable to believe that if you break into someone's house armed with a crossbow, you intend to use it, so good on the gentleman for defending himself and his family.

Until more violent offenders are behind bars, crime will continue to increase and stories like this will happen more frequently. We must be proactive instead of reactive, and this is what competent governments do. That is what we are doing, and this is why we are urging Ottawa to clarify self-defence laws for people protecting their families and property. This is why I'm presenting Motion 513 here today, because we hear your concerns and we're here to try and provide that clarity. I urge all MLAs in this Chamber to stand up and support rural Albertans so nobody has to go to bed fearful of home intruders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there any other speakers? There she is, from Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mrs. Johnson: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise today to speak in support of Motion 513, brought forward by my great colleague the Member for Grande Prairie. This motion addresses a concern that many Albertans know all too well, especially those who live in our rural communities, crime and the very basic and human need to feel safe in one's own home and community. It does this by acknowledging elevated challenges with crime in rural Alberta and by urging Ottawa to clarify self-defence laws for people protecting their families and property.

Mr. Speaker, rural Alberta is a proud and resilient place. It's made up of hard-working families, farmers, small-business owners, and neighbours who look out for one another, but alongside that strength there are also unique challenges, particularly when it comes to crime. In many rural areas police response times can be very long. This isn't a criticism of law enforcement. It's simply the reality of geography. Distances are vast, detachments are often responsible for large areas, and when someone calls for help, it can take time for officers to arrive. Those living in rural areas often face higher risks of theft, vandalism, and property crime. There are stories – way too many stories – of people having equipment stolen, vehicles taken, and homes broken into repeatedly. In those moments when help is far away, people are often left with a very difficult choice. Do they wait and hope for the best, or do they step in to protect what is theirs?

Now, Mr. Speaker, the issue we face isn't whether people should protect themselves. Most Albertans would agree that individuals have the right to defend themselves, their families, and their property. The issue is whether the law is clear enough to support them when they do. Across Canada we've seen cases where property owners who used what they believed to be reasonable force still ended up facing criminal charges. Think about how confusing and troubling that is. A person is put in a situation where they feel threatened, they act to protect themselves, and then they're left wondering whether they will be treated like a criminal for doing so. That uncertainty is not fair and it is not right. It's exactly what Motion 513 is trying to address.

Now, let me be very clear, Mr. Speaker. This motion is not about encouraging vigilantism. It is not about giving anyone a free pass to take the law into their own hands. That is not what Albertans want, and it is not what this motion is calling for. This motion is about clarity. It's about fairness and ensuring that law-abiding citizens understand their rights and are not punished for acting reasonably in a moment of fear or danger.

When we talk about reasonable force, we are talking about proportional and necessary actions taken to stop a threat. We're not talking about revenge and certainly not excusing excessive or reckless behaviour. We're talking about ordinary people making difficult decisions in stressful situations.

For example, Mr. Speaker, consider a farmer who sees someone stealing equipment from his yard in the middle of the night. He goes out to stop them, maybe to confront them, maybe to prevent the loss of valuable tools that his livelihood depends on. If that situation escalates, that farmer should not have to think twice about acting, especially if his life is threatened, due to a lack of clarity in the law that makes him wonder whether he will be charged for simply trying to protect what he already owns.

Or think about a family residing in a rural area just like in my riding of Lacombe-Ponoka and someone is hearing someone attempting to break into their home. That first instinct to the parents in this moment would be to act quickly to protect their children and their loved ones as safety is their number one priority. Later,

however, these parents may be left asking: did I do too much? Will I face charges?

It's a heavy burden for any law-abiding citizen to carry, and Albertans deserve better than that. They deserve clarity from the federal government about where self-defence begins and where it ends. They deserve to know that if they act reasonably in good faith to protect themselves or their families, the law will stand with them, not against them.

Alberta has been taking steps to address crime in rural areas. We've invested heavily in policing, especially in expanding the role of our sheriffs to support existing police services and improve response times and community safety initiatives and in support for victims. Those efforts are important and they're making a difference, but on their own they're not enough and need to be paired with stronger laws.

When it comes to criminal law, particularly self-defence provisions, that responsibility lies with Ottawa according to section 91 of the Constitution Act of 1867. That is why this motion matters. Motion 513 calls on the federal government to provide clearer guidance and stronger protections for individuals who act in self-defence. It's a respectful and reasonable request, and it sends a clear message that Albertans want certainty and fairness when it comes to something as important as self-defence.

Mr. Speaker, this motion is also about trust and confidence. People need to trust that their justice system understands the realities they face. Experiences in rural and urban areas can be very different. What might seem straightforward in a city, where police are minutes away, can be far more complicated in a rural setting, where help can be farther out of sight. At a time when many have expressed concern about the state of the justice system and its ability to deliver justice, we must ensure that our laws are no longer at odds with people's lived realities and are truly representative of the people they're meant to protect.

At its heart this motion is about standing up for ordinary Albertans, people who work hard, who follow the rules and simply want to feel safe. It's about ensuring that they're not put in a position where they're victimized twice, first by crime and then by the uncertainty of the justice system.

Today I urge all members of this Assembly to support Motion 513. Let's send a strong message to Ottawa that Albertans deserve clear and consistent self-defence laws. Let us stand with rural communities, who face unique challenges, and let's make it clear that protecting your family, your home, and your livelihood, when done reasonably, should never make you a criminal. I thank my colleague from Grande Prairie for bringing forward such a great motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the Member for Lacombe-Ponoka that just spoke, a farm lady that understands the needs out there, and also to the member bringing this forward from Grande Prairie, a fine, young MLA, a good, upstanding citizen, and a father as well. Obviously, with his motion here he's trying to look out for all Albertans in that context.

5:00

Mr. Speaker, I'll just read it here quickly for the folks at home if I can get my glasses on.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly

- (a) recognize that residents of rural communities and farm owners in Alberta face unique challenges related to crime, including property theft, vandalism, and personal safety, and
- (b) urge the government of Canada

Again, that's the feds, Mr. Speaker,

to introduce legislation to provide more legal certainty for individuals who are required to use force to defend themselves, their families, and their property.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's been some shots back and forth in the past here between the differences of rural and urban, of those services that are provided and the timeliness. I can tell you full well that most folks in the city will have a police officer there within 10 to 15 minutes. Depending on where you're at in rural Alberta, you could be upwards to half an hour, 45 minutes before somebody shows up. This may not seem like much, but as the member opposite who represents the Armed Forces and spoke to that in the past, most of those fire fights are within 15 minutes when you're deploying and engaging. Half an hour to 45 minutes?

Now, I'm going to put this on a personal level, and I'll give you a couple of examples here, Mr. Speaker, of literally things that took place in my constituency. There was a gentleman who put a nice big surveillance system into his properties so that when he was on a project, coincidentally up in Grande Prairie, he could keep an eye on his family out there. My constituency is just on the border of Edmonton here in the west. You go west for an hour and a half, and then my constituency kind of stops. He was within that half an hour to 45-minute shadow of the city, and he got to, on his nice surveillance system in great detail, watch armed suspects go into his house and hold a gun to his wife's head. It took a while for the police to show up, and he got to watch all of this as he was on the phone calling 911, trying to do all the right things by the time they got there. Again, not through lack of trying for the police officers.

Mr. Speaker, I was at Jack's Auto Body coincidentally a while back, almost a couple of years ago now, and Dave over there at Jack's picks up a bunch of cars, you know, a towing business, those types of things, a body shop, and he says, "Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland" – it would have been a shame if I would have said my name, but, you know, we cut it off there. He told me: you've got to talk to these folks. There was a husband and wife there trying to get their car repaired, and they were still rattled. This is the incident that took place.

Dad and daughter driving down the road, wintertime, and this car is behaving erratically trying to run them off the road. He ends up pulling into a farmyard. There was no one in the farmyard at the time. He gets out to find out what's going on. The individual, this lady, comes up, and his daughter cried out: "Dad, look out. She's got a hammer." She swung a hammer at him, tried to club him in the head. He ends up ducking that. She ends up in the car. He's on the ground, and his daughter is in the back seat. His cell phone was dying; a number of things. He managed to get on that vehicle, pull it out, everything else, managed to get his daughter out after this person was trying to run him over. She ends up on her merry way, and he had just enough time to try to send a ping to his wife to try to find it. Coincidentally, his daughter's phone was in the back of that car. They managed to ping it and get the person. This is a frequent flyer; 90 times, or something like that, in and out of the system. Like, this is scary stuff.

Going back to Dave again at Jack's Auto Body, it was there for a while, a frequent flyer. There was always somebody breaking into his yard, stealing stuff, trying to do that, Mr. Speaker. I had some elderly folks just down the road – and this is recent, within the last week or so – sending me pictures of people casing out their place. Again, they got to see it on their nice surveillance cameras. Their dogs are going, and there are armed suspects in their own backyard.

This isn't a discredit to the police service. The K Division over here has a great integrated plan. They can flash up on the screen. They can see, through ITAC, all the co-ordination efforts of where the resources are at. They've got the great hand-offs here on the

border to Parkland and to Sturgeon and to the RCMP detachments both in Morinville and in Spruce Grove. No discredit to them, but what we have, Mr. Speaker, is this prolific type of activity because the bad guys are not stopping.

Now, staff sergeants, especially ones that are retiring, are some of the best people. If any of the MLAs here want to sit down and talk, talk to them and tell them their experiences.

Now, this is going back to 2019, and hopefully I can say the minister's name now, Schweitzer. Yeah. The Speaker is nodding, that's okay.

The Speaker: He's not here.

Mr. Getson: It was one of my very first town halls. We had 350 at little old Calahoo, and we were talking about all the rural crime issues and everything taking place. I put my hand up, and I said: "Okay. How many people have had rural crime issues: people breaking in the yard, taking your things, causing problems?" Hands went up. Probably about 80 per cent of the room. I said: "How many more than once? Twice? Three times? Four times? Five times?" At five times there were still about 60 per cent of the hands up in the room, and I turned to the minister and said: "We don't have a problem with four-legged coyotes. We've got a problem with coydogs and two-legged coyotes. Help us out here." The staff sergeant had said something and, in my understanding, when you talk about reasonable force, it was put to me a while back when I was a young lad by a police officer who said that if you ever think of a hockey game, if you're talking about assault, like reasonable force, he said: it's a one-on-one item. When the players drop the gloves, there's an indicator that both individuals are going to get at it. They both agree; there's a consensus to it. You want to go, you want to go? That's it. You don't have an assault until one person has the advantage over the other, and that's when the linemen stick in.

I thought that kind of applied to most situations. That staff sergeant rightly corrected me, and he told us that our law, our existing Canadian law, allows you one threat level higher. So if you're breaking into my house, you're doing those types of things, I am by law, the federal law, our Criminal Code, allowed to go one threat higher to protect myself and my family. Property is a different thing. It's looked at differently, but if you're protecting yourself.

People out there, because of these haphazard cases that have taken place, in precedents in the media, not necessarily in the court of law, Mr. Speaker, doing that have made people have that victim mentality. So we've got the bad guys doing bad guy stuff, they can't get in, and the police are frustrated because it's a catch-and-release system. They're getting emboldened and emblazoned even to the point where, you know, the Member for Grande Prairie mentioned some dude coming in your house with a crossbow, and the guy that's defending his family gets charged. This is absolutely asinine.

Our federal government needs to give clear indicators that Canadian citizens still have the right to protect themselves, their family, and their property and not be victims on their own place. In the rural communities we see this lots, you guys. Coydogs and two-legged coyotes are a real issue, and they're getting more emboldened and emblazoned.

By putting this motion forward – thank you for bringing that topic forward. As a father and as a husband I, too, would do everything to defend my family, my friends, and the people around the area. As an MLA it's the same thing. Folks need to know a clear indicator that the law is actually on their side, not the bad guy's side.

For this motion, thank you again. I highly encourage everybody to support it because, yeah, there are some unique circumstances

and timing, and in the middle of the night it can get pretty dicey out there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and speak to this motion. I just want to start by what the motion itself is and also start a timer so that I know what's happening here.

Essentially, it says that "the Legislative Assembly [will] recognize that residents of rural communities and farm owners in Alberta face unique challenges related to crime, including property theft, vandalism, and personal safety". Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. I think the member is entirely accurate in this respect. When I acted as minister, I had the opportunity to travel around the province to meet with municipal councillors and with rural residents in a number of different locations and hear their concerns on exactly this issue. The member is correct. He is absolutely correct.

I'm also going to perhaps surprise the members opposite by agreeing with the Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland, who said that when you are waiting for emergency services to show up, seconds feel like hours. He's absolutely correct. It might only seem like a few minutes of difference in the statistics, but for the person living it, it feels like eons. That's regardless of where you are and regardless of what service you are waiting for.

Response times are necessarily longer in rural areas because of the relative distance, right? Because the area is larger, the unit may not be in the same kind of degree of proximity. That results in those people waiting longer. Those longer wait times, even if they are only minutes, feel like an eternity when the safety of your family is potentially at risk, so I just want to validate that that is absolutely correct.

That being said, I would also like to say that I think safety is an absolute top priority for everyone. I remember being surprised in the 2023 election that one of the top issues that was raised by my constituents, who are very much in inner-city Calgary, was safety. I heard from people who had lived in communities for decades and were forced to get locks for their gates for the first time; otherwise, people would enter and potentially stay there overnight, and they were afraid for the safety of their children. It's an issue that I think escalated first in rural. It is also escalating now in urban, and it is something that should one hundred per cent be addressed.

5:10

I absolutely hear what the members are saying. I heard those same stories from residents all across rural Alberta. That is why we put \$10 million into a rural crime initiative that involved essentially surveillance units that determined – I don't have access to the same data now, so I can't say definitively, but I suspect that it's similar. At the time it was very clear that a large portion of this crime, like 70, 80 per cent, was committed by a small number of individuals. These units were intended to target those individuals and sort of figure out kind of what the problem was and what the solution was, and they were very effective. Now, that being said, the population has grown. It's probably time to expand them, though I understand they are actually still operating even right now because they are fairly effective.

That is all important, and I do want to just nuance my support of this motion a tiny bit because the second part of the motion – the first part says that we recognize that they face unique challenges, and I think that we recognize that. That's correct. The second part asks for legal certainty, and I support that. I think legal certainty is very important.

My concern, and I think it's only because I'm a lawyer who's familiar with the case law, Mr. Speaker, is that uncertainty – not to draw the Speaker into debate, but I think we're all in this House aware of the fact that context is relevant. When decisions are made by any sort of deciding body, the context in which the words were said, if we're members of this House, is relevant to whether or not it's a point of order. Likewise, context is relevant when a court makes decisions.

The courts have actually cited the slower response times in rural Alberta as a relevant factor here, so insofar as I am a little bit concerned that this motion would impact that because part of the legal uncertainty is when the law applies differentially. The law does sometimes – I wouldn't say apply differentially, but courts do recognize that different actions may be permissible on behalf of a rural resident because of that slower response time and then not knowing when help will come.

Insofar as this would I guess potentially increase the standard – is that the right word? Insofar as this would not recognize that rural residents are more supportable in their actions, I think I wouldn't support it, but for the most part, yes, I think legal certainty is good. That's how I will say it. I do think that it is important for the courts to recognize that rural residents are under a different sort of pressure in these circumstances, and insofar as this motion would prevent a court from doing that, I wouldn't support that.

Yeah. I agree with the comments of the members opposite. I also wanted to thank both the members from Grande Prairie and Lacombe-Ponoka for their comments in light of the fact that there's a bill before the House federally. I really appreciate that both of those members stood up and said about vigilantism that Alberta's government does not suggest or support it and that if you feel in danger, you should call 911. I'm going to echo the comments of both of my colleagues. It doesn't happen a lot in here, Mr. Speaker, that we echo comments across in this way. I'm going to echo the comments and thank both the members for Grande Prairie and Lacombe-Ponoka for pointing that out, because I think it makes support of this motion incredibly easy.

I guess what I would say in closing is that I am in support of this motion. The only thing I would add – and I think this can be a yes-and situation, Mr. Speaker – is that we should also endeavour to make the residents in rural Alberta and in urban Alberta more safe

in other ways. I think that if response times are the concern, and hearing the members opposite I think those are the concern, switching to another police service is unlikely to impact that. There's no evidence that that will work. Response times are based on the number of officers you have, and recruiting of police officers is problematic across the system: in cities, for the RCMP, for rural forces, for everyone. It's unfortunate because this wasn't always the case.

You know, 10, even 20 years ago a lot of people were coming forward wanting to join the police who would have been well suited for the position. Obviously, like, the police have to have standards. They can't just take anyone who comes forward. There are important reasons for that, but there are recognized recruitment challenges across the system and have been for at least a decade. I think that what the government is proposing in terms of switching police services will not help with that, but there are a lot of ways that this government can help with that. They can help with that by investing in policing. They can help with that by investing in affordable housing. They can help with that by ensuring sort of investment not just in policing but in other areas of the justice system that sort of free up those resources. There are a lot of ways to do that.

I support this, motion, Mr. Speaker. I would say: yes and. [A timer sounded] Sorry; that's my bad. Yeah, I would say, "Yes and," and I guess, thank you very much, on that note.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I don't see any more speakers. Would the mover of the motion care to close debate?

Mr. Dyck: I would like to close debate and move the question forward.

[Motion Other than Government Motion 513 carried]

The Speaker: The hon. government whip.

Mr. Wright: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Assembly be adjourned until 7:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:18 p.m.]

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