



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, November 30, 2017

Day 59

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 29th Legislature

Third Session

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Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (NDP)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)
Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (NDP)
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (NDP)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (NDP)
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawthood (NDP)
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Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (NDP),
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Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (NDP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)
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Party standings:

New Democratic: 54 United Conservative: 26 Alberta Party: 2 Alberta Liberal: 1 Progressive Conservative: 1 Independent: 2 Vacant: 1

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Kleinsteinuber	

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 30, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two sets of visitors joining us today. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the ambassador of Austria to Canada, His Excellency Dr. Stefan Pehringer, and the honorary consul general of Austria in Calgary, Mr. Nikolaus Demiantschuk.

His Excellency's visit has given us a chance to identify areas in which Alberta and Austria can grow our relationship. With the Canada-EU comprehensive economic trade agreement now provisionally applied, there are plenty of opportunities for our two jurisdictions to expand bilateral trade and collaborate, especially in research, clean tech, and life sciences. We look forward to working with His Excellency on further developing and strengthening our relationship with Austria.

I would now ask my guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, I'm rising as well to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Mrs. Abhilasha Joshi, who is the consul general of India, as well as Consul Mr. Amar Jit Singh. Mrs. Joshi was posted as consul general of India in Vancouver in August this year after having served as consul general in Brazil.

Alberta's trade with India is about \$350 million each year, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, they are one of our largest agricultural export markets, and I was pleased that the minister of agriculture led a trade mission to India this spring. Like Alberta, India has a young population and a fast-growing economy. Our relationship will continue to be a priority as our government expands trade opportunities for local businesses, working closely with the Alberta office in New Delhi.

Mrs. Joshi and Mr. Singh are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am honoured to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 30 young students from the grade 6 class at Calder elementary school along with parents and teachers. Thank you to the teachers, parents, and volunteers who support these young leaders and help them lead healthy, happy lives. I'll now ask them to rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Wye elementary school. There are three classes, and their teachers – Sheryl, Tanya, and Janet – and many parent chaperones are here today. It's a very engaging school to visit with. They've been engaging in the process of what bill debate looks like, and they look forward to being here for question period today. I ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other school groups today?

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members a group of activists from the rally to save fertility treatments, just held on the steps of the Legislature. Thanks to these women and many other activists and Friends of Medicare and United Infertility Edmonton, I'll be tabling a petition with over 25,000 signatures to bring back fertility treatments at the regional fertility and women's endocrine clinic at Edmonton's Lois Hole hospital. I'll ask them to please rise as I name them so that we can give them the traditional warm welcome of the Legislature: Sandra Azocar, Friends of Medicare; Dajana Fabjanovich, Crystal Pratt, Angela Pfeifer, all from United Infertility Edmonton. Thank you for coming and expressing your needs. Let's give them a warm welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce visitors from the constituency of Edmonton-Glenora who are seated in the members' gallery, and I invite them to please rise as I introduce them. They are Rick Stewart, David Hook, and Beverly Lafortune from St. John Ambulance. St. John Ambulance has a long history with our province. It was instrumental in building compulsory first aid training for workplaces in the 1920s, and they are valuable community partners and volunteers serving communities across Alberta, providing first aid and emergency response support and training. I want to thank them for their commitment to providing a culture of safety in Alberta and ask my colleagues to please join me in extending the warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in the House to introduce to you and through you to other members in the Chamber four members of the group United Infertility who are in the public gallery today. They organized a rally on the steps of the Legislature earlier in support of keeping fertility services available at the Lois Hole hospital for women. I had the pleasure to address their supporters, who are indeed a dedicated group of champions for public health services. I'd ask that they rise as I call their names to receive the traditional warm welcome of the House: Amanda Butt, Dani Bourget, Carissa Therou, and Sara Spence.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Sabina Lange and her grandson Tom Boyce. Sabina moved to Alberta from Germany almost 50 years ago. She raised

her two daughters, Connie and Rose, here. She's a vibrant, independent senior, a loving mother, a grandmother, and a devoted partner. Her grandson Tom is my ministerial assistant, and he told me he could not be more proud to be showing his oma around the Alberta Legislature. Thank you, Tom, for your service and dedication to making life better for all Albertans. I'd ask that they both stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Darby Lee Young, a remarkable person who's never allowed her physical limitations to stop her from following her dreams. One of those dreams was to apply her personal experiences as a disabled individual to her professional life so she could help others with physical challenges chase their own dreams, and she's done that and so much more. She founded Level Playing Field Inc., which promotes accessible and universal design solutions in urban environments. Darby is also on the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, and I can tell you she looks forward with keen interest to seeing the council move forward at a pace perhaps somewhat quicker than it has to date. She also won one of the Calgary Stampede's western legacy awards and most recently was named one of YWCA Calgary's 150 women who dare. I'll be joining Darby and others at city hall tomorrow to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and I ask Darby to please stand now and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Service Alberta and Minister of Status of Women.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you a group of advocates from HIV Edmonton, an organization that is near and dear to me and my family. Tomorrow is December 1, and it is World AIDS Day. It's a day to reflect on the awesome and amazing achievements that have been made in HIV and AIDS and, most importantly, to renew our commitment to end HIV. HIV Edmonton's long-term vision is zero new infections, zero stigma, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths. The support of dedicated volunteers like our guests in the gallery today will get us to zero. I ask that Shelley Williams, executive director, and other staff, volunteers, and advocates please rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all the members in the House my guest, Stacey Carmichael. Stacey has worked in the community of Red Deer for many years demonstrating leadership related to homelessness, mental health, and addictions. She is currently the executive director of Turning Point Society, which is the local harm reduction organization in Red Deer. Turning Point has been working to foster healthy responses to HIV and related issues through support, education, and research. I would ask my guest to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

Thank you.

1:40

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you. With your indulgence, I have three introductions today. It's my honour to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two of Edmonton's city councillors. My riding of Edmonton-Decore is overlapped by two of the wards, but of course they also overlap into some of my colleagues' here in Edmonton as well. Ward 3 is represented by Jon Dziadyk, who was just elected to the position for the first time in the recent municipal election, and ward 7 is represented by Tony Caterina, who is serving Edmontonians now for his fourth term. They are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask that they now please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Nielsen: It's also a pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly one of my constituents, Moatasem Samara. Sixteen years ago Moatasem arrived in Canada, Edmonton specifically, for graduate studies at the University of Alberta. He's a proud small-business owner. He co-owns three pharmacies in Edmonton, one of which is in my riding of Edmonton-Decore, and is working to set up the fourth pharmacy now. His businesses employ nine people in addition to himself and his business partner. I would like to thank him for taking such good care of my constituents in Edmonton-Decore, and I would ask now that he please rise to receive the traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Nielsen: It's also, again, a pleasure to rise for the third time and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two staff members from Edmonton Meals on Wheels, Caitlin Fleming and Sarah McCrimmon. Although Edmonton Meals on Wheels is not in my riding of Edmonton-Decore – they are in the great riding of Edmonton-Centre – my office does have a very special relationship with this organization. As I have 21 schools in my riding along with numerous organizations that serve children, we have a special partnership where the children in my riding design and make cards for the numerous special occasions to be sent out with the meals. These cards have brightened up the lives of numerous seniors throughout the city of Edmonton, and I'm very proud of all the children who have taken part in this special endeavour. I would ask that Caitlin and Sarah now please rise to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Katie Kitschke, the executive director of Saffron. Katie has shown an incredible dedication in assisting those in Strathcona county who have been affected by sexual assault. Katie and her staff at Saffron sexual assault centre provide counselling to victims and their loved ones. I'll be speaking more about her work in my member's statement later on today. I invite all of them to stand and receive the traditional welcome from the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my absolute pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a very dear friend of mine. She's a tireless crusader for the conservative cause in Alberta. Leah Wood was the provincial director of the legacy Wildrose Party before serving on the interim joint board and is now a director on the United Conservative Party board. Outside her political engagement Leah and her husband, Alton, run a cattle ranch close to Drayton Valley and are staunch advocates for Alberta's agricultural community and the rodeo, having served on the ag society board and on the Rotary Club. Leah is a business owner, a community leader, a mom, a proud Albertan, and a very dear friend. I would ask that she rise to receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two constituents of mine that I've gotten to know over the last number of years. They are the father and the grandmother of one of our page program attendees, Amanda Porter. I'd like to introduce to you Joan Porter – she worked for many years as a nurse in the Barrhead area and also on a farm in the Fort Assiniboine area and was there to help my wife and me as we got into parenthood and helped to deliver some of our children – and also her son James Porter, who was available to help on our campaign in 2015. I would ask them to please rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

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

World AIDS Day

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am humbled to rise today to speak to World AIDS Day. Alberta is proud to join the international movement in declaring December 1 as World AIDS Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness around AIDS and HIV infection and remembering those who have died of the disease. Since 1988 World AIDS Day has recognized the devastation this disease causes and that every nation has a responsibility to ensure universal treatment, care, and support for those living with HIV.

The first Canadian case of AIDS presented itself in 1979. By 1983 Canada established the National Task Force on AIDS to help fight the epidemic. Since that time science and medicine have changed HIV from a death sentence to a chronic but mostly manageable disease. However, today there is still a lot of stigma and discrimination for those who live with HIV. The mere mention of the word "HIV" can bring judgment and can instantly change interactions. Few diseases are more misunderstood or feared than HIV and AIDS. World AIDS Day is important because it reminds us that HIV has not gone away and that more work is needed to end it.

Our guests from HIV Edmonton support a vision of zero: zero new HIV infections, zero stigma and discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths. Similarly, my guests from Turning Point in Red Deer echo the same determined vision for the Red Deerians they serve. On this day let us reflect on the advancements we have made in our fight against AIDS and HIV. More importantly, let us

renew our commitment to ending HIV. Now is the time to get to zero and end it for good.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I must say that it is nice to hear a child in this place on occasion.

The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Volunteers in Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two thousand and seventeen has marked a year of celebration to recognize our country's 150th birthday. I've had the pleasure of attending many events organized by volunteers throughout my constituency to help celebrate this special birthday.

Two individuals from my constituency have earned the Senate of Canada's 150th commemorative medal, which was created to recognize Canadians who through dedication and volunteer work make their community a better place. Mr. André Noël of Morinville has been contributing for many years to the vitality of Centralta's Francophonie. Involved for more than 13 years in the Centralta Tourism Society, he has worked to ensure that the contribution of francophones is recognized and recorded in both official languages. He is a director and member of the Morinville Historical and Cultural Society, and he is a founding member of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day festival held in Morinville in June of each year.

Mrs. Joy Wierenga from Neerlandia has invested significant energy and time into community events and celebrations. In addition, she organized the compilation and writing of her community's history, detailing the lives of the first settlers in the region and, later, the community's more recent history. She is described as one whose dedication and passion for her community is boundless, and the impact she has had on the lives of those in the local area is hard to overstate.

On June 28 I stood on the banks of the Athabasca River with over a thousand people to welcome 15 large voyageur canoes. About 170 paddlers had launched their canoes six days earlier by Jasper and paddled about 333 kilometres to Fort Assiniboine. This brigade was more than just a canoe trip; it was a celebration of our nation's history. The welcoming event volunteer organizers Quentin and Teresa Olson along with many other hands did a wonderful job to provide entertainment and a barbecue dinner for all.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of these and all of the volunteers in my riding who selflessly give of their time and efforts. Thank you.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Provincial Credit Rating

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, under this NDP government's watch Alberta's credit rating has been downgraded a staggering six times. Here's what a respected credit-rating agency said about the latest: the downgrade reflects large operating deficits and rapid debt accumulation, and Alberta's negative trend is because the province has yet to demonstrate any real willingness to address the weakest budget outlook among all Canadian provinces. It's clear that this government has no real plan to rein in its expenses. To the Premier: does she think that this reckless behaviour with Albertans' money can continue, or will she finally begin to rein in Alberta's expenses?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a good thing the member opposite corrected his language because we have reined in the expenses that Albertans are facing. We've made sure that we capped tuition. We've made sure that we capped electricity prices. We've rolled back school fees. All of these things are making life more affordable for Albertans, and we're not going to stop doing them. We're going to stand up for Alberta families and work to make it better. Guess what? Not only are we making life more affordable, but our jobs plan is working, too. That's because we have 70,000 new full-time jobs since just over a year ago, this time last year. It's working. It's time you guys got on board.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the NDP can say it as loud as they want, but I can tell you that Albertans don't think that six credit downgrades is acceptable. When asked about this yesterday, the Finance minister said that this will all come out in the wash and be a wash. The Finance minister is clearly confused. More taxpayer dollars for debt servicing will actually reduce services despite what the Deputy Premier just said. So will the Finance minister stand up in this House and make it very clear how much these credit downgrades are going to continue to cost Albertans? [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members.
The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's credit rating remains among the strongest in the country, and our balance sheet is the strongest among provinces, with the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio. Those are actual facts. I know that the members opposite like to whip things up, but it's important for us to lay the facts on the table. We'll be sharing more about our path to balance with Albertans in the near future, but this work takes time, and it must be done carefully and compassionately with Alberta families. We are proud to be doing that work, and we are on track absolutely to make sure that we continue to have the strongest economy and the strongest balance sheet in our country.

Mr. Nixon: The NDP want to talk about facts; let's talk about some. Last year debt-servicing costs alone were over \$1 billion, that's \$240 for every single person in our province that could have been spent on services, things that are needed by Albertans. If this government does not change direction, it's going to become more and more expensive. But, again, Mr. Speaker, I asked a very simple question. Will the Finance minister stand up in this House and tell us how much the increased costs will be as a result of his sixth credit downgrade?

Ms Hoffman: Minimal, Mr. Speaker. As the Deputy Premier I'm happy to answer this because – you know what? – what they're asking us to do, the members opposite, is to stop spending, and they're asking us to cut 20 per cent. That's what their leader, Jason Kenney, said. What would that mean? Firing 16,000 teachers and doubling our class sizes, closing half of Alberta's acute-care hospitals and 600 emergency spaces, and wiping out the student aid budget for postsecondary learners. That's what they're calling for. We won't stand for it. We'll stand up for Albertans.

The Speaker: It's a lovely day in the neighbourhood.
Second main question.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, that is ridiculous. Again, a very clear question was asked on a very important issue. Six credit downgrades under this government's watch. All I've asked in these last few questions is something very simple. Will the Finance minister stand up and tell us what that increased tax will be, what

the increased costs will be to Albertans as a result of his mismanagement? Yes or no, or does he not know?

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell you is that we know that Alberta is the envy of many, many provinces. We have a strong balance sheet, we have the lowest debt-to-GDP, and we are in good shape. You know, we've heard from credit-rating agencies before. They want us to cut \$3 billion to \$4 billion out of our budget so that they can keep our credit in place. That would hurt Albertans. That would stunt the recession. That would put us farther back. That would make us like Saskatchewan.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, yet again all the NDP have is fearmongering. They want to get up and they want to talk about fearmongering and all sorts of different issues except for the record. Here is the question I am asking. Six credit downgrades under this government's watch, under this Finance minister's watch. I have simply asked in this House for him to stand up and tell us how much that will cost Albertans as a result of that mismanagement. He either does not know or he is refusing to answer. Yet again, through you to the Finance minister: how much more will it cost Albertans as a result of your mismanagement and these credit downgrades?

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, the other side doesn't want to talk about the good things going on in Alberta. The other side doesn't want to talk about the return of 72,000 jobs since the low of July 2016. [interjections]

The Speaker: Keep the volume down.
Go ahead, Mr. Minister. Finish.

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, they keep running our economy down. Mr. Kenney and the Conservatives are so eager for the good economic story not to get out in this province. We are starting to return to 4 per cent growth.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Nixon: Again, Mr. Speaker, nothing but deflecting the question. This government has a failed record. They have two cancelled pipelines. They've got another one that everybody in B.C. seems to be working to stop. They have a carbon tax that they brought forward that they said would buy social licence, and it hasn't worked. But putting all that aside, this is an extremely simple question to the Finance minister. He has six credit downgrades under his time as Finance minister. I've asked, I think, six times now in this House today if he will rise and tell us how much that is going to cost Albertans. Do you know? Yes or no, Mr. Finance minister?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite are very clear in that they want to push for deep, brutal cuts. We've lived through that before; we've experienced that before. Instead, what we did is move forward with a plan... [interjections] I know they want to yell and shut me up, but they're not going to do that because I'm going to stand up on this side of the House for Albertans. [interjections]

The Speaker: I can't hear.
Please continue.

Ms Hoffman: On this side of the House we're going to stand up for the families who are sending their kids to school, who want to make

sure they have a quality education in a reasonable class size. On this side of the House we're going to borrow to make sure that we're building much-needed health infrastructure. We've opened hospitals in communities like High Prairie and Edson, and we're going to keep moving forward because it's been since the 1980s since Edmonton got one. We're not going to cut 20 per cent like the members opposite. We're going to stand with Albertans.

The Speaker: Third main question. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again they want to continue to stand up over and over in this House, not answer simple questions, avoid the facts around their records. We're just asking very simple questions. The credit-rating agencies say that this is a result of the management of this Finance minister and this government of the province. Again, how much more is this going to cost Albertans as a result of these credit downgrades? Does the Finance minister know, or does he not know? Extremely simple question, and we don't want to hear any more fearmongering. Stand up and answer the question.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, we had a choice in this province. We could go down the road they wanted us to go down, or we could stand behind Albertans and ensure they got through this recession. The costs are minimal. I've said that. We are going forward. We are going to grow the fastest of any province in spite of their activities.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the costs are minimal? What are the costs? It's a very simple question. Already we know that it's \$1 billion in debt-servicing costs alone before this latest credit downgrading. That is over \$240 per person in this province. It's not minimal. I don't think my constituents think that, and I don't think your constituents think that. What I do know is that your constituents and mine want an answer to this simple question: how much more is this going to cost them as a result of this Finance minister's mismanagement and six credit downgrades? It's as simple as that. Can the Finance minister answer that question, or does he not know? It's okay if he doesn't know. Just stand up and say it.

2:00

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, we are doing the work that this province needs to put it back on its feet. They would have kept us on our knees for years. The costs are minimal. It's \$50,000 to the end of the fiscal year.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Nixon: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. This is finance 101, Minister, you would think. This is about as simple a question as I could ask in this place. I'm now about to ask it for the ninth time. This is the Finance minister of Alberta, that oversees one of the largest economies in the world. Does the Finance minister know the answer to this question or not? Will he take it seriously, stand up, and tell us how much this is going to cost Albertans and what he's going to do about his gross mismanagement of our economy, that has resulted in six credit downgrades under his watch?

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, the previous Leader of the Opposition was a deficit backer when he was in the federal government. He saw that you needed to support your economy. I answered the question with the last question. It's \$50,000 to the end of the year.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Infertility Treatment in Edmonton

Ms McPherson: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I spoke at a rally on the Legislature stairs today about the service transition at the Royal Alex regional fertility clinic, which won't be offering important, uninsured services like IVF, and we haven't seen details on additional supports these patients will need. AHS said that they'd look into it, but we haven't heard a thing. Patients have been told that they will not be reimbursed for services they already paid for and now won't receive. To the Minister of Health: what is the status of the support for patients who are affected by the changes at the Royal Alex fertility clinic?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. Of course, to all families who are struggling – and we all know somebody who is. About 1 in 6 Alberta families does experience infertility at some point. Our hearts definitely go out to them, and we're working to make sure that there's a smooth transition. Every single one of the patients at the current clinic has been contacted by a letter and follow-up attempts by phone call to be able to talk about the transition plan, and any costs related to transferring biological material are going to be carried by AHS to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

Ms McPherson: Mr. Speaker, families who have been on wait-lists at the clinic are now facing further delays. Some of these families have been trying to grow their families for years and are heartbroken at the prospect that they may not even be able to store their embryos as these wait times come with additional costs for storage and transportation, creating further barriers. To the minister: how are these people supposed to plan for their future family when they don't know when or even if they will be able to get treatment?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Again, just to reiterate, the transportation costs from the current storage facility to the new facility will be borne by AHS, not by individual patients. I absolutely understand the nervousness, and we do encourage all of the families who are impacted to please reach back out to AHS. They've sent letters and made phone call attempts so that they can arrange for as smooth a transition as possible because we know that additional stress is not conducive to good care. That's one of the reasons why the counselling services and other publicly insured services at that clinic will continue to be in place.

Ms McPherson: Patients of the Royal Alex clinic have been told by AHS to seek out services at the new private clinic on Jasper Avenue or the existing one in Calgary or perhaps in B.C. Doctors trained in IVF at the University of Alberta may now have to look for work in the private sector instead of in the public system. Can the Minister of Health explain to us how she intends to strengthen reproductive health in the public system or if she intends to continue to encourage privatization?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, our track record is very clear. On this side of the House we stand for public health care and public access. Everything that is publicly insured will continue to be offered at the hospital and continue to be publicly insured. The pieces that were already privately delivered at that facility at that hospital: the

physicians are moving to a new clinic, and the physicians will continue to offer those privately insured services in the city of Edmonton. We are standing up to continue to reduce wait times and improve access for the publicly insured services. Again, our hearts go out to any family that is struggling with fertility.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think everyone in this House knows someone that has accessed fertility treatments to help them start a family, and I've heard how deeply personal that journey is. So I understand that the concerns came up after the changes to the fertility clinic at the Royal Alex, an important resource for families seeking support. Given the importance of these fertility services for Alberta, to the Minister of Health: why will IVF services no longer be available there?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for what we know is an important topic of interest to many Albertans. I know that infertility is a painful struggle for many Albertans, and again my heart does go out to families dealing with this uncertainty and stress because of the change.

Two physicians have made the choice to leave the fertility clinic at the current location and to go to a different one. My understanding is that they're hoping to transfer their patients, those who are interested in doing so, because the clinic will no longer offer the noninsured services at the current location. However, the clinic will remain open at the Lois Hole hospital and will continue to provide all the insured services that are available and, hopefully, with shorter wait times, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that there have been concerns about privatization of services at the fertility clinic, to the same minister: what fertility services are available through our public health care system?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of the services that are publicly covered include diagnostic testing, endocrinology, and semen analysis. Once the transition is complete, we will in fact be able to expand capacity for those insured services so that more Albertans will be able to access them. This change will also increase space for other important women's health services such as reproductive mental health supports and bereavement programs, cancer screenings and treatment, and care for high-risk pregnancies.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this is a difficult transition for many families, to the same minister: what measures are being taken to communicate these changes to patients using the clinic?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, AHS has informed me that they have sent letters to the patients and have made some attempts via phone to follow up. We certainly do invite patients to – I've invited some of the folks involved with the rally today to meet with me. We reached out to them earlier this week, and I wanted to have an opportunity to meet with them today, but I understand that they'll be available in the coming days instead. AHS has reached out to patients to answer questions, review their care plans, and to transfer

to other clinics as necessary. All transition costs for cryogenic material, again, will be covered by AHS. Again, I have absolutely extended an invitation and hope to meet with them at their easiest convenience.

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, there appears to be a credibility gap between what the minister is saying and the experience of the folks suffering with this. The abrupt removal of fertility treatments from the Lois Hole hospital for women in Edmonton has come as a devastating blow for hundreds, and I don't see it as likely to improve access and improve wait times. Today a rally on the steps highlighted many of those affected, and they're in the gallery today. Thousands more have signed formal and online petitions, which I'll table shortly. To the minister: will you reverse this decision? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Two physicians at that clinic that have been providing uninsured services have chosen to move their practice to a different clinic. I can't force them to reverse that decision. It was the decision that was made. They're continuing to provide their services in the city of Edmonton. I have made very clear to AHS that we want to ensure that any transition is done with ease to the patients and to their families and that all insured services continue to be provided there. AHS believes that they'll be able to reduce the wait times and provide more of the insured services with that space.

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, we'll take that as a no.

Since 2015 Alberta Liberals have campaigned on a promise to provide public funding for costly fertility treatments, which would save patients money and save the health system money. No other party has made the promise, choosing instead to send couples to private clinics, whose prices are much higher than those at the Lois Hole. Today I want to give this government an opportunity to change that. Will your government commit to funding at least the first round of expensive IVF treatments, saving both patient costs and the system costs?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

2:10

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I look forward to an opportunity to meet with some of the folks who have been involved in organizing this. I have a desire to meet with them and have reached out and look forward to discussing this more. Again, I know how difficult challenges with fertility can be on Albertans. One of the things is that we're working very diligently to protect and strengthen our public health care system. We know that members opposite are calling for deep and brutal cuts. We're not going to do that. We're working with Alberta families. I don't want to make commitments that I won't be able to follow through on, but I certainly look forward to and am open to opportunities that we might be able to explore.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Dr. Swann: Well, the other important impact here is the loss of academic training programs and opportunities. This clinic is one of only two academic IVF centres in Canada. More IVF specialists have been trained at the University of Alberta in the last 10 years than any other university in Canada. Now AHS has encouraged successful doctors to leave the public system for the private system.

What is the government's plan to train the next generation of fertility specialists, who've been forced into the private system?

Ms Hoffman: Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify that AHS has informed me that the physicians made a decision to move to a different practice. That is a decision that I think we need to respect. We certainly want to ensure that all the publicly delivered services continue to be offered in the hospital, and that's our intention. We respect the decisions that others have made to move their practice, but we are going to make sure that everything that is publicly delivered we're fighting to protect, strengthen, and improve. I know the members opposite are yelling at me to move privatization models, but we're not going to do that. We're going to keep fighting for the publicly insured services to continue to be publicly insured.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Provincial Fiscal Policies

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister has said that he can and will balance the budget by 2023. Does he still maintain that he can achieve it? Yes or no, please?

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, we'll be sharing more about that path to balance with Albertans in the near future. As we move towards Budget 2018, we are going to be carefully and compassionately watching our spending. We have opened up the web lines so that people can tell us what their views around cutting and shaving our budget are. But, yes, the plan is still to balance by 2023.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, given that multiple times today the Deputy Premier and the Finance minister have said that they won't cut 20 per cent from their budget and given that a 10 per cent, or \$10 billion, deficit is 20 per cent of your budget, how can you do both?

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, there is a growing economy in this province. Everybody knows that we're going to grow at least 4 per cent. I met with economists earlier today, and they were all bullish on our numbers. They said: yes, those numbers make sense. As the economy grows, as we restrict spending, and as we diversify our economy, we will get to balance in 2023.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, that sounds a lot like our plan.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister has said that he will balance the budget through hiring freezes and attrition. Can the minister balance the budget on these measures alone?

Mr. Ceci: You know, that side's plan to balance the budget is different, Mr. Speaker. They want to give massive tax giveaways to their friends and insiders. They want to pay for those massive tax giveaways by cutting the programs and services that we all rely on. We're not going to let that happen. We're going to balance by 2023 in the sensible way that we've talked about.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Land Titles Registry Website Outage

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since Sunday evening Alberta realtors, lawyers, buyers, and sellers of property have been stuck in limbo after the land titles search website crashed. This means that hundreds of thousands of dollars in transactions were stalled. No real reason for the site failure was given other than a technical glitch. It is this kind of secrecy that is a concern to all Albertans. To the Minister of Service Alberta: for the record did the site actually

crash due to an update, or was your department hacked and we lost total control of the Alberta land titles system?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Service Alberta.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans deserve a government that makes life better by focusing on what matters most. Certainly, we know the importance of the land titles system. [interjections]

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, it really doesn't help the situation with this, like, hyperbolic, you know, out-of-thin-air suggestion. The reason that has been given is the actual reason, I can assure the member opposite, and we're working on it.* We've extended land titles hours to be able to deal with this issue, and we have everyone working on this to get it back up and running.

Mr. Cyr: Given that this complete site failure clearly shows the limitations of the government's IT system and given the serious impact that stalled transactions and the inability to pull property information have on our real estate industry, if this is truly an update failure, why was there no contingency system in place to ensure that businesses and the personal interests of thousands of Albertans were protected, Minister?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is one platform available for these purposes. It's the SPIN platform, and unfortunately when something as serious as what occurred happens, there are unfortunate consequences of sites going down. This is not terribly unusual, unfortunately, when we talk about websites overall. But I can assure the public that we are working on this, and we will ensure that it's repaired, and we will learn from it to prevent this kind of thing from happening again.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this critical failure of the land titles system was so serious that you had to shut down your Edmonton and Calgary land offices and given that these IT disruptions could negatively affect the privacy and security of individuals and businesses and given that the system went down yet again today – there are clearly no adequate backup measures in place – to the minister: what assurances can you give to Albertans that our land titles system is safe under your direction?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the assertion that there is somehow a privacy issue here is just way out to lunch. There was an update that came. It caused the system to crash. We are fixing the system. These assertions are not helpful to anyone. We are working on the problem. We will have it back up and running, I assure the public. When we talk about transparency, they really are ones to talk. When we look at the record of Mr. Kenney, he refuses to disclose anything to the public. This is a computer glitch, nothing more.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Student Achievement in Mathematics

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The trends in international mathematics and science study, or TIMSS, has been administered

*See page 2163, right column, paragraph 3

across the world every four years since 1995. TIMSS data is collected from students in grades 4 and 8. In 1995 Alberta's grade 4 results indicated that our math achievement results were roughly in the middle of the countries that participated. However, our results have been steadily declining ever since. To the Minister of Education: are you concerned about the steady decline of our math results in standardized international testing over the last 22 years?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. In the last two years, absolutely, we've been taking a number of efforts to make sure that they're moving forward. For the 20 years before that, you'll have to talk to your benchmates, hon. member. In terms of the last two years we've invested over a million dollars to create a new bursary to support teachers in strengthening their own math knowledge and math education knowledge, to modernize the curriculum, ensuring that our school teachers have the basics or the pieces that they need to be able to provide quality learning environments, and of course we've improved testing, including the addition of a no-calculator portion to the PATs. That's certainly a move in the right direction, and we continue to move forward with Alberta teachers, students, and families.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that when the most recent cohort of Alberta students who wrote the TIMSS in grade 4, in 2015, wrote the provincial achievement test in grade 6 this past spring, they demonstrated the same decrease in math ability that was demonstrated through the TIMSS two years ago and given that the PATs are the official communication of the provincial standard, again to the minister. Two different tests, same result. Why are Alberta students continuing to struggle with math?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking as somebody who was trained as a math teacher, I have to say that it's incredibly important that teachers and students have reasonable class sizes to ensure that they can have good opportunities to engage one on one. That's why when we became government, instead of moving forward with the deep cuts that were proposed, that were going to result in far worse opportunities for students to learn and teachers to have a productive work experience, we moved forward to ensure that we provided stability to class sizes. We are updating the curriculum. We are updating testing. It takes some time, obviously, for implementation, but we know that we're headed on the right track, and we know that students and teachers are . . .

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

2:20

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the hon. member knows that it's far more than just class size.

Given that the PAT program assists schools, authorities, and the province in monitoring and improving student learning and given that if we had grade 3 PATs, the province would have had earlier data to help those kids succeed and given the failure of the SLAs, again to the minister. Waiting for an international test in grade 4 or your exam in grade 6 is too late. Why do we not have grade 3 PATs to identify these issues as early as possible?

Ms Hoffman: Well, Mr. Speaker, we worked with Albertans to make sure that there's a test. Actually, instead of having a PAT at

the end of the grade 3 year, there were earlier assessments brought in at the beginning of the year to do diagnostic approaches so that that year didn't lose the whole opportunity that it had to ensure that students were on track and prepared and able to move forward. I certainly think that in my experiences with the public school board and training as a teacher, the earlier you can get opportunities to sit down with parents and with students to talk about gaps in knowledge, the better. That's exactly why these tools are being developed and why the curriculum is being redesigned. We know there's room for improvement. We know our students can do better. They're doing it in science, and we know they can do it . . .

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

Child and Youth Recreational and Cultural Programs

Ms Luff: Mr. Speaker, children and teens across the province deserve to be able to participate in valuable activities when the school day is done. All Albertans benefit when our kids have access to cultural, recreation, and arts programs. When I speak to constituents about community concerns, one thing that I hear frequently is that there's a lack of after school programming in my constituency, especially for adolescents. To the Minister of Culture and Tourism: what is this government doing to help organizations that provide school programs for students in my riding?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Miranda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government knows that the best way to support programs for youth is to ensure that we continue to deliver funding for facilities and programming in these organizations. That is why our government is investing in community facilities like the Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary, the Forest Heights Community Association, and the Cornerstone Youth Centre Society, all of which have a significant benefit for youth in communities across the city and the province. While the opposition would have us cut, we are going to continue working to ensure that we continue to deliver the services that these children and youth . . .

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms Luff: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While all of those organizations are doing amazing work, many ethnic communities in my riding are working to provide programs for youth that will help to strengthen cultural ties and help students succeed in school. However, they find difficulty in accessing government grants. To the same minister: what is this government doing to help address systemic barriers for these groups to improve access to grants?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Miranda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud that our government supports nonprofit organizations that help to build stronger, healthier, and more inclusive communities. Not only are we investing in important grants that these organizations rely on; we have also made the application easier and clearer for groups who are applying so they can access the funding. If the member has specific questions about specific grants, programs, I'm more than happy to talk with her and provide additional information. The most important thing to remember here is that while that side will continue to cut, this side and this government will continue to support our province's nonprofit and voluntary organizations.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms Luff: Thank you. Given that community groups throughout the province also rely on funds from gaming to help support recreation and cultural programs, I often hear from new and small nonprofits, particularly in cultural communities, that receiving a bingo or casino licence from AGLC can be a huge challenge. To the Minister of Treasury Board and Finance: what is the government doing to ensure that all nonprofits have equal access to these opportunities?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you. In the last fiscal year alone 17,904 charities were licensed to carry out charitable gaming activities in support of their communities. They raised in excess of \$330 million. The dedicated team at AGLC strived to work with each and every one of these groups to assist them through the licensing process, ensuring that each group has equal and efficient access to information. The AGLC staff are passionate about the work they do for Albertans, and I'd encourage anyone facing challenges to reach out to AGLC.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Calgary Cancer Centre Construction Contract

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The awarding of the Calgary cancer centre design/build contract is great news for Calgary and fulfills a long-made promise to the city, but documents and sources indicate that the winner got the job for \$1.122 billion, a full \$206 million, or 22 and a half per cent, higher than the lowest bid. Two hundred and six million dollars is the equivalent of five new high schools or 80 per cent of the highway twinning and widening budget for this year or six years of medical equipment replacements. To the Minister of Infrastructure: can you explain why the highest priced bid won the job?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Ms Jansen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that it probably sounds attractive to members of the opposition to think that the cheapest bid is going to win at the end of the day, but we actually look for something beyond that. We actually look for quality of building design because, you know, when it comes to something as important as a cancer centre, we think it's incredibly important that we get the right build at the right time and that we get something in a structure that is going to provide decades of effective, quality service, care, research, and design for Albertans who are affected by ...

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

First supplemental.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that at the end of the day, we are building a box – mind you, a fancy box – to do the job of treating cancer patients and given that the Infrastructure minister has the right price at the right time and that the winner will take eight months longer to complete construction of this facility than the lowest bidder, to the Minister of Infrastructure: what are Albertans getting for the extra eight months of construction and the extra \$206 million being paid for the Calgary cancer centre?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The fact that the member opposite would talk about such critical infrastructure, needed for compassionate care for cancer patients, as a box, to me,

is disrespectful and disheartening. The patients who are involved in the creation of this project have put their hearts and their lives ... [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members.

Ms Hoffman: ... on the line to make sure that it is a quality building that respects the kind of care and dignity that I would expect all members to give to them. The dad who was at the announcement with his daughter, who was grieving the loss of his wife, the daughter's mother, is building that hospital, helping to build the design. It is going to be a thing of beauty, Mr. Speaker, far more than a fancy box. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members. [interjections] Hon. members.

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, a thing of beauty costing \$206 million more and eight months longer. What are Albertans getting for the extra time and the extra money? A simple question. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. member.

Ms Jansen: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to cancer care, I think we have to consider a lot of things. As someone who has a mom who goes for chemotherapy for one week out of every month across town at the Peter Lougheed, I will tell you that the idea of bringing all these services together under one roof, in the kind of state-of-the-art facility that we can be proud of around the world, is something I am incredibly proud to spearhead. And the idea that we do so with the consultation of cancer survivors and with the idea that we are creating a space that is going to bring comfort, care, and innovation to cancer patients everywhere ...

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Health Care ID Card Fraud

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, in our meetings with Health we asked about the costs associated with fraudulent use of our health system by non-Albertans. This fraud is perpetuated by the fact that our health care identification is extremely outdated. It exposes Alberta to millions of dollars in losses due to this simple oversight. At the time, the minister did not have a clear answer on financial loss due to fraud. To the Minister of Health: have you finally identified how much Alberta is losing due to health care fraud?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. What I did say is that there are international studies that are being done that propose projections. Any time we identify fraud, we do that in partnership with the public service and Service Alberta. Any time we identify fraud, it is addressed, it is gone after, and those funds are recovered or attempted to be recovered. If there is fraud that the member opposite knows about that he wants to point us in the direction of, we'd be very happy to recover those funds.

2:30

Mr. Yao: Given that concerns with our health care cards are not just financial and that our current health ID is vulnerable to allowing noncitizens to access health services and this could impact the actual medical record of our citizens, facilitating erroneous and possibly conflicting health information on Albertans' health records, which could be detrimental to their health, have you made

a decision to institute a permanent form of identification for health's sake?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. These are certainly some of the conversations that I think are important for Albertans to have. We know that there would be an increased cost in being able to do so. We've discussed this with our partners in Service Alberta and others. I do think that there is merit to the idea. I do also acknowledge that we are in a period of time where we're tightening our fiscal belt and we're making sure that we're investing in what needs to be done. They're calling for cuts in question one, they're calling for us to reduce the deficit, they're calling for 20 per cent cuts, and they're calling for increased investment. I think the idea is worth merit for further conversation, but it's time to figure out which page you guys want to be on when you're asking your questions in question period.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, even the most simple retail outlet can give an identification card to somebody.

Given that other provinces have incorporated photo ID with bar codes with basic personal information, which does help discourage fraud, and given that people who are addicted to illicit drugs are desperate and will use any option available to access opioids, including impersonating others to access prescriptions, and that this is another contributor to our opioid crisis, when will the minister come to the realization that she needs to make a decision on this issue? You've had 30 months to look into this. Why are you neglecting the simple, simple piece of the puzzle that really is inexpensive?

Ms Hoffman: It's simple to be a critic and to ask questions. I'll tell you that it is not a low-cost initiative. [interjections] That doesn't mean it's not important for us to be investigating. That's one of the reasons why I've asked Service Alberta and my Health officials to do that, but I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it is a very costly initiative. The members opposite are heckling me, talking about cuts, talking about spending. Enough is enough. Come up with a plan, and tell us what it is. Where's your shadow budget? Don't tell us we can cut 20 per cent without telling us where you'd cut it, because I can tell you that we're going to stand up for Albertans. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Energy and Environmental Policies

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier appointed Tzeporah Berman to the oil sands advisory group. Berman was paid Alberta taxpayers' money to give recommendations on how to implement a 100-megatonne emissions limit for the oil sands. Now, I'm sure Ms Berman was happy to give recommendations on how to implement this limit that has and will be detrimental to Alberta's oil and gas industry. Berman recently wrote an article for the *Guardian*. In this article Berman said that "there is still time to shine a light on Canada's most shameful environmental secret." Does the Premier believe that Alberta has a shameful environmental secret?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What I can tell the members of this House and all Albertans is that our Premier and our government are very proud of our oil and gas sector. We know that

our practices here in the province are world leading when it comes to environmental responsibility and sustainability. I can tell you that over the past year our oil sands, our oil and gas sector are growing. We know that drilling activity is up, with 64 per cent more wells being drilled this year than last year. This month we learned that Chevron is ramping up spending in the oil patch, investing up to \$1 billion on their Duvernay shale basin. Our oil and gas sector is thriving.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Loewen: Given that they're so proud that they call us the embarrassing cousins and given that this government has implemented a damaging carbon tax, punishing emission caps, and community-crushing coal shutdowns and has agreed to the federal government's horrific carbon tax increases that are even higher than what the NDP will be ramming down Albertans' throats even after the 50 per cent increase starting January 1, does the Premier believe Ms Berman's comment that Canada has "weak climate targets"?

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, our Premier will never back down from fighting for Alberta jobs and Alberta's energy sector. Frankly, our Premier has done more to promote pipelines and deliver results in two years than the members opposite did in 44. Here's what some of the members of the industry are saying about our Premier: you have been a strong and unwavering partner of ours and our industry; your voice is being heard across the country. That was from Ian Anderson, who is the president of Kinder Morgan Canada. I can tell you that the president of the chamber of commerce in Calgary said: Premier, your remarks are passionate, patriotic, and fantastic; thank you for your leadership and for standing up for Alberta.

Mr. Loewen: Given that this government's carbon tax has been responsible for two cancelled pipelines and given that this government has been late in its support for pipelines and Albertans do not believe the words that have been followed by actions and given that the NDP MLAs have protested pipelines and that the Premier has hired anti-oil activists and that one of them, Tzeporah Berman, has said, "The tar sands have been dubbed the largest (and most destructive) industrial project in human history," to the Premier: do you stand behind the quote from your past adviser?

Ms Hoffman: Let me be clear. The Trans Mountain pipeline expansion will be built. We will break our land lock. We will get our product to new markets. Our Premier is in Vancouver fighting for the support of this critical project. She carried the same message to Toronto and Ottawa last week. The Leader of the Opposition sat for decades in Ottawa. You know what? We didn't get to tidewater. Frankly, our Premier has done more to promote the pipeline in two years than Conservatives did for 44.

Greenhouse Gas Emission Regulations

Mr. MacIntyre: The NDP haven't got a clue how to attract and keep money in this province. It's called investor confidence, and every ministry has failed in it, especially Energy. The NDP want a shiny new sector-by-sector, output-based allocation system with performance standards. That was two years ago. Now the current system, SGER, will expire in a month with no details on a replacement yet. How can investors be expected to do a detailed financial analysis when the greenhouse gas regulations affecting emitters have not been released?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know what? I'm very proud of the work that the Minister of Energy, our minister of environment, and our Premier have been doing, working very closely with industry. We are working collaboratively with them to ensure that when the new OSAG rules come in, we're going to be working with industry to ensure that they can continue to invest. I can tell the member opposite that investor confidence is up in this province. I can give you a number of examples, from Amazon to Google to Pinnacle to Champion Petfoods, who are all investing in the province. In the energy sector Cenovus Energy has more than doubled their production this year.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. MacIntyre: Regulations limiting GHG emissions from Alberta's largest emitters are a core financial concern and ought to be a large part of this government's social licence narrative in advocating for market access for resource exports. Given that the government could have used the last two years to ease industry into the pending changes and instead chose to lollygag at industry's expense, why have these regulations not been a priority for this government?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I can appreciate the fact that the Energy critic is in the dark when it comes to the work that we've been doing with industry as far as coming up with our targets. I can tell you that when the Premier announced our climate leadership plan, she did so with a number of key industry stakeholders that support the cap on emissions, that support methane reduction. I can tell you that our government is working collaboratively with the energy sector, investing dollars in innovation to drive down our environmental footprint, reduce costs . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. MacIntyre: California, Ontario, and Quebec define large final emitters at a 25,000-tonne threshold, yet this government, being cash strapped, never turned down an opportunity to adversely punish Alberta's job creators. Given that one-third of our province's available power is used by heavy industry and given that added costs for our electrical generators means added costs for our job creators, will the minister commit here and now to keeping Alberta attractive to investors by keeping our definition of large final emitters in line with our neighbours?

2:40

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, you know what's attractive to investors? Stability in government, investments in infrastructure, investments in our oil and gas sector, knowing that a government is a partner, as opposed to the opposition, who love to jump up and down, throw our energy industry under the bus, drive back and forth over them, and then claim that they're somehow supporters. These guys are cheering for the two pipeline approvals to fail. Well, I'll tell you what. Our Premier is in B.C. right now advocating on behalf of Trans Mountain. We've said that we would intervene if need be, and we are confident that they will be built.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. Minister of Service Alberta has a supplemental comment to a response to be made.

Land Titles Registry Website Outage (continued)

Ms McLean: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have supplemental information to the question that was asked. As early as 10:14 a.m. SPIN 2 was restored.*

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, a comment?

Mr. Cyr: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. What was the response?

Ms McLean: My supplemental information to the question that was asked earlier is that as early as 10:14 this morning SPIN 2 was fully restored.

The Speaker: Any questions, hon. member?

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have information that says that that system has gone down several times during this very day, so it sounds like your answer right now is maybe incorrect. Please go back and check your facts. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order, please.
The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I certainly appreciate that there have been difficulties with the system, I can assure the member opposite that, despite his assertion, I am not lying and the system was restored as of 10:14 a.m.

Members' Statements (continued)

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

Alberta Party

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is a remarkable place. The people of Alberta are the most extraordinary, talented, resilient, kind, community-minded people anywhere in the world, and this didn't happen by accident. It happened because we're the kind of place that rewards people who take risks, who work hard, who make something of themselves, and, more importantly, who make something of their community. Albertans are both fiercely independent and at the same time we rely on our community and we look out for our neighbours. We are not the stereotype of the single-minded, profit-motivated, tax-despising Albertan. We are entrepreneurial and independent – make absolutely no mistake – but we also care deeply about our community, and we care deeply for one another.

But Albertans are smart and practical, so we won't support politicians who are spendthrifts, who persistently rack up huge amounts of debt for our children to pay. Albertans deserve a government that shares all of those values. We've shown this time and time again. When given the opportunity to vote for politicians who are narrow-minded and mean-spirited, we won't do it. And we also won't support a government that's out of step with Albertans' innate sense of fiscal discipline.

Albertans don't have to choose either/or. We don't have to choose left or right. We don't have to choose between a strong economy or a good quality of life. We can have both, and we deserve both. That's the message the members of the Alberta Party endorsed at our recent AGM. It was a packed house, but it wasn't just the number of people in attendance that was exciting; it's who they were: community leaders, activists, doers. Most importantly, the room reflected the diversity of this great province.

*See page 2159, right column, paragraph 5

The province of Alberta is a place of possibility, and the Alberta Party is a party that reflects the optimism that we should all share about this great place. We want Albertans to get involved and join in one of our many upcoming events throughout the province, join a CA, share your ideas. Yes, Alberta has its challenges, but they will be overcome by working with can-do people in a can-do province. That's who the Alberta Party is, and that's who Albertans are.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Saffron Sexual Assault Centre in Sherwood Park

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise today and speak about an incredible organization, Saffron, the Strathcona county sexual assault centre. Their relentless commitment to providing critical services to survivors and families is truly appreciated. Saffron hosts many community awareness campaigns, the walk for consent, discussing toxic masculinity, public education in schools, and that's not a comprehensive list. They go above and beyond their task because of the high demands placed on their services.

Katie, the executive director, leads this organization with passion that is inspiring. Creating safe environments for survivors to come forward and seek the help that they need is a task that sexual assault centres can't do alone. It takes the whole community to become involved in changing attitudes.

November 25 marked the United Nations 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence. Today is day six of my pledge, during which individuals and governments around the world recognize the deep impacts of gender-based violence. Recently we've seen the global outcry where millions of folks have used the Me Too hashtag to bravely share their stories. As a survivor I know that these experiences impact us for a lifetime and that we can and should be preventing these occurrences.

Our government is taking actions to address this. We have stabilized and in many cases increased funding. As part of the NDP government's commitment to making life better for Albertans, FCSS funding has been increased to over \$100 million.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Addiction and Mental Health Services Outcomes

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Surely, one of the most significant challenges that government needs to acknowledge is that spending does not equate to improved outcomes. Nowhere is this more valid than in Alberta's health care system, the most expensive in Canada. It is now two years since the Valuing Mental Health report, and I acknowledge efforts to develop targets and timelines and the new 18 next steps identified on the website. More plans and reports and spending, particularly on addictions and the opioid crisis, though, are not enough.

The sticky part continues to be measuring whether they are improving, one, access; two, quality; three, cost-effectiveness of our services. This needs new, bold, dedicated leadership to achieve medical care that's better co-ordinated; communications with other service providers, especially for those with mental health and addictions; prevention as a higher priority, with better outcomes. Why are we not measuring these?

The most recent AHS performance report does indicate that some major urban centres have reduced wait times for children and youth with mental health challenges though not in Edmonton and rural

areas. Current indicators are not actually measuring improvements in co-ordination, communications, and results for folks with mental health problems and addictions – such as subjective improvement, ability to work, reduced drug dependency, and reduced recurrences – and they should be. Proper management involves oversight of both process and outcome. Our fragmented mix of public health services do not do so.

As the Auditor General indicated in several reports in the past decade, Albertans are not seeing value for money in a health system that spends more per capita than any other province, especially on physicians. In short, it's not enough to do things right if you're not doing the right things and not measuring the right things. Ultimately, accountability, of course, falls to deputy ministers and managers . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Parliamentary Debate and Political Discourse

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, overblown political rhetoric and hyperbole erode the quality of political discourse and undermine our capability to act as elected representatives. Take, for example, the varying reactions to the current economic recovery. For some it doesn't fit their political narrative, so they deny it's happening or actually cheer against it. Now, I won't do that. I am encouraged, but I also recognize that the recovery is fragile and has not yet reached all corners of Alberta.

Now, the government brags that the recovery is proof that their plan is working. What an unmitigated load of tripe. Not too long ago the Finance minister drew on his thespian skills and gave an Oscar-worthy performance, blaming the downturn solely on the steep and prolonged slide in oil prices. But since then oil prices have doubled and the industry has made difficult but necessary adjustments to return to modest profitability. Stabilizing oil prices and resourceful Albertans are the reason for the recovery, not this NDP government. When the economy was struggling, they accepted zero responsibility, and now that it's on the uptick, they say that they caused everything. Well, they didn't. It was not due to their poor policies.

And just when you thought the self-congratulatory rhetoric couldn't be topped, the Official Opposition steps forward and says: hold my beer. Staying true to their usual modus operandi, the folks on my extreme right make yet another attempt to confuse and confound Albertans. Their claim that the January 1 50-cent hike in the carbon tax on natural gas will cause home heating bills to increase by 75 per cent is at best misleading and at worst full-blown folderol. Several sources have already pointed out the glaring flaws in their math, but, hey, why let accuracy get in the way of a good meme? Their claims are totally incorrect. They know it, yet they defend them with the tenacity of a Jack Russell terrier trying to defend a savoury pork chop that it's just unearthed.

Mr. Speaker, governing in a province is a privilege earned by building trust, not by rhetoric and hyperbole. Albertans deserve better.

2:50

Presenting Petitions

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table on behalf of Friends of Medicare a petition signed by hundreds of Albertans to keep fertility treatments at the Lois Hole health centre.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With sincere apologies to the Child Friendly Housing Coalition of Alberta, I rise to belatedly table a petition calling on the Legislative Assembly to urge the government of Alberta to “end discrimination against children and their caregivers in condominium and rental housing,” something which was largely accomplished with the passing of Bill 23.

Introduction of Bills

Bill 214

An Act to Regulate Political Action Committees

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

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, I have some tablings. I’m tabling copies of a petition . . .

The Speaker: We’re at bills now, hon. member. Do you have an introduction of a bill?

Dr. Swann: Of course. Yes. Bills.

Today I rise, Mr. Speaker, to introduce Bill 214, an Act to Regulate Political Action Committees.

Mr. Speaker, political action committees represent a means of circumventing Alberta’s campaign finance laws. Even the Chief Electoral Officer has said so. At this very moment dark money from corporations, unions, individuals from outside Alberta, outside of Canada, even, is freely flowing into Alberta to influence our electoral process. This was all supposed to stop with the passage of the Fair Elections Financing Act, but clearly major problems still exist. Even when their money comes from within Alberta, political action committees can still operate in the shadows if they don’t engage in advertising. For that very reason, some are choosing not to.

The Speaker: Hon. member, this is the introductory part. A little faster. A little less detail.

Dr. Swann: A little faster.

That’s why this legislation is so critical, Mr. Speaker. Quite simply, we need to maintain the integrity of democracy in Alberta.

Lastly – well, no, not lastly. Mr. Speaker, this bill does something that’s never been done before in Canada.

Do you want me to close?

The Speaker: Yeah. I really would like that.

Dr. Swann: I got that message, sir.

I will put this bill up against anything the government is proposing – it appears it certainly will – and I ask that members . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. Thank you. I think we’ve got the message.

[Motion carried; Bill 214 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. MacIntyre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More letters continue to pour in from very concerned rural Albertans who’ve been experiencing very bad crime. This one involves a lady, a nurse and mother of five, who was home alone and had to watch from her living room as they destroyed the contents in her garage and stole her possessions. She was unable to protect herself, and the police did not show up.

Another one says that “rural residents should not have to barricade our homes and yards every day” and fear being prosecuted ourselves if we should try to protect ourselves. This is from Donna from my riding.

This one is from Sarah from my riding. She is a mother of three who lives on a farm outside of Spruce View who had to build a safe room in her home in central Alberta just to protect her children because they’ve been robbed so many times.

This one is from a pastor of a church which has been vandalized five times. They installed security cameras and recording equipment. That was all stolen.

This particular individual, Glenn, says that the people that were arrested and charged came back into his community within one year doing the crimes again. They feel absolutely powerless to stop this.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m also tabling copies of a petition to keep fertility treatment at the Lois Hole which did not meet the requirements of a petition from the Legislature.

Finally, I am tabling an online petition with over 25,000 names calling on the government to reverse its decision on the fertility clinic. I have one of several boxes here. The able assistants here may or may not be able to carry them.

The Speaker: I’m sure we will be able to circulate that very soon.

Hon. members, I have two tablings today. The first I’d like to table is five copies of the revised DVD, attached letter, and table of the 87 electoral division boundaries from the 2017 Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission final report, incorporating the amendments to Government Motion 34.

Secondly, I have five copies of the 2016-17 annual report of the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta.

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 the hon. Ms Ganley, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, return to order of the Assembly MR 1 asked for by Mr. Cooper on May 8, 2017. On behalf of the hon. Mr. Feehan, Minister of Indigenous Relations, return to order of the Assembly MR 3 asked for by Mr. Hanson on May 8, 2017. On behalf of the hon. Mr. Mason, Government House Leader and Minister of Transportation, return to order of the Assembly MR 15 asked for by Mr. Cooper on May 8, 2017.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

The Speaker: Hon. members, yesterday I advised the Assembly that I would be deferring my ruling on a point of order raised by the Government House Leader relating to comments by the Leader of the Official Opposition during question period. Subsequent to my statement the Leader of the Official Opposition indicated that he would be withdrawing his comments. At that point I’d hoped that the matter would have been at an end. However, in withdrawing his comments, the Leader of the Official Opposition made an additional statement to which the Government House Leader raised objections. Therefore, it is necessary for me to return today with a ruling.

The initial point of order was raised by the Government House Leader in response to a claim by the Leader of the Official Opposition that the Premier was laughing at rural Albertans. The Government House Leader argued strongly that this observation

was incorrect. You can find those comments in yesterday's issue of *Alberta Hansard* at pages 2116, 2117.

As paragraph 494 of *Beauchesne's* provides, on occasion the Assembly will be required "to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident." I may not have found an order in this instance, as I will take the Leader of the Official Opposition at his word that his comments reflected his true perception of what occurred.

However, I note that this situation could have been avoided if members refrained from making personal comments about other members that may be misconstrued or that imply motive or that may give rise to disorder in the Assembly. I further note that arguments on the matter yesterday managed to inflame the situation rather than to defuse it.

Hon. members, we are in this House as a method for representing the people of this province. If we want this institution and this House and, in fact, all of us to be respected, it seems to me that we need to show respect for each of the members, and when that does not happen, we are in fact not showing respect to the people represented by any member who is in this House.

3:00

Generally speaking, on the matter of withdrawing comments I will make one clear statement that I expect all members to follow going forward. If a member is withdrawing comments or making an apology, that withdrawal or apology should be unconditional and offered in a sincere tone and manner. An apology should not be used as an opportunity to debate the matter further or to have the last word. Additionally, if a member sincerely withdraws a comment or apologizes unconditionally, it should be accepted without further comment by members.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

Bill 26

An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs on behalf of the hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and move third reading of Bill 26, An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis.

If passed, this legislation will establish a system for legalized cannabis that will provide Albertans reasonable access to cannabis products when it becomes legal next July. It is a proposed system that prioritizes the health and safety of Albertans.

Bill 26 proposes amendments to the Gaming and Liquor Act, including amendments related to the role of the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission in this system. This legislation will grant the AGLC authority to oversee the distribution of cannabis, ensuring that all cannabis products that come to our province's retail sector are legally produced and come from licensed producers. The bill will also authorize the AGLC to oversee the retail aspect of cannabis, ensuring that products are distributed only to specialized retailers that only sell cannabis; no tobacco, alcohol, or pharmaceuticals.

If passed, Bill 26 will enable our government to begin establishing the elements of the system that will include privately owned and operated cannabis retailers who are licensed and strictly regulated and online sales of cannabis that are controlled and operated by government, allowing us to verify that all customers

are of legal age and ensuring that all Albertans will have access to cannabis products on the first day of legalization.

Our legislation establishes provincial offences, making it illegal for anyone under 18 to possess any amount of cannabis. It also restricts smoking and vaping cannabis in public where smoking or vaping tobacco is not allowed and bans the consumption of cannabis in vehicles. It makes it an offence to smoke or vape in any outdoor space typically frequented by children, such as playgrounds, skate parks, spray parks, and on school grounds and hospital properties.

Finally, Bill 26 includes amendments to reduce the risk of impaired driving. If legislation passes, there will be no consumption of cannabis in vehicles, either by the driver or passenger, and any cannabis products must be stored away from everybody's reach.

I know there has been a lot to discuss around the minimum age issue, which is why I want to reiterate why we are proposing the age of 18 in Alberta. We have certainly heard concerns about the health risks associated with cannabis used by young people under 25, but we also recognize that people between 18 and 25 are the largest age category that already uses cannabis. We want to encourage young adults who would otherwise frequent the black market to instead purchase legal cannabis from a licensed and regulated retailer, reducing their exposure to other criminal activity and potentially using unsafe cannabis products.

The legal age does not mean that we promote its use. It means that we feel that an 18-year-old is equipped to make an informed and responsible choice regarding cannabis. Eighteen will align with the minimum age for alcohol and tobacco in our province as well as the federal minimum age for cannabis.

Madam Speaker, more than 60,000 Albertans made their voices heard through consultation this summer and fall, and most of them said that they approved of the system that we proposed in October. If Bill 26 is passed, we will begin setting up a system for legalized cannabis that we believe will work for Albertans because that's what they told us.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank all members who spoke to this bill this week. We appreciate your support, concerns, and your suggestions. As was mentioned throughout debate, this bill marks a good beginning, with more to come as the system evolves.

I ask that all members support me in moving third reading. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, can I clarify that you are moving third reading on behalf of the Minister of Justice?

Ms Goehring: That's correct. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Any other members wishing to speak to third reading? The hon. Member for Highwood.

Mr. W. Anderson: Thanks, Madam Speaker. I rise today to discuss this government's Bill 26, An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis. While it is indeed the government of Alberta's bill, it needs to be noted that this is a reaction to the federal government's legislation on cannabis under Bill C-45, which is to take place on July 1, 2018. On the whole, I think this provincial government's reaction to this, Bill 26, is decent legislation but could probably be tweaked slightly to provide some clarification and dispel some concerns that I've been hearing from Albertans. These points I'll get to shortly.

However, I'll begin with some main points of this bill, beginning with online sales. Under Bill 26 this gives the government a monopoly on public sales. My concerns with this revolve around a

couple of issues. While online access to medical marijuana has been in place for a while now, it's clear that each company can price their strains as they see fit. Of course, like any other commodity, it would have to be priced competitively. Under a government monopoly, however, no such flexibility exists. A user of cannabis would be required to pay what the government says you pay.

Another important issue with regard to online purchase of cannabis is age verification. For years it was near impossible to get wine or beer delivered to your home. Same thing for something like Wine of the Month Club. The reason it was difficult was due to concerns about ensuring that purchasers are of legal age to purchase the stuff. In other words, how do you validate an 18-year-old or the age of that individual? Yet the government has no issues with this for online marijuana. At least with medical cannabis there is a process you must go through, including medicals and prescribing doctors and referrals, and if your info is verified by your government ID and your health card, then you get your medical marijuana.

I guess a question that I would have is: where are the safeguards for this legislation? We don't even know if the government will make a profit on this operation. I mean, it's implied, but have they done any sort of economic study on this? If so, can those results be shared with the House or tabled? That'd be nice. I know that the federal government has suggested that they will take 50 per cent of the profits on the tax applied to the sales of cannabis, but another question is: will there be a risk that taxpayers in Alberta may end up subsidizing these operations?

Another pressing concern is retail sales. Under this legislation retail sales will begin on July 1, 2018. There has been plenty of discussion about where and who will sell cannabis, but will the same restrictions on proximity to schools and liquor stores have to be applied? Will municipalities have the ability to limit the number of stores or the distance between competing stores, such as 500 metres, in a bylaw? I believe that these are some questions that need answers.

Madam Speaker, much debate has been around whether to allow pharmacies and liquor stores to sell cannabis or just stand-alone retail stores. The government has decided to go to independent stand-alones, with the government monopoly on online sales as their model, so quite frankly I think that ship has already sailed. It can't be overstated, however, that the liquor industry has the training and experience to deal with issues that arise while selling a controlled product like alcohol or cannabis, so I hope the government will ensure that the same standards are adhered to by these new stand-alones and their owners and, of course, their employees.

What sort of public education campaign will be introduced in order to school citizens with regard to the effects of cannabis? Certainly, the feds will have come up with their version because they're the ones legalizing the product. What has this government done, you know, in this regard?

3:10

Another issue is enforcement. I touched on this throughout my speech already, but other thoughts have occurred as I go here. Why won't the same restrictions apply to smoking or vaping cannabis as do around the consumption of alcohol? You know, would the rules for smoking be different for vaping? I don't know. Can someone in the future open a nightclub exclusively for vaping as it is very different from smoking? Will these questions be answered in time for the July 1 deadline? People just want to know. It's certainly not fair to our law enforcement folks to have them play catch-up with legislation. We owe it to them to try to give them every possible tool to ensure that all Albertans are protected. It's about safety.

Perhaps the best way to ensure that is that as this technology and this bill progress, we put in place a sunset or autorenew clause in this legislation that ensures that this act is renewed every so often, perhaps every three years, just to ensure that this legislation keeps pace with what is going on with society and how this act works with Albertans at large.

It's too bad the government turned down my friend from Drumheller-Stettler's amendment, which I find odd because in some cases this government's own technical briefings often mention that there will be a review done and that it will be done in three to five years. It seems to me somewhat hypocritical of this government to pat itself on the back for inserting a review of legislation clause in some other bills, but when we propose it on a bill that brings about such a major shift in society, that side of the House just drags their feet.

Madam Speaker, this is a highly complex issue, and there are many aspects that need to be worked out before I'm totally comfortable with this bill, while understanding, of course, that the government has been put in this position by the federal government. I guess the success and failure of this bill will come down to how the police and the AGLC deal with regulations and the consequences that come out of this legislation.

Whether this is an ideal model can always be debated, but be assured that the UCP will be watching closely to see how this bill is rolled out, and as with all legislation we'll continue to engage with the public and stakeholders to ensure their concerns are always heard.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak on third reading of Bill 26, a bill that amends the Gaming and Liquor Act to become the gaming, liquor, and cannabis act. The United Conservative Party supports a private model for marijuana retail, which is a major portion of this bill as well as online sales and other regulating aspects in this legislation.

We disagree with the NDP's plan to treat marijuana like simply a new tobacco product; however, tobacco is a restricted substance. Alcohol is a controlled substance. Marijuana, which is currently illegal, will soon become a controlled substance, too. Unlike tobacco, alcohol and cannabis are both intoxicating substances.

When this law passes, adults can walk down the street smoking marijuana just like they can a cigarette. They can't, however, walk down a street in Alberta drinking a beer. We made an amendment that would allow us to treat both of these as the same substance under the law.

The UCP public consumption amendment would have created public consumption laws for cannabis that mirror as close as possible liquor's, a bit of a hybrid from smoking and the liquor laws. These liquor laws are well known and well accepted by Albertans.

The UCP believes it's the government's job to help protect members of the public from exposure to unwelcome marijuana use and second-hand marijuana smoke. Albertans who prefer not to be around people drinking can easily avoid being in environments that allow it. The NDP is not applying that same measure to marijuana.

The NDP insists Bill 26 protects Albertans from smoking or vaping cannabis by making the Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act apply to the substance. Kudos. It also provides specific protection to children by prohibiting use near playgrounds, sports fields, and child care facility properties, but those are very narrow provisions, and interestingly they don't include public events. I

know that one of my hon. colleagues in the House in opposition proposed an amendment to address this. This means that families may think twice about bringing their children to one of Alberta's many family events and festivals.

Modelling of children is of special concern. I know many of my colleagues in this House share that. Many parents will wish to shield their children from seeing adults using recreational drugs. It makes sense. A family can walk down the street now and not be concerned about someone walking by with a beer. So why wouldn't it be the same for marijuana?

On July 1 people will be able to smoke marijuana on sidewalks, outside of buildings other than schools and hospitals as long as you're not within five metres of a door or window, and almost anywhere else in Alberta that you are allowed to smoke a tobacco product.

The NDP may make it sound like it has good restrictions on public use of marijuana, but it simply does not. We tried to highlight this with our amendment. Thankfully, municipalities can make their own bylaws restricting or allowing marijuana use. It's interesting to note that the NDP has complained about the federal government downloading responsibility onto the provinces, but now the province is doing the same thing to the municipalities.

Our amendment would have treated marijuana more similar to alcohol in its public use. It was a common-sense view that reflects that of Albertans and many other jurisdictions that have legalized cannabis in their society. I think this is the best-case scenario for something like this in the provinces. It's unfortunate that the NDP didn't accept our very reasonable amendment in an effort to strengthen this legislation. However, I will effort to do that as we go down this path in making safe spaces for the children and families in our province.

I will support this piece of legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any further speakers to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak in support of Bill 26, An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis, at third reading. This legislation is a turning point for the province, and while it has been imposed upon Alberta given the changes made at the federal level, each province and territory has been tasked with legislating its sale and distribution. Like the province of Manitoba, the government of Alberta has decided to adopt a hybrid model of private retail and government online sales.

On the whole, we're generally satisfied here in the Alberta Party caucus with this plan. The NDP has created a system that both allows and encourages entrepreneurship at a very important time for our province, when Calgary's unemployment rate remains above 8 per cent and the overall unemployment rate in the province hovers around 8 per cent. In the truest Alberta fashion, people from across this province will be able to do what we do best, set up shop.

With respect, Madam Speaker, it's hard to imagine the government setting up a system, though, that can adequately protect the information of cannabis consumers with online sales given the fact that they carelessly deleted 800,000 of their own e-mails and up until today can't seem to keep critical systems like land titles online. In an age when a great deal of our personal information is stored online, we need assurance that the government can and will protect it, and at this juncture we are not convinced that the provincial government is ready to take on this responsibility.

Madam Speaker, I have spent most of my career in the information technology and business sectors, and I know all too well the importance of data security and the dangers of having personal information exposed, and frankly so do most Albertans. The government is proposing that they undertake online sales of cannabis to the exclusion of private business. Now, currently medical marijuana is sold exclusively online and through government-approved vendors. While concern about public safety in the distribution of cannabis is a legitimate priority of Bill 26, there are some concerns about safety and security of online sales that do need to be addressed.

As we discussed in committee under the amendment that I proposed, delivery of cannabis is sometimes compromised by the delivery method. If a vendor doesn't check the box indicating that a signature is required on delivery, the package is left at the doorstep. It's now difficult for police to seize illegal drugs in the mail system, and there's nothing in this bill that addresses that particular issue.

As well, I've heard from stakeholders that one of the challenges is checking for ID in online delivery. Will the government online sales be delivered by a service more expensive than Canada Post to ensure proper delivery, and in that case, if it costs more money, will it make the black market more attractive to customers?

Another priority I haven't seen the government address is the security of the data that will accompany online sales, data like consumers' names, ages, addresses, payment details. If there were a data breach, not that I'm aware that any necessarily have occurred, it would still be a small subset of records that were compromised if the government adopted a hybrid public and private model for online sales. With a single vendor those records will essentially be aggregated in one place, making it a very attractive target for online criminals. What system of authentication and IT security do the NDP propose to keep the information of Albertans safe? What measures will be in place to ensure that this information is kept confidential?

Again, we have not heard or seen from this government a demonstrated ability that this government can be trusted with IT systems, so why would we trust them with the information of thousands of potential consumers? As far as we're concerned, the government has a long way to go before it can be trusted with our data in this new context.

The other issue, Madam Speaker, is cost. The amount of money it's going to cost to stand up an online sales system is going to be substantial. If that cost was borne by private retailers, the savings to Albertans could be substantial.

3:20

Ultimately, my caucus colleagues and I feel like this legislation is half baked. Even the slightest online security threat could leave us dazed and confused, hungry for reassurance that Albertans' data isn't going to go up in smoke. Right now what we need is sound digital leadership, a government that proves it can be responsible with our information.

However, we will still support this bill because I think that, fundamentally, the retail aspect of it the government has gotten right. While we'd like to see private sales available online as well, the Alberta Party caucus will stand in support of Bill 26 at third reading.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any other speakers to the bill?

Seeing none, I will call on the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs to close debate on behalf of the hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank all members of the House for their passion and debate on this issue. When the federal government legalized cannabis, all of us had the same concerns. We all want to keep cannabis out of the hands of children, protect public health, promote safety on roads, in workplaces, and in public spaces, and we all want to limit the illegal market. I believe our framework meets these important objectives. While some of our solutions may be different, I know that when it comes to the legalization of cannabis, all members have the best interests of Albertans at heart.

I'd like to thank you for your constructive and thoughtful debate on this important issue. I move to close debate.

[Motion carried; Bill 26 read a third time]

Bill 28 School Amendment Act, 2017

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park on behalf of the hon. Minister of Education.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Madam Speaker, Mme la Présidente. I am pleased to rise today to move third and final reading of Bill 28, the School Amendment Act, 2017, on behalf of the Minister of Education.

This legislation will ensure that the School Act, which has served Alberta well for over 30 years, will continue to do so in the future. Bill 28 brings a number of small changes to the act to ensure that it remains relevant with other existing legislation as well as paves the way for important changes in standards to come into effect in the coming years. This includes establishing certification processes for principals and superintendents that are similar to those of teachers now and ensuring that the leaders of our education system are well equipped and held accountable as they work to ensure every student is prepared for success. The bill also allows for the creation of standards for education service agreements, which will help students on First Nations access provincially funded schools, thereby helping to improve the educational outcomes of indigenous students.

We're also establishing a common age of entry through this legislation. By setting the age at which students start kindergarten, we will ensure that all students in the province have a good basis for success in their academic future.

This act will also ensure that establishing a separate school district will be made clearer and more collaborative under the proposed amendments, ensuring communities are well aware of any potential impacts.

As well, the act will be building a measure of flexibility by removing some provisions from the School Act that set student transportation requirements in stone.

Finally, Bill 28 is ensuring that the School Act aligns with other legislation and will continue to help schools upgrade smoothly for the foreseeable future. Madam Speaker, this act will make Alberta's education system stronger and thereby make the lives of students and communities in our province a whole lot better. I therefore hope that everyone in this House will be supporting me in voting yes on this legislation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to this bill at third reading? The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 28, the School Amendment Act, 2017, at third reading. We all understand that Bill 28 has many parts to it. In many ways it's an omnibus bill, and because of its many parts, it tackles some very important issues, many of which the United Conservative Party will support and can support.

One of the parts of this bill deals with the age of entry. We know as educators that sometimes in many children's lives it's best if we delay the entry into school. Especially for boys, it seems to be important. You know, with a little bit of age, a little bit older, they will perform much better academically. Establishing that age of entry as December 31 and having a common age of entry across the province, in our view, is beneficial for students.

Having an education service agreement between the provincial and the federal governments for First Nations children is a good thing. Bill 28 allows the minister to be able to establish standards for an education service agreement that would allow First Nations students to be able to attend provincial schools. In our party we believe that all children in Alberta deserve a high-quality education. We believe that all children in Alberta should have access to a provincial education on equitable terms and that these education service agreements between the province and the federal government will take positive steps towards ensuring that that occurs. We believe that establishing these education service agreements actually works towards providing all Alberta students with the ability to have choice. Should First Nations parents and First Nations children desire to attend a provincial school because they deem that it is in their best interests to do so, that is a positive step forward.

Updating the references to the Chartered Professional Accountants Act: a good thing.

Updating the terms of office for trustees to four years: a reasonable thing to move forward on.

It's a good thing to enact a set of professional standards for principals and superintendents. Madam Speaker, superintendents are charged with a very important duty, the duty of ensuring that education is functioning smoothly, that our schools, our educators, our children, and the education that occurs within the walls of our institutions are meeting professional responsibilities and that education is in fact taking place. Setting professional standards for principals and for superintendents is a positive step.

Our concern with Bill 28 and with this particular setting of professional standards for principals and superintendents revolves not around the intent but around the lack of confidence that we believe Albertans have in this government to oversee the regulatory process. We have seen in the term of this government a lack of proper consultation, and they have sometimes, some would say, purposely placed poor legislation before this House – an example would be Bill 6 – with the promise that they will fix this poor legislation through the regulatory process. Then the consultation process to develop the regulations can be controlled by the government, and the regulations can address those parts of the bill that should have actually been addressed in the Legislature but, instead, are being worked out outside of the Legislature and without the input of the Assembly.

This government has a habit of not listening to its stakeholders, and we are not convinced that this government will work co-operatively with the stakeholders involved. We don't believe that they will work co-operatively with the stakeholders involved when drafting up things like the professional standards that principals and superintendents will be expected to live up to.

3:30

Madam Speaker, Bill 28 addresses, within this omnibus bill, a trustee code of conduct, and in this we see a trend beginning and continuing towards the centralization of power – the centralization of power – with the minister. In an education system which for decades has been characterized by a decentralization of power, where we've had local school boards elected by the people of Alberta, the parents of Alberta, that have made local decisions that have governed the education system of our children, we begin to see and have continued to see a centralization of power in the hands of the minister.

Bill 28 also provides the minister with power to set mandatory elements when developing a trustee code of conduct. The United Conservative Party does not agree that the minister needs to centralize and to continue to centralize the decision-making power of education in his office.

Over the course of the past two and a half years we have seen the minister take control away from the school boards across this province and invest it in himself. The minister abandoned local bargaining in favour of a provincial bargaining system where he appoints the majority of the representatives on the negotiating team.

This minister's solution to the school fees issue was to vest the decision-making power regarding school fees in himself rather than leaving it for a local school board to decide. While the minister may believe that vesting that power within his office is a positive step, we've seen even just this past week that it has had some very real issues creep up, some unintended consequences, some might suggest. As we've seen over this past week, in the Elk Island public schools they've cancelled their half-day kindergarten as they had paid for the noon hour busing through fees. The result? Parents who at one time had a choice to have a half-day kindergarten program now no longer have that choice in Elk Island public schools. Why? Because the minister has vested the power within his office and has made decisions on a province-wide basis that do not have the capacity to take in local considerations.

The minister supported an amendment and spoke to an amendment in this Legislature to a private member's motion that would have made the minister and the public school boards the determiner of school choice in Alberta, a private member's motion, that should have been easily supported and eventually was by the government when they backed down, to support private and charter and home-schooling options. Instead, the minister at first supported, as the government did, an amendment to the motion that would have made the minister and the public school system the guardians or the gatekeepers over whether you could have had those educational options.

This minister has taken a most determined stance to be the guardian of school choice by refusing to expand the charter school alternatives in this province. We've had several charter schools over the last two and a half years that have applied to be able to be a charter school in this province. They've had waiting lines of parents to enrol in these schools once the minister has agreed to allow that charter school to move forward, yet they have been turned down by this minister without reasonable explanation even though the minister could have clearly added these additional charter schools and, in the process, would have met the needs and the desires of Alberta parents.

Now this minister has determined that he will mandate the elements of the board of trustees' code of conduct, another step in a long line in consolidating power within this minister's hands.

Mr. Mason: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, we've had a point of order. Go ahead, hon. Government House Leader.

Point of Order Relevance Items Previously Decided

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise on several points in the Standing Orders of the Assembly.

- 23 (b) [When a member] speaks to matters other than
 - (i) the question under discussion . . .
- (c) persists in needless repetition or raises matters that have been decided during the current session . . .
- (f) debates any previous vote of the Assembly unless it is that Member's intention to [see] that it be rescinded.

Madam Speaker, with respect, I recognize that the chair needs to allow wide latitude to members when they speak to questions, but it does occur to me that the member is not at times in his speech referring to the bill but, rather, is taking the opportunity to read a litany of his complaints against the minister for things that the minister has done, which may or may not relate to this bill. I understand that he has been rather frustrated as our government has embraced a progressive approach to education during our term in office. Nevertheless, it is important that you focus on what is before the House, what is on the floor, and also that you not reflect on previous decisions of this Assembly because those are clearly matters that are dealt with in these particular clauses of the standing orders.

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

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise on the attempted point of order, which I don't think is one. I think what I heard the hon. member doing was trying to create context as part of his debate on the bill to make it clear, not only to people in this Legislature but the people that may be watching through other means, why he feels the way he does and why he's taken the position that he does. I don't think there's a point of order here. Frankly, I thought that while the Government House Leader may not have cared for what the member was saying, he was speaking in a fairly respectful way and, again, was giving context to both the things that he did appreciate and support about the bill as well as the things that he did not appreciate and support about the bill.

One of our jobs here as we debate these things is to debate in such a fashion that the people that vote for us or against us at home or any Albertans watching would have an idea of why any of us here do choose to vote for something or against something. Part of that is context, which I believe the hon. member was providing, and I thought that in a fairly respectful manner he was doing that. I appreciate that the Government House Leader feels tender about some of the decisions that, you know, his minister has made, but I don't think the member was so much trying to redebate the items that have already been decided as giving context to why he would or would not support the bill. With all due respect, Madam Speaker, I think the Government House Leader is being a little bit more sensitive on this Thursday afternoon than he needs to be.

Thank you.

3:40

The Deputy Speaker: Any other speakers to the point of order?

Seeing none, I will note that as the hon. Government House Leader recognized, the Speaker does tend to give fairly wide latitude when speakers wish to express their comments regarding a matter or a bill. For the most part that's how I was interpreting what the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon was doing, providing a background explanation of why he perhaps could not support some elements in the bill. However, I would caution members that

it is important to try to stick to the bill being debated and not drift too far off the context. However, in this matter I think we can simply proceed. Just be a little more closely aligned to the bill itself. Thank you.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will endeavour to take your counsel into consideration here as I move forward, okay?

Debate Continued

Mr. Smith: May I bring us back, then, to this bill. This minister has determined that he will mandate the elements of the board of trustees' code of conduct. Now, education and codes of conduct in education are best developed in a co-operative climate where the people at the most local level would develop their own codes of conduct as many school boards have already done across this province. Rather than co-opting local authorities so that he can mandate elements of the board of trustees' code of conduct, the minister could, should issues arise, direct his concerns to the school board involved and work with that school board and help them address any of the concerns that the minister may have.

Each of these trustees, Madam Speaker, has been elected. They've been elected by the parents of the constituency that they serve in education, and these trustees are accountable, at the end of the day, to the constituents that have elected them and to the expectations that these constituents have of them. We know that in this province, that is larger than most countries in the world, every school board is unique. We have rural. We have urban. We have some school boards that in their territory alone are massive, and the educational issues that they face are absolutely unique. In that case, the trustees may need some very unique expectations written into their codes of conduct.

What happens if the mandatory portions of the code of conduct from the minister conflict with the wisdom of the trustees and/or the people that they represent? If the minister believes that he needs this additional level of power, then he must have a pretty clear idea of what these standards would be that he wants to mandate. So why not build them into the legislation, where they could be debated by the members of this Assembly?

Busing across the province of Alberta: the problems that school boards have to overcome regarding their transportation in this province are incredibly varied. Urban needs, rural needs: they will vary greatly.

The United Conservative Party agrees that the walk limits are a problem and that they need to be addressed. Setting a 2.4 kilometre limit in legislation was an issue in some jurisdictions, but in other districts it was not the primary busing issue. Rather, the number of routes or ridership or travel distances or funding: these were the primary issue. The United Conservative Party can support placing distance limits in regulation. What we find worrisome is how the distances will be decided. Our position would be that local boards know best what is needed as far as walk limits, and they should have reasonable flexibility to decide what those limits will be. This should be locally driven, not driven by a bunch of bureaucrats who are making up regulations that may not particularly reflect the local concerns or the realities of the parents and the students where they live.

Madam Speaker, in an urban setting asking a five- or a six-year-old to cross several busy intersections regardless of the total distance may not be safe, and putting forward a provincial formula is not going to allow for local situations to come under consideration. Our school districts are simply too varied. They need the boots on the ground making these decisions, not some province-wide formula.

Indeed, we've heard from many stakeholders that their concern is less the formula and is more focused on the process for fulfilling their responsibilities regardless of whatever the walk limits are. The opposition would strongly remind the Minister of Education that funding decisions regarding transportation will affect the bus routes that will be provided. We are not talking about the amount of money set aside in the budget for transportation, while that can be an issue, but, rather, an issue of timing.

For many large urban school boards, the bus schedules are driven by money. If the budget is finalized and approved by the Legislature in the spring, many school boards fear that there is not going to be enough lead time for the school boards to be able to implement the busing plan. For instance, we've been told that the Calgary board of education has more bus routes than the city of Calgary. Imagine trying to organize all of those bus routes, pick-up times, et cetera, in only a few months. This minister must be sure that the decisions regarding walk limits and the budgets that accompany them also consider a reasonable period of time in which to implement the bus routes and the schedules.

The minister continues his trend towards the centralization of power when he provides himself with the power to force school boards to co-operate regarding busing through Bill 28. Providing the minister with the power to force school boards to co-operate over busing simply removes the decision from being a local, community-driven process to one where the decision is made by a minister who may not understand the local sensitivities or nuances regarding transportation. Let the people, the voting parents, decide whom they are willing to vote for, and let those school board trustees decide if it is in their children's best interest to have a co-operative busing agreement.

The United Conservative Party supports co-operative busing agreements and arrangements. We believe that co-operative busing arrangements should be pursued where savings can be accrued and where it can be done meeting the local needs of the parents and the students. We believe that these decisions are best made locally and that providing the minister with the ability to enforce co-operation is a troubling sign that reveals once again this government's mistrust of local elected decision-making.

There are parts of Bill 28 that we do support, but like all omnibus bills, the good portions of this bill will sometimes be lost because of other parts of the bill that need improvement. For instance, the United Conservative Party, as we've said, supports the updating of the terms of office for school board trustees. Yet because of the increasing power creep of the minister built into this omnibus bill, we will have to vote against good parts of Bill 28. That is the nature of an omnibus bill. It leaves the potential that good legislation, legislation that has the support of the House, is lost if the entirety of the omnibus bill is defeated.

It is therefore with a sense of an opportunity lost that the opposition will not be supporting Bill 28.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour to rise today to speak to Bill 28, the School Amendment Act, 2017. I want to thank the hon. Minister of Education for bringing this piece of legislation forward. We were elected two years ago based partly on our commitment to strengthen the education system across our province. Of course, we've had many discussions around the importance of our government's promise to fund enrolment growth and build new schools throughout the province, but we must also work to enhance the legislation that governs the system as well.

3:50

It's important to recognize that the School Act has served our province's communities for over three decades. I believe that through Bill 28 and through its amendments to the current act we will be able to address many of the complexities within the act that have become somewhat outdated, ensuring that the legislation meets the needs of our communities now and into the future.

Madam Speaker, I can tell you that through the conversations I've had with educators, parents, and the wider Edmonton-Meadowlark community, I've heard many great ideas about how we can modernize our education system. The amendments within Bill 28 address many of the concerns within the current act that have been brought forward to my office. As a government we must do our best to address the changing needs of our communities. The way in which the province delivers education and the fairness in how it is delivered are of the utmost importance to my community and to all Albertans.

Among the changes to the School Act contained within Bill 28 is the proposed establishment of school transportation co-operative agreements, which would encourage co-operation between school boards to ensure efficient transportation for our students, sharing transportation services where possible. This is an idea that has come up often while considering this legislation and even before then with my constituents, and I'm happy to see it move forward.

We also see changes proposed to the school transportation walk limit, which would eliminate the antiquated 2.4-kilometre restriction on bus services, taking effect in the 2018-19 school year. Once again, I've heard from many people in my community that having children walk anywhere near 2.4 kilometres every morning and every night to receive transportation services is simply too much, especially when we look at some of the complexities within my community like Westview Village, which is measured from the front of the manufactured home community and doesn't take into account those who live near the back of the massive property. There is no doubt that these changes will have a positive impact on the families in my community and for others across the province.

Bill 28 also specifies that school boards will be required to develop and implement a code of conduct that applies to school board trustees, recognizing that these trustees play an important role in leading our education system and should have established guidelines much like the ones laid out for municipal councillors under the MGA, or the Municipal Government Act.

Bill 28 will set a consistent standard that a student must be five years of age as of December 31 of the year they are entering into kindergarten, something we've heard broad support for, I believe, at least on this side, for sure. Right now the age at which a student may start kindergarten is set individually by local school authorities and varies across the province. Consistency across all boards will ensure fair and equitable education for all students, of course taking effect in September 2020 to allow school boards and parents and families to plan around these changes.

Bill 28 will also allow the Minister of Education to set standards for the education service agreements to ensure that students are able to access the provincial education system on equitable terms no matter where they live throughout the province. In cases where students live on-reserve and want to attend schools in a public, separate, or francophone school jurisdiction, an ESA is signed between the First Nation and the school authority. These ESAs vary across the province, and as a result, once again, these agreements are not consistent. Having standards for these agreements will ensure accountability and will remove some of the barriers that exist when students on-reserve look at their choices for education while

maintaining and allowing continued opportunities for First Nations and school authorities to collaborate into the future.

Madam Speaker, within Bill 28 we also see changes to increase collaboration of and transparency for the public in the process around establishing separate school districts. This would ensure, once again, a consistent approach with standardized timelines and specific steps throughout the process. It will also encourage all parties to work together.

We also see within this legislation updates to financial reporting requirements for private schools to bring them into alignment with practices within our public system. While many private schools already provide this information to Alberta Education, this would ensure that all that accept public dollars are subject to consistent financial reporting expectations and would ensure greater accountability for the public funds that go into all of our schools. It's important to note that for the 2017-18 school year there would be no changes. This regulation, once put in place, would take effect in the '18-19 school year.

Madam Speaker, I am very supportive of the amendments proposed within Bill 28. Through the changes that I have discussed and other changes to the School Act, we will ensure that the professionalism and dedication demonstrated by educators across our province will be supported by legislation that has been updated for the 21st century. These changes will go a long way in terms of addressing some of the challenges that have presented themselves within the current School Act, and I believe the implementation of this bill will result in stronger collaboration, more transparency, and better service delivery to many Albertans that rely on our education system while making the system more fair overall. I know that the minister has spent a lot of time consulting with educators, parents, and all interested stakeholders in the development of these amendments, and I believe it shows through the common-sense changes that have been put forward.

I'm happy to stand in support of Bill 28, and I hope all of my colleagues will do the same. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any other speakers to the bill? I'll recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Pleased to rise and speak to Bill 28, the School Amendment Act, 2017. The Alberta Party caucus will be supporting Bill 28. It is not a perfect bill, but I think it does do more, certainly, good than not.

Briefly, just speaking to some of the aspects of the bill that we support and then some areas of concern, the professional practice standards for principals, superintendents, and certificate-holding central office staff I think is a very positive move. I think what's especially positive about this is the grandfathering for existing people who are in existing positions. It allows for continual improvement within the system but doesn't place undue burden or new expectations on people who have legitimately achieved the positions they have to date.

The establishment process for separate school districts as well, I think, is a result of a good, collaborative process between separate and public school boards, and I hope it ushers in a new era of collaboration which will benefit Alberta students primarily, also perhaps offering an opportunity for cost savings.

That then leads me to the school transportation and co-operative agreements. The opportunity for the minister to have an increased ability to examine and address situations where co-operative transportation may be beneficial is a good thing. It can eliminate duplicate service and increase service levels. I was pleased to see

that the minister was so clear on that point, that school boards that choose to collaborate will be treated more favourably by the minister. I think Albertans would expect that our education system would collaborate wherever possible to both reduce cost and improve service. That seems like a good, common-sense outcome.

Education service agreements with First Nations I think are very particularly important and very welcome. In a conversation I had with the chief and council at Tsuut'ina Nation recently, which is adjacent to my constituency of Calgary-Elbow, they raised this issue with me, and they had some grave concerns about some of the inequities in education when Tsuut'ina students would participate in either the public or separate system, primarily in Calgary. This will, I hope, allow the government to establish standards that will ensure that all students are treated fairly, that indigenous students have every opportunity for a great education, be that on-reserve or in partnership with off-reserve schools.

The transportation walk limit. Of course, it's great to see the 2.4-K limit gone. I do have some questions about how exactly the new walk limit will be set. That's a tremendous amount of work to do all around the province, and for the ministry to be involved in that with each school board is going to be a long and complex process. This could very well have a knock-on effect that, I hope, does not have a further detrimental impact.

I can tell you that many of my constituents in Calgary-Elbow – and I've heard from many, many parents in Calgary and around the province who have real, genuine concerns with how transportation has been handled. There have been some significant changes to bell times and busing and transportation within, in particular, the Calgary board of education, which has had a real detrimental impact on parents around the city, in particular parents of children in alternative programs. We have situations where students now as young as 10, 11 years old need to take multiple city buses plus a C-Train, then cross a busy street just to get to school. I think that as a parent that doesn't feel right to me.

I think that we as legislators should ensure that we're thinking of making sure that education is the prime area of focus and primary objective for all of our school boards. The way one parent put it to me is that it felt very much like the system was transportation focused and happened to also educate students as opposed to an education system that happens to also provide transportation. They felt that the situation was reversed, where the focus seemed to be on making sure that transportation worked and that if the kids happened to also get an education at the end of it, well, so be it. Of course, I think we would agree that that certainly is not an acceptable situation.

4:00

My hope is that removing the 2.4-kilometre walk limit and allowing school boards to work collaboratively with the ministry to establish new walk limits that fit the context of each community and each school board will be a positive thing and, equally, that the ministry will provide backfill funding to school boards to enable proper transportation to make sure that students have the opportunity, of course, to get to and from school in a way that makes good sense for them and good sense for their family.

While I have the floor and speaking of transportation and alternative programs, one of the frustrations that many constituents have expressed to me is that French immersion, in particular, is treated as an alternative program when it is so widely available, especially in our larger cities but even beyond, and that that's captured as part of this umbrella, which creates tremendous inequities when it comes, especially, to transportation for parents whose children choose French immersion. It is an official language of this country, as I'm sure we all know. I understand that up to 1

in 5 or even 1 in 4 students in the Calgary board of education participate in an alternative program, the vast majority of those in French immersion. It's widely available throughout the city. One would hope that there would not be an inequality in transportation as it relates to alternative programs of all kinds, but especially French immersion.

Standardizing the age of entry to kindergarten: we certainly will support that as well as the trustee code of conduct, requiring each school board to establish a code of conduct. I would hope that that would help improve governance and accountability of school boards and make sure that school boards are, in fact, responsive to the needs of parents and students. The good news, Madam Speaker, is that I think that is the case in the vast, vast majority of situations amongst the dedicated trustees who serve our province, but this, I think, can only seek to improve that.

The technical and administrative amendments to update some of the references to things like the Chartered Professional Accountants Act, updating the term of office for trustees to four years: these are sort of technical amendments that also exist in the legislation that are a positive thing.

With that, Madam Speaker, we in the Alberta Party caucus are happy to support Bill 28 at third reading. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any other speakers to the bill? The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I've spoken to this bill a few times. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak to Bill 28, the School Amendment Act, 2017. There are a couple of things that need to be addressed. You know, a lot of the members have spoken about the good changes in this bill, and again I would completely agree. As the Official Opposition we have a crucial job in making sure that we are holding the government to account with respect to any new legislation that comes through this House. It just feels that time and time again so much legislation comes so quickly through the House. It's large, large legislation, and to debate and question it appropriately and to get to the nitty-gritty of the legislation – I mean, this legislation has real-world implications to Albertans.

How is one supposed to ask appropriate questions, no matter how difficult they are, about the plans for these programs and the rollout of the legislation, especially legislation like this, that really gives the minister a tremendous amount of oversight, Madam Speaker? Actually, the changes that can be made by the minister can be made whenever he deems it to be necessary. If the Minister of Education felt so strongly that we should support every aspect of the legislation and if there were no contentious things hidden in this legislation, then why is there not a comprehensive plan to actually address the larger portions of this legislation, that we're supposed to just believe are going to go through regulations? We're supposed to just be okay with that? There are large parts of this legislation that I believe Albertans would prefer to make sure have the opportunity to be debated, especially as there are so many good things in this bill. Again, it's so frustrating as a legislator to see so many good things that need to be changed.

From the stakeholder outreach that I was able to do and from many of the trustees and the board members that I spoke to, especially with the new elections, I have to tell you that there is a lot of information in this, institutional information that was with the other trustees and past boards that hasn't been transferred, necessarily, at least not at this point, to the new trustees.

So there's a whole bunch of information that is huge within this bill. I understand that the government did some two-day

consultations and discussed it. But to tell you the truth, Madam Speaker, how much of the feedback that came from stakeholders was actually put into this legislation? We won't know because we're being expected to understand that everything that will happen in this legislation, the larger portions of this, is just going to happen in the regulations. As much as I would like to think that everything is just going to be okay, I do believe that our responsibility in this House is to actually be able to look at the meat and bones and the guts of this whole thing and to be able to discuss it appropriately.

But this is a continued pattern, where legislation is hidden within other legislation. You know, again, it's mind boggling. You want to be able to support practical ideas and policies that the government puts forward, really great policies, really great ideas. I'm not interested in voting against those things, especially the more relevant things that we know that the stakeholders are looking to change. However, there are pieces of this legislation that are very concerning that will not even come to see the light of day, Madam Speaker, so how are we supposed to ask questions about those when it's going to just go through the regulations?

You know, the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark was speaking about modernizing and how, when we get the bill, it's going to be changed. You can modernize the bill as much as you want, but how are we supposed to understand what those modernizations are going to look like if that's not in the guts of the bill and that's going to happen in the regulations? We can't debate that.

He also spoke about collaboration and transparency. Well, the only way that we can collaborate and create transparency is to actually have access to understand what's going to happen in the guts of this legislation.

The Member for Calgary-Elbow, you know, is agreeing to vote in favour of this legislation, but if the minister doesn't show the ability to consult widely and all things happen in the regulations, how can we possibly vote in favour of a piece of legislation that does not adequately tell us exactly what's going to be going on? This is a tremendous amount of oversight, and it will give the minister – and I don't believe any minister should have this level of it – the oversight to legislate on these issues as he sees fit in the future.

Like I said, there are so many good things in this bill, but there are things that are contentious, and it just makes it a huge deal breaker to otherwise very strong legislation.

The crux of the matter is that the significant changes to the way our province is run need to be vetted through this Assembly, Madam Speaker. We need to ensure that we're creating policies for the betterment of all Albertans. The government doesn't just get to create workarounds for that process through one piece of legislation whereby the practical pieces of that legislation seem to be the main idea there.

But then as you go through the legislation, there are all of these other things that are really concerning. The timing, of course – not that that's the government's fault. I mean, there was an election. However, I think there's a sensitivity that needs to be there in understanding that there's a whole bunch of stakeholder outreach that hasn't been done, with 50 per cent of the changes happening to school boards and school authorities and to our trustees.

Of the board members past and present that were aware of this bill, many had been communicated with initially, but did you know, Madam Speaker, that many of the boards and the trustees have yet to see the final report on how their feedback was implemented? I don't think that that is transparent at all. I don't think that that is collaborative at all. Those are all of the things that the government keeps saying, but we have yet to see that happen in real life.

4:10

Would the government be willing to table the consolidated feedback that was supposedly used to inform this legislation? That's just one of the questions. If you have that, I would be very, very grateful to see that. I think it would, at least to some degree, put at ease some of the questions that at least the folks I've spoken to have had. That feedback is of high importance, the feedback that comes from these people. These are our elected bodies, our elected trustees and school authorities, that have the thumbprint of each one of these school boards. It is absolutely imperative that that feedback be tabled or that we understand it so that as the process goes through and these regulations are put forward, Albertans actually understand and are part of at least the understanding of the process that's going to be put forward here.

What is the government's plan, then? If so much of this is going to change within the regulations, I'd like to know what the government's plan is to communicate these sweeping changes to the school boards, many of which, like I had said before, have newly elected trustees. Were the trustees aware of this legislation? Many of them felt that this bill had potential to further erode local decision-making.

Now, as you know, on this side of the House that's a pillar of our party. That local decision-making process is so important because we put faith in the folks that are elected by the people of those local areas. That is the level of accountability that is imperative at all levels of government. We really believe that the people in those areas have a responsibility to be able to understand and elect who they believe best represent the people in those areas. If local decision-making is being taken away as a result of eroding the work that is done by the school boards, the school authorities, and the trustees, I do believe that we have a responsibility to the people of Alberta to make sure that we are not undermining a process that is imperative to making sure that decisions that are being made at those levels are impactful, appropriate, transparent, and accountable to the folks that elected them there.

You know, the most important thing about those local school boards and school authorities – and I think all of us can agree on this – is that schools are the focal point and the centre of a lot of communities, especially in rural Alberta. These schools are the heart of the community, the hub of the community. The teachers live in the communities. The principals shop at the same Safeways as the parents. They see each other all the time. They have dinners together. These people know each other. These are very, very important relationships. Those communities and that communication and that level of understanding: we can't take that for granted, that local aspect.

Even in the larger cities you see that, with so many of the schools being the hub of so many of the communities. This is what brings parents together and families together. We do not want to be doing anything that divides that local decision-making from the families that rely on the people in those places that take care of their babies for eight hours a day.

I just think that, with respect to those entities, we need to respect and understand and really, really look at the intricacies of those schools and their communities and the families, and we need to make sure, Madam Speaker, that we're actually empowering those communities, that we're empowering those bodies, because they have the heartbeat of those communities. We need to empower them, not erode their power. I believe that any time a minister is going to have that level of oversight into a school authority, you are undermining the ability for that school authority to actually act in the best interests of that community.

We need to ensure that they're engaged, that with the changes that are made, their positions are not being made redundant by a provincial government that is overstepping, especially with the running of the school boards. Changes being made to school transportation and the establishment of separate schools are two instances where trustees should be heavily involved in the decision-making. These people know what is going on with their schools.

As the Member for Calgary-Elbow had mentioned with regard to transportation in the cities, when Bill 1 came forward, the level of letters that came across our desk with regard to transportation, especially with regard to our alternate schools – he'd spoken about French immersion. We had many, many, many families that were in alternative programs that are provided by CBE that all of a sudden could not access the schools because of ridiculous changes in transportation. That is a direct result of lack of consultation, Madam Speaker.

That is comparative to the exact situation that we could find ourselves in with the passing of this bill, with not actually pulling it apart a little bit and finding out what it is that we need to do. Why not do one part of the bill with the changes that need to be made that have been consulted on, obviously, and then take a look at these other pieces and consult appropriately on those?

I also have questions regarding how the smaller private and independent schools will be impacted by sections 5, 6, and 7 of this bill, and those are the technical components of this. That was extremely vague. They are quite concerned, given that, you know, Madam Speaker, schools come in all shapes and sizes in this province, which really is an absolutely magnificent part of the schooling system in this province, our choice and the different kinds of education that are possible. I'm constantly blown away by the amazing – amazing – people that educate our children in this province. School choice is a pillar of education in this province.

When we're looking at the administrative components that would require schools to hang on to student records and financial statements, as important as that is, that oversight within the schools in those situations, I think that you can't look at it as one size fits all, Madam Speaker. We have larger school boards that obviously have a very different component, but when we're looking at small schools, I think that we need to be sensitive, and we should look at the unique perspective of each of those schools before we go rushing in to create policy that oversees a whole bunch of different school authorities. Again, consultation amongst all of these school authorities I think could fix a lot of the issues that I could foresee happening in this bill due to the oversight of the minister and maybe not particularly understanding the thumbprint of that particular school.

My list of questions on implementation of these incentives is long, Madam Speaker, and the point is that this House should have the opportunity to debate those and question all of the sweeping changes. Honestly, if the minister was ready to bring forward a cohesive and well-thought-out piece of legislation, I think most of us would be more than happy to have a robust debate on those specifics. I believe it is necessary to do that. Given the engagement

of Albertans and given the changes in the education system and given what is happening – we were talking about math scores and all sorts of things earlier – there are a lot of families and parents that are frustrated right now.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, I will have the hon. Member for Sherwood Park on behalf of the Minister of Education to close debate.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour for me to close debate on Bill 28, School Amendment Act, 2017, and ensure that the School Act is meeting the needs of the students and the school trustees that we have in our education system at the moment.

I have to say that I'm very disappointed that the members opposite are not supporting this common-sense legislation that will move the education system forward. I would like to remind everyone in this House that this legislation was built in extensive consultation, and I would be willing to repeat the list of groups that the minister consulted with, but as it is in *Hansard* in my speech yesterday, I think I will refrain from doing so.

I would also like to really thank those people that have been consulted: the school trustee associations, the Teachers' Association, the parents' associations, the First Nations groups, and everyone that participated in the consultations over the last few months. I think it's a really good reminder of how the Minister of Education values the collaborative work that happens in our school system. He values the work of school trustees, the work of superintendents, the work of teachers, and the role that parents play in the school system.

4:20

These amendments are going to ensure that our students in Alberta have the best education possible and that they can succeed in their chosen endeavours in the school system. I would like to suggest to the members opposite that they reconsider their decision not to support this bill, that is really going to meet the needs of our students.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 28 read a third time]

Mr. Mason: We're finished third reading, yes?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Mason: There is no more business before us for the afternoon, Madam Speaker, so I would move that we adjourn until 1:30 on Monday afternoon and wish everyone very safe travels and a great weekend.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:21 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 29th Legislature - 3rd Session (2017)

Activity to Thursday, November 30, 2017

The Bill sponsor's name is in brackets following the Bill title. If it is a money Bill, (\$) will appear between the title and the sponsor's name. Numbers following each Reading refer to Hansard pages where the text of debates is found; dates for each Reading are in brackets following the page numbers. Bills numbered 1 to 200 are Government Bills. Bills numbered 201 or higher are Private Members' Public Bills. Bills numbered with a "Pr" prefix are Private Bills.

* An asterisk beside a Bill number indicates an amendment was passed to that Bill; the Committee line shows the precise date of the amendment.

The date a Bill comes into force is indicated in square brackets after the date of Royal Assent. If a Bill comes into force "on proclamation," "with exceptions," or "on various dates," please contact Legislative Counsel, Alberta Justice, for details at 780.427.2217. The chapter number assigned to the Bill is entered immediately following the date the Bill comes into force. SA indicates Statutes of Alberta; this is followed by the year in which it is included in the statutes, and its chapter number. Please note, Private Bills are not assigned chapter number until the conclusion of the Fall Sitings.

Bill 1 — An Act to Reduce School Fees (Eggen)

First Reading — 6 (*Mar. 2, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 105-10 (*Mar. 8, 2017 morn.*), 192-96 (*Mar. 9, 2017 aft.*), 235-42 (*Mar. 14, 2017 morn.*), 269-71 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft.*), 273-74 (*Mar. 15, 2017 morn., adjourned*), 282-91 (*Mar. 15, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 424-31 (*Mar. 21, 2017 aft.*), 556-58 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 674-78 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — 879 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2017 c6]

Bill 2* — An Act to Remove Barriers for Survivors of Sexual and Domestic Violence (Ganley)

First Reading — 67-68 (*Mar. 7, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 110-11 (*Mar. 8, 2017 morn.*), 192 (*Mar. 9, 2017 aft.*), 314-22 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft.*), 336-39 (*Mar. 16, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 455-59 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 678-79 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — 879 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force May 4, 2017; SA 2017 c7]

Bill 3* — Voluntary Blood Donations Act (Hoffman)

First Reading — 208 (*Mar. 13, 2017 aft., passed.*)

Second Reading — 323-36 (*Mar. 16, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 394-400 (*Mar. 21, 2017 morn.*), 421-24 (*Mar. 21, 2017 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 472-80 (*Mar. 23, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 30, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 30, 2017; SA 2017 cV-5]

Bill 4 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2017 (\$) (Ceci)

First Reading — 191 (*Mar. 9, 2017 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 306-07 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft., adjourned*), 322 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 389-93 (*Mar. 21, 2017 morn.*)

Third Reading — 449-52 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 30, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 30, 2017; SA 2017 c2]

Bill 5 — Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2017 (\$) (Ceci)

First Reading — 266 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 310-14 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 393-94 (*Mar. 21, 2017 morn.*)

Third Reading — 452-55 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 30, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 30, 2017; SA 2017 c1]

Bill 6 — Northland School Division Act (Eggen)

First Reading — 524 (*Apr. 4, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 558-61 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 671-74 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 755-59 (*May 2, 2017 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — 879 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force May 4, 2017; SA 2017 cN-5.1]

Bill 7 — An Act to Enhance Post-secondary Academic Bargaining (Schmidt)

First Reading — 552 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 679-81 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft.*)

Committee of the Whole — 810-15 (*May 3, 2017 morn.*), 828-38 (*May 3, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 865-66 (*May 4, 2017 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — 879 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force May 4, 2017, with exception; SA 2017 c4]

Bill 8* — An Act to Strengthen Municipal Government (S. Anderson)

First Reading — 577 (*Apr. 10, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 691-700 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn.*), 716-22 (*Apr. 20, 2017 aft.*), 780-84 (*May 2, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 784-95 (*May 2, 2017 aft.*), 838-45 (*May 3, 2017 aft.*), 855-65 (*May 4, 2017 morn., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 991-1004 (*May 11, 2017 morn.*), 1101-06 (*May 16, 2017 aft.*), 1107-10 (*May 17, 2017 morn., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2017 c13]

Bill 9 — Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 2017 (Carlier)

First Reading — 606 (*Apr. 11, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 683-87 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 687-90 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 759-62 (*May 2, 2017 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — 880 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2017 c5]

Bill 10 — Appropriation Act, 2017 (\$) (Ceci)

First Reading — 670-71 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 690-91 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn.*), 700-02 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn.*), 722-23 (*Apr. 20, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 762-67 (*May 2, 2017 morn.*), 795-97 (*May 2, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 799-810 (*May 3, 2017 morn.*), 845-47 (*May 3, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — 880 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force May 4, 2017; SA 2017 c3]

Bill 11* — Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Amendment Act, 2017 (Gray)

First Reading — 771 (*May 2, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 849-55 (*May 4, 2017 morn.*), 924-39 (*May 9, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1072-77 (*May 16, 2017 morn.*), 1092-1101 (*May 16, 2017 aft.*), 1168-69 (*May 18, 2017 morn., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1199-1202 (*May 23, 2017 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2017 c11]

Bill 12* — New Home Buyer Protection Amendment Act, 2017 (S. Anderson)

First Reading — 877 (*May 4, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 939-44 (*May 9, 2017 aft.*), 945-56 (*May 10, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 956-62 (*May 10, 2017 morn.*), 1004-1008 (*May 11, 2017 morn.*), 1008-10 (*May 11, 2017 morn.*), 1111-20 (*May 17, 2017 morn., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1169-71 (*May 18, 2017 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2017 c10]

Bill 13 — Securities Amendment Act, 2017 (Ceci)

First Reading — 893 (*May 8, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 977-90 (*May 10, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1027-31 (*May 11, 2017 aft.*), 1065-72 (*May 16, 2017 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1137-44 (*May 17, 2017 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 7, 2017; SA 2017 c12]

Bill 14 — An Act to Support Orphan Well Rehabilitation (McCuaig-Boyd)

First Reading — 1090 (*May 16, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1144-52 (*May 17, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1225-30 (*May 23, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1244-46 (*May 24, 2017 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 7, 2017; SA 2017 c14]

Bill 15 — Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2017 (Ceci)

First Reading — 1137 (*May 17, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1184-89 (*May 18, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1215-25 (*May 23, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1246-48 (*May 24, 2017 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2017 c15]

Bill 16 — An Act to Cap Regulated Electricity Rates (\$) (McCuaig-Boyd)

First Reading — 1214 (*May 23, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1262-78 (*May 24, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1279-91 (*May 25, 2017 morn.*), 1291-97 (*May 25, 2017 morn.*), 1351-58 (*May 29, 2017 eve.*), 1389-1406 (*May 30, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1514-17 (*Jun. 1, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 7, 2017, with exceptions; SA 2017 cC-2.3]

Bill 17* — Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act (Gray)

First Reading — 1260 (*May 24, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 1311-22 (*May 25, 2017 aft.*), 1359-61 (*May 29, 2017 eve.*), 1363-76 (*May 30, 2017 morn.*), 1407-20 (*May 30, 2017 eve.*), 1421-32 (*May 31, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1432-36 (*May 31, 2017 morn.*), 1449-66 (*May 31, 2017 aft.*), 1467-79 (*May 31, 2017 eve.*), 1490-99 (*Jun. 1, 2017 morn.*), 1517-20 (*Jun. 1, 2017 aft.*), 1534-51 (*Jun. 5, 2017 aft.*), 1553-67 (*Jun. 5, 2017 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1589-93 (*Jun. 5, 2017 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2017 c9]

Bill 18* — Child Protection and Accountability Act (Larivee)

First Reading — 1388 (*May 30, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1481-90 (*Jun. 1, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1567-79 (*Jun. 5, 2017 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1587-89 (*Jun. 5, 2017 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2017; c8]

Bill 19 — An Act to Protect Gas and Convenience Store Workers (Gray)

First Reading — 1610 (*Oct. 30, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1648-53 (*Oct. 31, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1695-98 (*Nov. 1, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1729-31 (*Nov. 2, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 20 — Beaver River Basin Water Authorization Act (Phillips)

First Reading — 1610 (*Oct. 30, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1627-35 (*Oct. 31, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1655-64 (*Nov. 1, 2017 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1728-29 (*Nov. 2, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 21 — Agencies, Boards and Commissions Review Statutes Amendment Act, 2017 (Ceci)

First Reading — 1648 (*Oct. 31, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1664-72 (*Nov. 1, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1699-1706 (*Nov. 2, 2017 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1789-90 (*Nov. 7, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 22 — Resident and Family Councils Act (Hoffman)

First Reading — 1648 (*Oct. 31, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1687-94 (*Nov. 1, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1706-14 (*Nov. 2, 2017 morn., adjourned*), 1731-32 (*Nov. 2, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1790-94 (*Nov. 7, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 23 — Alberta Human Rights Amendment Act, 2017 (Ganley)

First Reading — 1685-86 (*Nov. 1, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1761-69 (*Nov. 7, 2017 morn.*), 1796 (*Nov. 7, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1805-15 (*Nov. 8, 2017 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1910-17 (*Nov. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 24 — An Act to Support Gay-Straight Alliances (Eggen)

First Reading — 1726-27 (*Nov. 2, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1769-74 (*Nov. 7, 2017 morn.*), 1796-1803 (*Nov. 7, 2017 aft.*), 1833-46 (*Nov. 8, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1847-55 (*Nov. 9, 2017 morn.*), 1870-75 (*Nov. 9, 2017 aft.*), 1917-19 (*Nov. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1921-35 (*Nov. 15, 2017 morn., passed on division*)

Bill 25 — Regulated Forestry Profession Amendment Act, 2017 (Gray)

First Reading — 1745 (*Nov. 6, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1794-96 (*Nov. 7, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1815-19 (*Nov. 8, 2017 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1935-36 (*Nov. 15, 2017 morn., passed*)

Bill 26 — An Act to Control and Regulate Cannabis (Ganley)

First Reading — 1978 (*Nov. 16, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2021-26 (*Nov. 27, 2017 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2087-2104 (*Nov. 29, 2017 morn.*), 2121-26 (*Nov. 29, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 2166-69 (*Nov. 30, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 27* — Conflicts of Interest Amendment Act, 2017 (Ceci)

First Reading — 1831 (*Nov. 8, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1876-78 (*Nov. 9, 2017 aft.*), 1904-10 (*Nov. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1936-39 (*Nov. 15, 2017 morn.*), 1955-59 (*Nov. 15, 2017 aft.*), 2066-68 (*Nov. 28, 2017 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2119-21 (*Nov. 29, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 28 — School Amendment Act, 2017 (Eggen)

First Reading — 1953 (*Nov. 15, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1980-81 (*Nov. 16, 2017 aft., adjourned*), 2027-31 (*Nov. 28, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2126-29 (*Nov. 29, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 2169-75 (*Nov. 30, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 29* — An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol Impaired Driving (Mason)

First Reading — 1903 (*Nov. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1959-66 (*Nov. 15, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1982-85 (*Nov. 16, 2017 aft.*), 2031-39 (*Nov. 28, 2017 morn.*), 2053-66 (*Nov. 28, 2017 aft., passed with amendment*)

Third Reading — 2117-19 (*Nov. 29, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 30 — An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans (Gray)

First Reading — 2000 (*Nov. 27, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2131-51 (*Nov. 30, 2017 morn., adjourned, amendment introduced*)

Bill 31 — A Better Deal for Consumers and Businesses Act (McLean)

First Reading — 2115-16 (*Nov. 29, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 201 — Justice System Accountability Act (Jean)

First Reading — 127 (*Mar. 8, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 208-20 (*Mar. 13, 2017 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 202* — Protecting Victims of Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act (Cyr)

First Reading — 245 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 375-86 (*Mar. 20, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 578-86 (*Apr. 10, 2017 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 738-40 (*May 1, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — 880 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force 3 months after date of Royal Assent; SA 2017 cP-26.9]

Bill 203 — Alberta Standard Time Act (Dang)

First Reading — 253 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 496-503 (*Apr. 3, 2017 aft.*), 1614-20 (*Oct. 30, 2017 aft., reported to Assembly, not proceeded with*)

Bill 204 — Protection of Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2017 (Stier)

First Reading — 444 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 503-07 (*Apr. 3, 2017 aft.*), 899-905 (*May 8, 2017 aft.*), 1046-50 (*May 15, 2017 aft., reasoned amendment agreed to on division (not proceeded with)*)

Bill 205* — Advocate for Persons with Disabilities Act (Jansen)

First Reading — 552 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft.*)

Second Reading — 1050-57 (*May 15, 2017 aft.*), 1120-25 (*May 17, 2017 morn., moved to Government Bills and Orders*), 1153-63 (*May 18, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1163-68 (*May 18, 2017 morn.*), 1191-99 (*May 23, 2017 morn., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1231-43 (*May 24, 2017 morn., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2017 cA-5.5]

Bill 206* — Child, Youth and Family Enhancement (Adoption Advertising) Amendment Act, 2017 (Aheer)

First Reading — 1024 (*May 11, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1334-45 (*May 29, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1747-56 (*Nov. 6, 2017 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1879-82 (*Nov. 14, 2017 morn., passed*)

Bill 207 — Regulatory Burden Reduction Act (Hunter)

First Reading — 1310 (*May 25, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1756-58 (*Nov. 6, 2017 aft.*), 1882-90 (*Nov. 14, 2017 morn.*), 2008-11 (*Nov. 27, 2017 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 208 — Government Organization (Utilities Consumer Advocate) Amendment Act, 2017 (Hinkley)

First Reading — 1512 (*Jun. 1, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2012 (*Nov. 27, 2017 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 209 — Radon Awareness and Testing Act (Luff)

First Reading — 1903 (*Nov. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 210 — Missing Persons (Silver Alert) Amendment Act, 2017 (Smith)

First Reading — 1869 (*Nov. 9, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 214 — An Act to Regulate Political Action Committees (Swann)

First Reading — 2165 (*Nov. 30, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill Pr1 — Calgary Jewish Centre Amendment Act, 2017 (Kazim)

First Reading — 524 (*Apr. 4, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1110 (*May 17, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1110-11 (*May 17, 2017 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1261-62 (*May 24, 2017 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 7, 2017]

Bill Pr2 — Paula Jean Anderson Adoption Termination Act (MacIntyre)

First Reading — 524 (*Apr. 4, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1027 (*May 11, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1027 (*May 11, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1110 (*May 17, 2017 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 7, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 7, 2017]

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