



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, December 4, 2018

Day 58

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature

Fourth Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (NDP), Speaker

Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (NDP), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees

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

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (UCP),

Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition

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Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (UCP)

Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (NDP)

Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)

Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)

Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne (NDP)

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Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (NDP)

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Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (NDP)

Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP)

Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (NDP),

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Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (NDP)

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Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)

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New Democratic: 53 United Conservative: 26 Alberta Party: 3 Alberta Liberal: 1 Freedom Conservative: 1 Independent: 2 Progressive Conservative: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 4, 2018

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly our distinguished guest, Ms Lucia Piazza, consul general of the United States for Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Northwest Territories. She's accompanied by Mr. Keith Gacek, political and economic specialist with the U.S. consul general in Calgary. The U.S. is Alberta's largest trading partner, and bilateral ties between us remain deep and far-reaching. In 2017 our bilateral trade was more than \$106 billion, supporting jobs on both sides of the border. Alberta is also the largest foreign supplier of crude oil to the United States, greatly contributing to its energy and economic security. Alberta will be home for Consul General Piazza for the next few years, and I hope she enjoys the warm hospitality of Albertans. I look forward to working with her during her tenure in our wonderful province. I would like to ask Consul General Piazza and Mr. Gacek to please rise to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome. Thank you for your visit.

The hon. Minister of Transportation and Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First, I'll introduce my school group, and then I have another introduction for the minister of ...

The Speaker: We're at visitors now.

Mr. Mason: Okay. Sure. I'm happy to do that then, Mr. Speaker, in that order.

It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Health, Minister Glen Abernethy of the Northwest Territories. His wife, Carolyn, and son John are with him today, and they're seated in the Speaker's gallery. Re-elected in 2018, Minister Abernethy has several portfolios, including Health and Social Services, the Minister Responsible for Seniors, the Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities, and the Minister Responsible for the Public Utilities Board. That's a lot, I think. I know that the Minister of Health deeply appreciates their working relationship and regrets that she's not able to introduce him herself. I will now ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome. It's particularly nice to have that child; this place could use more of those sounds.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Now the Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Mason: Now, Mr. Speaker, it's my great pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of this Assembly a group of 20 brilliant grade 5 students and their teachers from the north side Al Mustafa

Academy, which is located in my constituency of Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. These students have been very busy here today and have already visited the Borealis Gallery and the Pehonan Theatre in the Federal Building. They have also just finished a tour of the Legislature Building. They are accompanied by teacher Lahoucine Saheem and Mohammed Saheem as a chaperone. I would ask them and their teachers to please rise and accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you some fantastic students from St. Theresa school. St. Theresa has a Ukrainian program, and it's a school where every time we have an election, municipal or provincial or federal, the students get together and have a forum. Today the students from St. Theresa have their teachers, Lisa Hall and Kurt Davison, and they have chaperones Amie Gartner, Rae Rees, Rebecca Kostura. I would like to ask the students to please stand up and receive the customary welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Labour and minister responsible for democratic renewal.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members roughly 30 students from Millwoods Christian school who have been spending the day here learning about the Legislature. They are joined by their teacher, Ashley Merta. I would like to ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

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

I've looked at my pages and pages of invitations here, so I just remind you about brevity as we move along. The hon. Member for Peace River.

Ms Jabbour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions on your behalf. The Salvation Army is very visible during the festive season, but they actually do good work throughout the year. They are the largest nongovernmental direct provider of social services in the country, serving over 1.7 million people a year in 400 communities across Canada and 16 Alberta communities, where they provide emergency shelter, transitional housing, addictions treatment, mental health support, food security, outreach counselling, family supports, and so much more. The Salvation Army Christmas kettle campaign is one of Canada's most recognizable charitable events, and it's now under way. It has raised funds for more than 125 years. We are very pleased today to have in your gallery Major Margaret McLeod, who is the divisional commander for Alberta and the Northwest Territories, stationed in Edmonton. Major McLeod has served across Canada in postings of ever-increasing responsibility. She was raised in Medicine Hat and is a keen skier. Major Alan Hoeft is the divisional secretary for public relations and development and area commander of the northern region. He and his wife, Karen, most recently stationed in Yellowknife, are both Rotary Paul Harris fellows. Major McLeod and Major Hoeft are in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and I'd invite them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Ms Jabbour: It's also my pleasure to introduce to you and through you three members of the Aramark team here at the Legislature. We have Patricia Jimenez, who has worked here at the Legislature for almost 10 years, since November 2009. She is our baker, cashier, a hard worker, and an important key to our daily operations, always focused on providing the best customer service. We have Guruprasad Kulkarni, who recently joined the team at the Legislature in October. He's the food service supervisor at the cafeteria. And we have Luiss Vaskess-Kilsans, who has worked here at the Legislature for one year, since November 2017. He has worked for Aramark for five years, is the chef manager, managing the three cafeterias at the Legislature and the Haultain and Terrace buildings. On your behalf I'd like to thank them for their service in keeping us well fed and fuelled, always being friendly and providing great customer service. If they could please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome. Mr. Manager, I want to point out that Pat is a great public relations agent.

The hon. Member for 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 this Assembly two constituents from Strathcona-Sherwood Park, Rosella Bjornson and Bill Pratt. I'd ask them to rise as I continue on. Rosella has shown that when it comes to living your dream, the sky is the limit. She recently received the highest honour that the province of Alberta can bestow upon a citizen, the Alberta Order of Excellence. Rosella was recognized for her leadership in the aviation industry as the first female airline jet pilot in Canada, the first officer in a twin engine in North America. She paved the way for other women to enter into the world of aviation. Rosella's husband, Bill, has literally been her co-pilot in life, and they both continue to fly today. I ask Rosella and Bill to rise, which they have already, and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Sherwood-Park.

Ms McKittrick: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I was just thinking about flying and the incredible work that the previous person did.

Today it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Ms Jeannine Basken. Ms Basken received her degree in interior design from the University of Alberta and is currently an interior designer in Edmonton. She has travelled the world and worked overseas as an au pair. This is her first trip to the Legislature. She is with her grandfather, my constituent Mr. Reg Basken, who just recently also received the Alberta Order of Excellence. I would ask both of my guests to rise and receive the customary welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm introducing guests for Human Rights Day, and I'd ask my guests to rise as I call their names. First, Manwar Kahn is dedicated to raising public awareness of bullying across Alberta, and he launched the province-wide antibullying campaign Do Not Be a Bystander, which empowers bystanders to intervene in a safe way through antibullying techniques. Manwar has received the Governor General's caring Canadian award and the Alberta community justice award in the category of community mobilization.

Marco Luciano is the founder and director of Migrante Alberta, which carries out education and advocacy work for persons who are in Canada on temporary work visas. He assists individuals who are facing discrimination and ensures that public policies change to treat temporary workers fairly. Marco also organized a memorial candlelight vigil in solidarity with Syrian refugees and was a key organizer in the campaign to make Edmonton a sanctuary city.

Ali Mahdi is a family and youth community worker with the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. Ali has worked tirelessly in many ways, including through a program which helps Somali youth successfully graduate high school. As a mentor with the police and youth engagement program Ali works with other community leaders to teach youth the role of police and Canadian laws and to help police understand the challenges that newcomer youth face. Ali also recently started free citizenship preparation classes.

Giscard Kodiane is the president of Pont Cultural Bridge. Giscard works to rally and unite communities, community members, and community structures in Edmonton. Giscard uses oral history traditions to teach history to future generations. Giscard also contributes to the Ivory Canadian Community of Edmonton and the community of African francophone associations of Edmonton and the establishment of the Ivory Coast consulate representation in Edmonton.

Chantal Hitayezu is the founder of the African Canadian Performing Arts Foundation. She dedicates her time to planning activities for local and international artists and connects with accomplished refugee artists, world peace ambassadors, genocide survivors, and emerging and underrepresented female talents. Chantal works as a home support operator and volunteers as a settlement counsellor for Rwanda Social Services and Family Counselling.

I thank all my guests for their impressive service and leadership, and I ask that they receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this afternoon to introduce three incredible individuals from the 4-H community. Nora Paulovich, Mark Sayers, and Pat Sayers will be inducted into the Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame this year. Nora Paulovich is a volunteer 4-H leader in the Peace region, a role she has had for over 20 years. Nora was active at the district level as district president and district representative and at the regional level as rep for the provincial 4-H Beef Advisory Council. She is currently serving as the Peace representative on provincial council. Nora is an excellent organizer, 4-H mentor, and she continues to make a lasting impact on 4-H around the province. She's joined by her husband, Bob Noble. Both Nora and Bob are active farmers in Manning, Alberta. Mark and Pat Sayers have both been involved in 4-H since 1993. They have been instrumental in planning well-remembered leaders' conferences and highly successful provincial beef shows. Both Pat and Mark have served on the 4-H Council of Alberta, with Mark serving as president during his time. From their local club to national events Pat and Mark have made a significant impact on the 4-H community. They currently live in Lethbridge and are just as active in their community as ever. With them is the Peace region 4-H specialist from my department, Nicole Hornett. I would now ask all my guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore. I think you have two.

Mr. Nielsen: I do have two introductions, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. It's a privilege to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly local entrepreneur Sandi Jewett. Sandi owns and operates the award-winning business A Ribbon in Time, which offers training and business services. Sandi is also here as a representative of Coming Home Alive, an organization that promotes education and safety in the commercial driving business. I would like to thank Sandi for all of her work enhancing our community and for promoting safety on our roads. I would ask that she now please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Of course, it's also a privilege again to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a group of individuals from the Today Family Violence Help Centre. With us today we have Richard Ouellet, Merle Linton, Cindy Furlong, Monique Methot, Danielle Sehn, Maryam Chamanifard, Kaitlin Schmitz, and Cecilia Kasten. The Today Family Violence Help Centre's mission is to raise awareness and build capacity by providing immediate, inclusive, integrated services for those impacted by family violence. They are the first stop for anyone affected by family violence and provide nonjudgmental help to anyone regardless of their situation, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or culture. I would certainly like to thank them for all of their help in creating a safer and more inclusive society. I ask that my guests please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have the incredible pleasure and honour today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Emily Pitchers, Christina Ryan, and Christina's partner, Ron Taylor. Emily and Christina have long fought to make sure that all adult children with disabilities can apply for child support regardless of their parents' marital status. I think that this is an incredible story of how someone can, despite all odds, make a difference in the lives of those around them. I'm glad that they were able to join us today for third reading of the Family Statutes Amendment Act, 2018, and to work to help to modernize this act for all Alberta families. I'd like to ask Emily, Christina, and Ron to please accept the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Ms Miller: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House three constituents of Red Deer-South. Cindy More has been married to Rick for the past 36 years, is the mother of daughters Lindsey and Stephanie and sons John and James, and is the cofounder of the Smiles Thru Lindsey foundation. Cindy is employed at the Cosmos group of companies, where she helps to improve the lives of those with developmental disorders. Rick is the cofounder of Smiles Thru Lindsey, and he is an amazing advocate for mental health and depression in our youth. Rick is on the board of the Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre, and he's the current interim CEO for the Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce. Steph is the daughter of Rick and Cindy and big sister to Lindsey. Losing her sister to suicide has shaped her life in a direction she would never have imagined. She resides in Red Deer with her fiancé, Marshall, and is

employed at the Collicutt Centre. Would you please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

I'd like to welcome back the Minister of Seniors and Housing.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly an inspirational senior from Edmonton-Riverview, the riding I have the honour to represent, Mr. Bill Gilroy. Bill turned 90 in November, and he attributes his longevity to exercising every day. He exercises with the November Project and is the oldest member in the world. He's also a member of the Edmonton Hash House Harriers, a social running group, and he's run more than 1,500 times with hashers around the world and is also the oldest hasher in all of Canada. Bill says that the key to healthy aging is staying active, and certainly he exemplifies that. Bill Gilroy is here today with his family: his wife, Margaret Golberg, his daughter Christa Gilroy, and his daughter-in-law Kathy Kiel. I'd like my guests to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Government House Leader, unanimous consent to continue with introductions?

Mr. Mason: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Will we return to this after question period?

The Speaker: We could, or we could complete the introductions now with unanimous consent.

1:50

Mr. Mason: I will ask the House, then, Mr. Speaker, for unanimous consent to finish the supposedly brief introductions today and then go to question period.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: The Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Government House Leader. I will keep it brief.

I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly six outstanding Albertans who are here today celebrating Human Rights Day at the Legislature with us. First, from Canadians for a Civil Society I would like to introduce the president, Vasant Chotai, and board director Prabhjot Punnia. Also here from Canadians for a Civil Society is board director Netta Phillet. Glori Meldrum is the founder of Little Warriors. Jonn Kmech is the program manager of the homeless partnering strategy with Alberta Rural Development Network. Lastly, I introduce Colin Campbell, regional manager of Native Counselling Services of Alberta. All of these individuals are outstanding advocates and leaders in their communities. Thank you, all, for all the work you do to create a safe and inclusive province for all Albertans. Please know that our government stands with you. I ask my guests to rise, which they already have, and receive the traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Labour and democratic renewal.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my absolute pleasure to introduce six guests who are here today for Human Rights Day at the Legislature. I ask them to rise as I call their names. From the Edmonton Police Service: Sergeant Colleen Mooney and Sergeant David Jones. Sergeant Jones co-ordinates a multi-agency

project working to prevent violence, extremism, and radicalization in Edmonton. He also volunteers his time serving on the board of directors of KidSport Edmonton. Sergeant Mooney is a patrol sergeant and co-ordinates the reintegration team that implements a program to help police officers affected by PTSD.

Maigan van der Giessen is a program facilitator and arts lead with the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights. Maigan brings youth perspectives on human rights issues to the forefront through a number of different programs and initiatives that she has led.

John Kolkman is a research associate for the Edmonton Social Planning Council, a nonprofit focused on finding solutions to poverty. John has researched, published, and presented on many social policy issues, including poverty, wealth, income inequality, and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

Oliver Kamau is a manager at the Edmonton Immigrant Services Association, where he oversees settlement and integration programs offered at 82 locations in the greater Edmonton area.

And last but not least is Jitendra Shah, president of the Mahatma Gandhi foundation in Edmonton. Jitendra provides active leadership in the local community. He has been the founding member and chair of the Mahatma Gandhi Canadian Foundation for World Peace. He recently received the Polovnikov-Mokray lifetime service award from Project Ploughshares.

I'd like to thank my guests for their contributions and invite them to receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two sets of introductions. I rise to introduce to you and through you five members of the Muslim Association of Canada, also known as MAC, who are joining us in the public gallery. MAC is one of the largest Muslim organizations in Canada, with a national presence across 13 major cities, and recently they celebrated their 20th anniversary. They provide essential leadership for the Muslim community and beyond. Their MAC Rhama mosque in my constituency of Edmonton-McClung is a key community hub and a welcoming space for all. I ask my guests to rise as I call their names: Sharaf Sharafeddine, Abdussalam Nakua, Ali Assaf, Hassan Gabbara, Angie Teliani, and Issam Saleh. Please receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Dach: I also want to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker, who are here today to celebrate Human Rights Day. I ask my guests to rise as I call their names, starting with Reverend Audrey Brooks, a pastoral minister with the Unitarian church of Edmonton who has focused her actions on human empowerment and social justice. Her many activities include the Women's Wellness Advisory group at Grey Nuns hospital, initiating the annual Genocide Memorial Service, being a member of the famous Raging Grannies, and being a spiritual counsellor and support for LGBTQ2S youth. As a U of A chaplain, she helped found the pride alumni chapter and offered spiritual support at the TRC hearings. Reverend Brooks also serves on the capital region interfaith housing initiative board.

I'm also pleased, Mr. Speaker, to introduce Katherine Tracy, who is here on behalf of Jan Fox and the Reach Edmonton Council for safe communities. Reach is a co-ordinating council that works closely with social agencies, businesses, and citizens to make Edmonton a safer place to live, work, and play. As Reach's executive director Jan Fox has been an outstanding champion for human rights. Jan's experience includes being the first warden at

the Edmonton Institution for Women, founder of Women in Police and Corrections, and a leader of the Rotary aboriginal partnership.

Next, Noel Somerville is with the Seniors Task Force of Public Interest Alberta. In 1997 Noel retired as executive secretary of the Edmonton public teachers' local of the ATA. Since then, he has been active in social justice issues and serves on the city of Edmonton's Subdivision and Development Appeal Board. Noel has served on the board of directors of Public Interest Alberta and has been chair of the Seniors Task Force for 14 years.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, from the Earth Group I introduce Kori Chilibek and Matt Moreau. The Earth Group is a social enterprise which produces bottled spring water, Alberta-grown tea, and fair trade organic coffee. The Earth Group exists entirely to provide free food, water, and education to children globally through the United Nations world food program and donates 100 per cent of their profits to fund school meal programs. They have provided nearly 4 million school meals globally and have the only business card which you can plant. Thank you for all your work.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to also introduce guests joining us today to celebrate Human Rights Day and the 70th anniversary of the UN declaration on human rights. I ask them to rise as I call their names. Meghan Unterschultz is assistant dean with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at the U of A. She also volunteers as a big sisters mentor and serves on the boards of Goodwill Industries of Alberta and the YWCA Edmonton. Meghan has served on the EndPovertyEdmonton community well-being committee and on the Parkland Turning Points Society board, that offers counselling and programs to end the cycle of family violence.

Marnie Suitor is a founding member of Aspiring Women in Leadership and Legacy, which provides a forum where women from all backgrounds can come together to give and receive wisdom, support, and mentorship. AWILL's vision is to see all women fully living out their leadership potential. As a management consultant Marnie works extensively with indigenous communities, and as co-owner of the Nook Cafe she partners with social agencies to support those less fortunate.

Gail Haynes is the manager of housing services and peer supports for the Canadian Mental Health Association. The CMHA housing program provides safe, secure, affordable housing to individuals who live with mental illness or in poverty. Gail oversees the management of 146 units in seven properties and provides leadership to the CMHA staff. She's chair of the Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness.

Salma Lakhani is a clinical biochemist who currently manages her husband's medical practice. Salma has been volunteering in many different capacities such as with Compassion House, the Lois Hole hospital outreach team, and the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights board. Salma has been a mentor for students at NorQuest College and currently serves on the 1000 Women Advisory Committee, which raises funds for the college.

Lastly, Michael Hoyt is a social worker at the city of Edmonton working on programs and initiatives that focus on engaging men in building healthy relationships in gender equality to prevent gender-based violence. He's involved in creating spaces like the Men's Sheds movement, where diverse men come together to embrace healthy and respectful relationships, prevent violence and discrimination, and promote the improvement of community health.

I thank my guests for their service to Albertans and ask that they now receive the traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Conklin.

Ms Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unlike some of the people that have gone before me, I will try and keep this brief. I would like to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Maryanne McGrath, who is here today to watch her very first QP live. Maryanne is a fourth-year political science student at MacEwan University who was born and raised in the fabulous community of Fort McMurray. She's an expert campaigner, having worked on countless campaigns for her father, one of the regional municipality's councillors and Catholic school board trustees. I would ask her to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to move immediately to question period.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Oral Question Period

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

Oil Price Differentials Keystone XL Pipeline Project

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not often that we can celebrate good news here, but today Alberta oil is trading at \$28. Last week it was at \$10. The differential has come down from \$45 last week to \$25 today. Will the Premier please confirm that this appears to be the result of the very difficult but necessary decision around curtailment of production?

2:00

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Indeed the member opposite is correct. Preliminary responses within the market are positive, and we are certainly seeing the differential come down. We're not, you know, out of the woods yet by any means, of course, and we know that it's likely to pop back up a bit as the market unfolds, but it's a good start. We're going to continue to work with industry to make sure that we find the right amounts and that we can clear the market as soon as possible and move out of distressed-barrel economics as soon as possible and do a better job of getting our product to market.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Kenney: I thank the Premier, and I'm glad that she's not tempted to do any victory laps on this one, Mr. Speaker, as there's a long way to go.

Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns raised by some Albertans about the policy of curtailment is that cuts in production will result in cuts in jobs. Our view is that by increasing the price and getting some positive cash flow into the energy sector, this will actually help to save jobs by saving capital spending in 2019. We understand that MEG Energy, for example, has confirmed that this has saved jobs. Would the Premier like to comment on how this policy could actually help to prevent unemployment in Alberta?

Ms Notley: My goodness. I almost feel like the member opposite was in our caucus meeting and we were putting together some – I thank him for that question. There is no question that our focus as we moved forward on this policy was very much front and centre

on saving jobs and, with any luck, in fact, encouraging the kind of capital flow that would see jobs increasing as we go forward into the next fiscal year. On a preliminary basis that seems to be what we're seeing. As I say, we will continue to work with industry to make sure that that's the outcome for all Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Kenney: Yes. If I carry this on, I might be accused of lobbing puffballs, Mr. Speaker. Heaven forbid.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, there was a negative decision on the Keystone XL project at a federal court in Montana two weeks ago. The U.S. administration is appealing that decision to an appeals court. Is it the intention of the government of Alberta to intervene in any way either in that appeal or in the pending regulatory reassessment being led by the United States State department?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, there's no question that we have been in touch with TCPL to offer them any and all support that we can provide. Certainly, we've seen our minister of environment travel and make representations where there were regulatory hearings around line 3, and there may well be the opportunity to do that with KXL as well. We'll continue to work closely through our office in Washington as well as through our relationship with TCPL and offer assistance and support wherever we can.

The Speaker: Second main question.

Carbon Levy and Federal Carbon Pricing

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the United Conservative Party has filed an application before the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal to seek intervenor status on the pending constitutional reference brought forward by the government of Saskatchewan and supported by the governments of Ontario and New Brunswick, challenging the constitutionality of a threatened federal carbon tax. Will the government of Alberta join in support of Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick in that challenge if for no other reason than to protect provincial jurisdiction over our own regulatory authority?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think on that matter we're going to have to agree to disagree, and I'm sure that the member is very disappointed that we've ended this wonderful relationship. Nonetheless, you know, our commitment is to spend our legal dollars on taking positions that support our government's efforts to support our oil and gas industry, to get our product to market, and to pair that with the work that our government is doing, a made-in-Alberta plan that supports our industry as it becomes more and more sustainable and more and more marketable to more and more markets that care about greenhouse gas emissions. We will keep on doing that.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, on the question of the carbon tax the Calgary board of education has confirmed that they are spending an estimated \$3.3 million per year on the NDP's carbon tax. As a result, they've had to reduce bus service for Calgary students. How does it help the environment or Albertans to make kids wait longer to get a school bus ride to get to class?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In fact, under our government's leadership the Calgary board of education has received extensive support and financial support over the course of the last three years. We have put across the province roughly 4,000 more teachers into classrooms because we support our public education system. We have also funded the reduction of school fees across many parts of this province because we support public education. We have funded class-quality improvements because we support public education. We expect the Calgary board of education to manage that money.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the NDP's carbon tax, which they want to raise by at least 67 per cent, makes it more expensive not just for people to heat their homes and drive to work but for school boards to operate. As a result of the NDP's carbon tax forcing the removal of five Calgary school buses, this means that this affects 400 students, many of whom are now being driven to school by their parents, actually increasing emissions. Does the government not understand that this is one of the many unintended consequences of their carbon tax?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In fact, what would make things more expensive for the Calgary board of education would be if we had engaged in the funding plans that the member opposite's previous party would have put forward; i.e., freezing funding at 2015 levels. What we have done is that we have funded enrolment. We have funded more teachers. We have funded more class-quality improvements. We have done the things that improve public education. The Calgary board of education needs to use the generous amount of funding they have received from this government over the last three and a half years to . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Third main question.

Federal Bill C-69

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, in 1981 Premier Lougheed won a historic fight to establish in section 92A of the Constitution exclusive provincial jurisdiction over the production of oil and gas, recognizing that this Legislature has exclusive authority over exploration, development, conservation, and management of nonrenewable resource development. This constitutional authority is being challenged by Justin Trudeau's Bill C-69. Why is the NDP government not challenging this attack on our constitutional authority?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, as the member opposite knows, there is joint authority when it comes to environmental issues. The member opposite is fully aware of that, but he also knows that we have been working very hard and pushing very hard to have the federal government change and amend Bill C-69 in order to reduce the uncertainty that that bill is creating for industry. We have seen some minor progress, but it is not good enough. It happens to be one of the issues that I will stand up for Albertans on when I'm in Ottawa with the first ministers next week.

Mr. Kenney: I'm glad to hear that the Premier will do that. It's unfortunate that her Energy minister signed on to a communiqué from provincial energy ministers that raised no objection to C-69 even though Ontario and Saskatchewan did. It's odd that we have Ontario defending our rights more strongly than the government of Alberta. The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the government has only objected to the federal assessment of downstream carbon emissions associated with pipelines. Bill C-69 attacks our authority over upstream regulation, which section 92A says is the exclusive authority of the provincial Legislature. Why is this government surrendering our exclusive authority?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, two Fridays ago, I believe, so about 10 days ago the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment issued a communiqué in which Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba ensured that there was language around Bill C-69. In addition to that, the regulatory authority over upstream emissions, we have said to the federal government, shall be covered off through Alberta's climate plan. The existence of that climate plan then keeps the federal government out of our jurisdiction.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, it seems the government is missing a critical point here. The exclusive provincial jurisdiction over the regulation of upstream production of oil and gas is not a matter for negotiation. It is nonnegotiable thanks to the victory of Peter Lougheed in 1982. This is not about haggling about whether the feds or Alberta will punish consumers more for driving to work. It's a question of defending this hard-fought exclusive provincial jurisdiction. Will the government join with us in doing so and objecting to those provisions in the federal no more pipelines act, Bill C-69?

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our government has stood up for the rights of the province of Alberta since day one. We have stood up for the need to get our product to market since day one. We have also stood up to ensure that we can work with industry to develop a responsible plan for protecting our climate now and into the future. Now, I understand that the members opposite want to object to every effort to protect our climate now and into the future, but that is not our vision of leadership.

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

Unemployment

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unemployed Albertans are out of work 50 per cent longer now than they were two years ago. The University of Calgary's School of Public Policy recently cautioned that longer unemployment means increased difficulty in finding re-employment. I know I've spoken to a number of my constituents, previously in professional careers, who cannot find a job after three or four years. People looking for jobs are significantly worse off today than they were two years ago. What specifically is the government doing to address this critical issue?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the drop in the price of oil has caused the worst collapse and recession in Alberta's recent history, for two generations. It's worse and it's

been longer than the collapse in 2008. We know that this is really hard on all Alberta families, of course. That's why we know that there's much more work to do, and we are doing that work so that all Albertans feel the economic recovery.

We're putting jobs and economic diversification first, investing in training programs across our economy so that Albertans have greater hands-on experience with \$10 million through the integrated training program. I'm sure I'll address more things later.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Ms McPherson: There were three times the number of men aged 15 to 24 looking for work for six months in Alberta in 2017 as there were women. Experienced professionals, engineers, geologists, and systems analysts are having trouble finding work bagging groceries or working in security. Employers are turning them away because they are overqualified. When does the government believe that these people will have the chance to rejoin the workforce?

Mr. Ceci: Certainly, I hope that all Albertans have a great chance to rejoin the workforce and for prosperity for their families. In addition, we're creating workforce placements so that Albertans can build the connections with employers, Mr. Speaker. There are 1,300 of those workforce partnership placements. We know there's more work to be done, and we won't stop until all Albertans feel this economic recovery. In addition, we're investing in building much-needed infrastructure, that has helped put companies and Albertans back to work, and we're going to continue to see that bill go forward.

Ms McPherson: The number of women in their peak earning years looking for work for a year or more has almost doubled in the last two years. We know that different groups experience unemployment and underemployment differently. Indigenous populations usually see a decrease in employment rates after a downturn. We need to tailor supports so that people can access help in an appropriate way. What specific measures has the government implemented to recognize the differences in unemployed groups?

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, perhaps this is a better question for other ministers. I know that they are supportive and I've been supportive of making sure there's increased monies there for social assistance caseloads when we need them and people are unsuccessful in getting employment. We, of course, pushed Ottawa in the past around EI benefits and extending those to Albertans who were suffering through the downturn. We're going to continue working on the jobs front, supporting diversification and getting more Albertans back to work.

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

Federal Mortgage Rules

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the changes to the federal mortgage rules over the past 10 years, it's become harder and harder for first-time homebuyers to purchase a house. Now it seems the new federal stress test involving the Bank of Canada benchmark is forcing Alberta to address a problem it doesn't have to counter issues in B.C. and Toronto. More and more Albertans are unable to purchase a house or refinance their homes when dealing with hardships because of these rule changes. To the Minister of Finance: what communications have you had with your federal counterpart surrounding this issue?

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much to the member. You know, it does seem like Ottawa is on a different economic plane from time to time and not looking at our needs. This stress test was intended to deal with issues in Vancouver and Toronto, but it has had an impact here in Alberta. I've heard from hard-working Albertans that it's difficult to buy a home at this point in time because of these rules. Now, it's important for Albertans to be able to afford their homes with good, mortgage-paying jobs, and that is challenging for many Albertans. That's why Ottawa cannot ignore the punishing differential. We need support around that so we can get back to good, mortgage-paying jobs.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that these rules are imposed by the federal government because they are concerned about rising consumer debt and given that the federal government has done nothing to curb issues like credit card debt, which is the root of the problem, to the Minister of Finance: are you looking into solutions to either empower ATB or our credit unions to provide alternative solutions for consumers?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much again, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Again, Ottawa doesn't seem to get it. That's why here in Alberta we've done things to make life more affordable like axing payday loans, that were put in place by the previous government. We brought in \$25-a-day daycare to make life more affordable, and we froze tuition fees. Those things are making life more affordable . . .

Mr. Fildebrandt: Point of order.

Mr. Ceci: . . . for more Albertans as we go forward. On the personal banking side of things, Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with ATB and our credit unions to find solutions to community issues like this.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that consumers and brokers are having a hard time renegotiating mortgages, preventing them from being able to qualify for financing, and given that all real estate markets are local and the federal government's national solution has hurt Alberta's housing market, will the Minister of Finance urge the federal government to consider measures which reflect the regional nature of Alberta's real estate market?

The Speaker: The hon minister.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker and to the member for his advocacy. A couple of months ago I did write a letter to Ottawa saying that any interest rate decisions should take into account Alberta's situation and that we're looking at the Bank of Canada's next potential increase and thinking it may not happen as a result of some of the things going on in our economy. We know there's still more work to do, and until all Albertans feel this economic recovery, we're not going to stop. We know that the path forward is not to cut 4,000 teachers and 4,000 nurses from their positions like the opposition wants to do every day of the week. Next week I'll be in Ottawa talking to the finance ministers . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Energy-sector Unemployment

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier claims that government oil production cuts will not result in job losses, but production cuts of 9 per cent, more than 325,000 barrels, mean fewer workers needed. Canada's banks estimate that Alberta's GDP growth will fall by 50 per cent next year. This will cause economic pain. Does the Premier have a plan to deal with a 50 per cent decline in GDP growth?

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We knew when we made our call the other day that the cost of doing nothing was more job losses and a continuance of \$80 million a day in the Canadian economy, so we took the action, a short-term curtailment, to help our companies get more cash flow, take care of the resources that we have here in Alberta, the resources that all Albertans know. We're working on crude by rail, we're working on energy upgrading, and we're working on pipelines.

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, Christmas is coming. What assurance can the Premier give to Albertans working in oil and gas related work that they will not be losing their jobs this Christmas season?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we have such a variety of industry in this province, and every industry will be affected differently by this curtailment. We have protected the small producers, and we're working with the 25 producers in this curtailment through the AER, listening to any concerns they have or questions, and we're working with every industry. But we know that had we done nothing, there would have been job losses.

Dr. Swann: A last question, again for the Premier: will the Premier, given 70 layoffs recently at Trican Well Services and reduced drilling budgets for the 2019 season, join the Alberta Liberal opposition and support our call for the federal government to reinstate enhanced unemployment benefits to hard-hit Albertans who have lost their jobs, especially in Calgary, where we've hit an unemployment rate of a phenomenal 8.4 per cent?

2:20

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to working with our industry, we are working with a number of critical groups like PSAC, the small drillers, CAODC for their impact, and I thank them for their advocacy. PSAC has been out to Ottawa many times talking about the impact that this whole crisis has on their members. We are working together as a group because Albertans own the resources, the industry helps extract the resources, and we need to work together. Together we can tackle this crisis and get ahead of it.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Prime Minister's Remarks on Construction Workers

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Canadians were absolutely horrified to hear the Prime Minister's condescending and demeaning comments at the G-20 summit regarding the hard-working men and women that literally build our country. My question is to the Premier. Do your policies support your friend Justin Trudeau's gender-lens analysis of our hard-working pipeline construction workers?

The Speaker: The Minister of Children's Services and Status of Women.

Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I first want to say thank you to all our hard-working men and women in the oil and gas industry in this province, who are out there working so hard, and to the families that they have, who make many sacrifices on their behalf as well. You know, we have a stand-alone Status of Women ministry here in this province because we all do need to work together across all industries in order to ensure that we support women to be successful, to support women to continue to do better. We'll continue to work across all those sectors in order to do so and look forward to continuing to improve the well-being of women in the province.

The Speaker: Thank you.

First supplemental.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that this government will not stand up for the hard-working men and women who work on these national projects but instead hides behind their friend Justin Trudeau as he creates excuse after excuse to promote and justify his no more pipelines bill, Bill C-69, to the Premier: are you going to stand up for our construction workers, or are you going to continue to allow the Prime Minister to bash our industry, our resources, our province, and the hard-working folks who work on the pipelines that you supposedly want built?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, I can't help but set the record straight. On this side of the House we are fighting every single day for working people – working men, working women – for their families, making lives more affordable. On this side of the House we know that it's government's job to stand up for pipelines. The Leader of the Official Opposition, when he was a minister of the Crown in the federal government for 10 years, two of those as a minister responsible for jobs, failed to act on pipelines. He only said the word "pipelines" in the House of Commons once, and when we asked him why, he said: because it wasn't my job. You bet it was his job. It's this government's job, and every single one of us is standing up for our sector.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that a large percentage of the folks working directly on these crucial infrastructure projects is male and given that the social impacts of the people working on these projects are that they live in local hotels, they buy food from local restaurants and grocery stores, and they buy their clothes there and their supplies and ultimately actually contribute to the economic prosperity of these communities, to the Premier: will you commit to calling out Mr. Trudeau on his derogatory comments and set the record straight for Albertans and Canadian workers?

Ms Hoffman: I commit, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Health and the Deputy Premier to fight for the people of this province, including fighting for pipelines. I don't need somebody to put it in a mandate letter to know that that's my job. For the Leader of the Official Opposition to have his left hand stand up and criticize us for the work we're doing on this project when we've taken it further than he ever did when he was in Ottawa is mighty rich. I have to say that we will continue to fight for the women and the men of this province every day because that's our job, and it should have been his job when he was in Ottawa.

NDP and Pipeline Development

Mr. Nixon: The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers says that the cancellation of Northern Gateway was the most damaging thing that has been done in our economy. Now, back in April 2015 the Premier told the *Calgary Herald* that Gateway is “not the right decision,” and then this NDP government supported the Trudeau Liberals in Ottawa as they scrapped the project. Sadly, now Albertans are living with the consequences of that terrible decision. Will the NDP, after denying it so long in this House, finally admit their mistake and apologize to the people of Alberta for not supporting Northern Gateway?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, what I will admit, first of all and foremost, is that all of us on this side of the House are fighting for pipelines every day. Northern Gateway was dead in the water a long time ago, and it was dead in the water because the federal government under Stephen Harper did not do their job, nor did the Leader of the Opposition, who was at the cabinet table at the time. The Federal Court of Appeal clearly outlined that there were mistakes made, but it wasn’t mistakes on this side; it was mistakes by the federal government. We stand by that.

Mr. Nixon: Given that this alliance the Alberta NDP has pursued with the Trudeau Liberals in Ottawa has had dire consequences for Alberta – the NDP have sided with Trudeau over and over instead of with the people of Alberta – will this government finally admit their mistakes and apologize for opposing Northern Gateway; for siding with Justin Trudeau over Albertans; for voting in this House to support Bill C-69, the no pipelines law; for protesting against Keystone and not fighting for it; for standing by idly as Trudeau killed Energy East; and for standing with Trudeau over and over and over while he decimated Alberta’s energy industry?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you. You know, the mistakes that were made were a lot of inaction by the federal government when it mattered – they should have had a vision 10 or more years ago that we needed pipeline capacity and not just more capacity to the U.S. but capacity east and west; that was not done – a cabinet that, when times were good, did not pay attention to the matter. Mr. Speaker, we are paying attention to the matter. We’re fighting every day for access in all directions because we see the result of a lack of pipeline access. We have a huge differential right now, and we are addressing that and many other things such as pipeline capacity.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, let’s be clear. At the same time period that she’s talking about, the minister, these people across from me were protesting that pipeline and our energy industry. Again, will this government finally admit their mistakes and apologize to Alberta, apologize for opposing Northern Gateway; for siding with Trudeau; for supporting Bill C-69 in this Chamber, the no more pipelines bill; for protesting against Keystone and not fighting for it; for standing by idly as Trudeau killed Energy East; and for standing with Trudeau over and over while he decimated our energy industry?

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I along with my colleagues here stand up every day for the energy industry. We

know it’s our job to build pipelines. We know it’s our job to get market access, something the previous federal government and our previous colleagues across the way did not understand and did not know and did not do anything about. We are working very hard with our industry partners. We know that pipeline access matters. That’s a long-term solution. In the meantime we’ve got crude by rail, that we’re working very hard on. As of Sunday we are doing curtailment because we know that that will make a difference in the short term. At the end of the day, these are resources Albertans own. We are responsible for those resources.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The Member for Fort McMurray-Conklin.

Energy Industry Opposition

Ms Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The oil sands and Alberta’s oil industry in general have been under attack for far too many years. Unfortunately, many of these anti-oil and antipipeline campaigns have successfully helped to see pipeline projects delayed and denied. We are hearing of a growing number of layoffs throughout Alberta’s oil patch, and foreign-funded campaigns to land-lock our oil are working as hard as ever. What, if anything, is this government doing to fight back?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, we are doing a number of things. Short term, as was announced last Sunday, we are doing a curtailment because we have too much supply. We’re not able to ship everything we can produce, so we’re managing that oversupply in the short term. In the medium term we’re working to get more railcars so we can move product in many directions. Longer term we have a made-in-Alberta energy upgrading strategy that you’ll hear more about soon as we are working on the pipelines.

Ms Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, given that in Fort McMurray and across Alberta we have watched countless Greenpeace protestors, left-wing eco-activists, and celebrities talk down our oil industry and my hometown and given that the minister of environment used to be one of the far too many anti-oil, antipipeline activists and given that I would hope all Albertans are cheering for our oil and gas industry, will the minister of environment finally admit that standing up against Alberta pipeline projects was bad for Alberta?

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, for many years we’ve heard talk about diversification, but this is the government that is taking that in hand and working with it – folks in Fort McMurray are going to be a critical part of that – in using bitumen for a number of things here in Alberta. That’s going to keep jobs here in Alberta. It’s going to create new jobs, more taxes, more jobs, more people working in our industry to create value here, keeping the money in Alberta rather than shipping it out elsewhere.

2:30

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Dan Woynillowicz was formerly of the Pembina Institute and who’s now with a group named Clean Energy Canada and given that Mr. Woynillowicz was a presenter at the infamous Rockefeller Brothers meeting wherein they schemed to land lock our oil sands and given that at this meeting he advocated for stopping and limiting pipelines

and refinery expansion and reduce the demand for oil sands, I'd like to know: how many times has the minister of environment spoken to Mr. Woynillowicz since becoming the minister of the environment?

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I believe it's once, when Dan – I don't know his last name – stood on a stage on November 22, 2015, with the CEOs of CNRL, Suncor, Shell, and Cenovus in announcing the climate plan. So perhaps the hon. member should direct her question to CEOs of the largest employers in her riding.

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

Racism and Hate Crime Prevention

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We live in an interesting age, a time when the rise of social media has combined with economic and political disruption to create an environment where voices of hatred and intolerance have been able to rise, and in my work with Alberta's diverse communities – Muslim, indigenous, African, Caribbean, Jewish, South Asian – they regularly tell me about the fear and anxiety this creates for them and their support for our government's work to take action on racism and questions about our progress so far. To the Minister of Education. The applications for the Anti-Racism Advisory Council closed in September. When will you be announcing the first 25 members?

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise and answer this question on behalf of the Minister of Education. Interviews for the Anti-Racism Advisory Council are ongoing as we speak and will continue for the next week or so. We've had over 300 applicants to the council, with interviews for more than 100 of them. We're taking the time to be mindful and considerate of all of the powerful personal experiences that applicants have shared and to ensure a diverse membership that accurately reflects Alberta's population. Appointments will be announced early in the new year, with the council's inaugural meeting to take place soon after.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, given that experts suggest there are at least 130 extremist right-wing groups operating across Canada and given that hate crimes in Canada are on the rise and given that these groups are growing increasingly bold and working to infiltrate and influence both the military and conservative political parties, to the Minister of Education: how close are we to establishing a provincial hate crimes task force, as called for in your report?

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, we're actively working on all priorities addressed in our government's antiracism report. We know that the data clearly indicates that indigenous and black Albertans are disproportionately affected by certain practices and that there is a rise of Islamophobia demonstrated through disturbing examples of intolerance and prejudice in our province, our country, and in other parts of the world. The hate crimes unit is an important part of our antiracism work that will directly impact these realities and create a safer, more inclusive Alberta for our diverse communities. Consultation and development of the hate crimes unit is ongoing, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with the Minister of Justice and ...

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Second supplemental.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that one of the best ways to combat racism is education and that when people know more about others, they're less prone to hate and given that we've committed to include the history of indigenous Albertans, including residential schools, in our curriculum, are you also working to ensure that the history of Alberta's other many diverse communities, such as African-American settlers, Muslims, and Sikhs, will also be taught to students?

Mr. Schmidt: Our government is fostering inclusion and diversity within schools and across the province. We know that standing up against racism and hatred is the right thing to do. That's why we're listening to diverse perspectives in writing the new curriculum, because when students see themselves reflected in what they learn in the classroom, they're confident in their identity as Albertans and as Canadians and they feel empowered to speak out against hatred. The minister has had the opportunity to directly engage with thousands of Albertans from many cultural backgrounds and faiths on both the antiracism initiatives and the new curriculum, and he's very thankful for their ongoing advice and support. In fact, this afternoon his staff are meeting with engaged individuals from ...

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Health Facility Construction Costs

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has continually failed to meet the needs of our health care system despite increasing our health care spending by over \$2 billion. Under the ASLI program the previous government with its partners were able to build beds for \$65,000 a bed. Meanwhile in Fort McMurray 144 beds are being built at a price tag of \$110 million, or \$764,000 per bed. Can this government provide the logic and explain the difference in the construction costs?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that the hon. member is well aware that many things in Fort McMurray cost a bit more than they do in other parts of the province like Edmonton and Calgary. I imagine that he probably experiences that when he's visiting his riding in his time away from this place. We certainly are aware of that. We also worked with the hon. member and the former Leader of the Official Opposition on which site they felt was most appropriate, something that we thought was important that the people of Fort McMurray have a say in, and they chose a site that requires more investment to make sure that it's the right fit. The reason why we're investing in Fort McMurray is because Conservative governments failed to do so, but we will act as the NDP government.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, the private sector will have created 72 per cent of the 2,081 beds projected to be built by this spring. Given that the ASLI program was able to build these builds for about \$65,000, a significantly smaller number than those being built in Fort McMurray and other places, and given that when asked about these numbers, we just don't get a clear answer from this government, to the minister: why did you scrap the ASLI program?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, we worked with partners to make sure that we increased the level of care to long-term care and dementia care beds throughout our province. I want to rearticulate, though, that it isn't fair to present the Willow Square project or any other project on a cost-per-bed basis because the total projected budget

includes costs associated with developing space for outpatient and in-patient programs as well. We're doing this in a way that respects the community's feedback. You'd think that's something that the MLA who represents the riding would want, that he would want us to actually build the project in the core of the city, where the community said that they wanted it, not on the edge of town, that he'd want to have these wraparound services in a fantastic public build close to the hospital rather than having people outsourced to other spaces.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, here's an example about construction costing and management. There's a superlab being built in this province in this city. It initially cost \$290 million. It has doubled in cost to \$600 million for a building. It is a big box. It is a superlab. It is a space that you could have leased in any old Sears space. The value in a lab is the people and the equipment in the lab. Why did it cost that much? Why did it double in cost?

Ms Hoffman: The fact that we continue to have members of the opposition refer to quality health care environments that people work and live in as fancy boxes is outrageous, and it is so out of touch with the reality of ordinary Albertans, Mr. Speaker. We're not talking about petri dishes and test tubes in a shopping mall, for heaven's sake. We're talking about top-quality lab materials, making sure that we have safe results. These decisions impact patient care. I won't apologize for investing in the people of Alberta and making sure that we don't privatize and outsource to multinational corporations things that should be done within Alberta. I'm proud of that, and the member opposite should be ashamed of himself.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I had a lapse there. Forgive me.

Health Facility Policies on Assisted Dying

Dr. Swann: My questions are for the Health minister. The Catholic church hasn't managed hospitals in this province for over 50 years. I'm wondering to what extent the minister believes that Covenant Health should be in charge of restricting constitutional rights for people who request assistance with medical assistance in dying in this province as a publicly funded institution.

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every patient in Alberta deserves the same level of dignified, compassionate care no matter what facility they happen to be in. The federal direction is that this is a legal procedure. It's our direction, of course, that there be ease of access and that the patient's choice be respected. Covenant did ensure that their updated policy reflects that assessments can be done on-site as well as signing of final papers. I think that that reflects the will of the people of Alberta, and I'm proud that we're going to be moving forward with patients as the number one guider in that policy.

Dr. Swann: Well, Mr. Speaker, I've been hearing from both physicians and patients that, in fact, this policy does not reflect the will of Albertans and physicians, who see a discriminatory approach within Covenant Health, who feel that the process of providing – the policy says: may provide those services on-site –

does not go far enough, that it should be mandatory to provide constitutional rights. Will the minister require all publicly funded institutions in Alberta to provide assessment and care regardless of institutional support?

2:40

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I believe that today's – or I guess it was yesterday's now – policy update is a very good step moving forward, and we will continue to work with our partners who provide care on the front lines to ensure that patients are supported and that their wishes are respected. Anyone who read those stories about citizens who were accessing their health care at a bus stop or outside of a facility knows that that was wrong, and that's why I asked Covenant to update their policy. That's why they made sure they did so. But we're not going to make it mandatory for it to happen there if they want to go home to have their assessment done there, but absolutely, if they want it done in the facility, it will be.

Dr. Swann: I believe that's a red herring, Mr. Speaker. We're not talking about mandatory on-site; we're talking about the policy of the institution requiring them to, where it's requested, allow the services on-site. This is a constitutional right. This minister said that she abides by the ...

The Speaker: The question only. The question.

Dr. Swann: Given that she has said that she will abide by the Constitution of Canada on health care, why will she not insist that this be a required service in our publicly funded institutions?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, it's important to me that we make sure that every Albertan who wants to exercise their right to chose with regard to legal health care procedures be supported in that, and that is why we made sure that the new Covenant policy confirms that when a patient request is made, an AHS care co-ordinator service will assume responsibility for arrangements for that process, and our care co-ordination services are a made-in-Alberta plan to ensure Albertans who want medical assistance in dying can access that help and support throughout all stages of the process. This is still a relatively new procedure in Canada, and we are continuing to work as it moves forward.

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

Social Studies Curriculum Redesign

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week a hand-picked member of the government's secretive curriculum working group resigned citing a litany of problems with the process and results of the curriculum redesign. It turns out that many of my concerns about the new curriculum learning outcomes, its dearth of instructional resources, and its one-size-fits-all approach are shared by someone with a PhD in curriculum studies and by many of his former colleagues. To the Minister of Education: now that some of your experts have lost confidence in the curriculum redesign, will you finally admit that the process has been flawed?

Mr. Schmidt: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure it'll come as no surprise to the member opposite that I'd make no such admission. In fact, it's long past due that our province undertake this work in updating the curriculum. We're sorry that the member of the curriculum

redesign group resigned. We understand his differences of opinion with the way this is going, but, you know, it's been a long time to take to get to this point to review the curriculum, and we won't make any apologies for updating something that was more than 30 years old.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this professor stated, and I quote, that the rationale and the justification offered for redesigning the K through 12 Alberta curriculum was not relevant to the current Alberta social studies curriculum, end quote, and given that the professor is clearly not a UCP supporter, concerns about this agenda-driven curriculum redesign are clearly across partisan lines and given that this social studies curriculum expert does not believe the government's talking points, to that same minister: what was the real reason for redesigning the social studies curriculum?

Mr. Schmidt: Well, Mr. Speaker, it should come as no surprise to the member opposite that in our schools right now we're still teaching about the Soviet Union as if it still existed. It's long past due that we update the curriculum. It's something that their government refused to do when given the chance. We're finally undertaking the work to make sure that our students learn a modern social studies curriculum that's updated to reflect the current realities of the world that our students live in today so that they're better prepared to engage in the democratic processes of their communities, their province, and their country.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the professor stated that, quote, much of the work completed during social studies curriculum working group meetings has been altered or revised by Alberta Education staff and given that he also stated, quote, that decisions about the architectural design and structure of the social studies curriculum were made before the curriculum working group ever met, end quote, when will the minister apologize to the curriculum working group and to the members of the public he supposedly consulted for using them as a cover for this predetermined, agenda-driven curriculum redesign?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, Mr. Speaker, let me answer that question with a question. When will the member opposite and all of his colleagues apologize to the people of Alberta and the members of the curriculum working group for smashing their names in public and promoting conspiracy theories about their secret, hidden agenda to indoctrinate our youth? The only members of this House who need to apologize for their comments about the curriculum working group are that member opposite and all of his colleagues in that party.

The Speaker: Two more days, folks. Two more days.

The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Road Maintenance

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's cost-effective, performance-based road maintenance system offers Albertans the best value for their tax dollars. Now we hear that the Minister of Transportation is plowing forward with wholesale changes that will result in a more costly model. Can the Transportation minister

assure Albertans that adopting B.C.'s model will not increase the cost of road maintenance for Alberta's taxpayers?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Mason: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not quite sure what the hon. member means by "B.C.'s model." I can assure him that the changes that we have implemented and are implementing, which have been done in consultation with the industry, will make it a more performance-based model, will improve the performance, I believe, and will find economies; for example, working with rural municipalities doing the same work on the same roads. When they cross, they raise their blade and put their blade back down on the other side. There are all kinds of efficiencies we can find.

The Speaker: Thank you.

First supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the B.C. model shifts all risk to road maintenance contractors and that will require contractors to adjust their business plan to take on more costs and given the minister recently retendered some of the road maintenance contracts using this system and the tenders are closing in a couple of weeks, to the minister: why the urgency? Usually contractors have much more time to bid. Is this just another way to justify taking road maintenance in-house?

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member, the House, and the industry that we have no plans to bring highway maintenance services in-house. However, I've told the industry that because of the financial difficulties that we're facing, we're going to have to sharpen our pencils, and they're going to have to sharpen their pencils. We need to get better value for money, and we need to make sure that we do things in a way that keeps our roads safe and operable year-round.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that snowplowing is an essential service, as evidenced by the recent snowfall that caused havoc on our highways across the province, and given that expediting this new model could result in contractors changing their priorities to absorb the extra cost of liability, to the minister: is this new contract going to cost taxpayers more or decrease the service? You can't have it both ways.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I want to assure the member and all Albertans that the safety of our highways is the highest priority. We need to make sure that we get good value for our money from contractors, but I think there are better ways to do it that require a little bit more innovation on the part of the industry, and I am sure that they are up to the challenge. They do a good job for us, and they are going to continue to do a good job for us.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

Workplace Safety

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fourteen years ago the government of Canada introduced the Westray law. This law was meant to hold employers criminally responsible in cases where workers lost their lives in workplace accidents where employers

ignored the health and safety of their workers. But it's been a decade, and we still haven't seen much progress. To the Minister of Labour: what are you doing to ensure that Westray is enforced and supported?

2:50

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our government is fighting for what matters to Albertans, and that includes ensuring that workplaces are safe and healthy and that workers get home safe at the end of the day. That's why last year we signed a memorandum of understanding with 10 different police services across the province that clearly defines the protocols for investigating workplace incidents and ensures that OHS and the police are able to work together to assess when charges might be laid. This MOU will help ensure that in the case of a tragic incident the intent of the Westray law is not only followed but the families can feel confident that, where warranted, action will be taken for their loved ones.

The Speaker: Thank you.

First supplemental.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that employers have the most responsibility to keep workers safe and given that if they ignore this responsibility, there can be tragic consequences like we saw in the Westray mine disaster, to the same minister: what are you doing to ensure that employers know what's expected of them?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, when we were elected three years ago, we inherited a set of labour laws that had not been updated in decades, 30 or 40 years in many cases. That wasn't right. I'm very proud of the work that we've done to make workplaces safer and healthier. It's now every employer's responsibility to ensure that their workplaces are safe not only from physical hazards but from bullying and harassment as well. We're continuing to work with employers and workers to make sure everyone understands the new rights and responsibilities.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that workers have often been shut out of health and safety discussions in their workplace and given that we know that when workers are involved in these decisions, workplaces are more efficient and have better results, again to the minister: what are you doing to ensure that workers have a say in their own safety?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. By giving workers the right to know about hazards in their workplace, the right to participate in health and safety on their work site, and the clear right to refuse unsafe work, we are able to keep workers safer and ensure that fewer Albertans are hurt on the job. These are all rights that the Conservative leader has promised to roll back at the request of Conservative insiders and the highest bidder. I know that the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills promised that the Conservative plan would hurt workers, but even I was surprised that they would be so literal about it. We're not going to let that happen. We're going to keep fighting for workers and make sure that every worker comes home safe at the end of the day.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I've been asked if there is unanimous consent for the introduction of a guest. It's been an unusual amount of time already. Is there unanimous consent?

[Unanimous consent denied]

The Speaker: I would ask that members depart. Government House Leader, you might have a request.

Mr. Mason: I was going to make it a little closer to the wire, but I can inform the House that under Standing Order 7(8) we'll be extending the Routine past 3 o'clock.

Members' Statements

Human Rights

Loyola: Mr. Speaker, the UN declaration of human rights is an international agreement outlining the fundamental rights of all human beings. Within this document is the acknowledgement of the sovereignty of each nation and their responsibility to uphold these rights for their citizens. This is accomplished through a collaborative approach by governments working together with civil society.

I want to acknowledge the organizations joining us today to recognize this important partnership. Together we are all working hard on ridding our society of systemic injustices that violate the human rights of all who call Alberta home.

Standing up for human rights requires more from politicians than just lip service at election time. It requires action. On this side of the House we've got the backs of newcomers and cultural communities, and we're fighting for what matters to them. Whether it be for the religious freedom of the Sikh community or for refugees' access to drivers' licences, we're making real, concrete changes that are making life better.

Unfortunately, though, even with all this work we're still seeing an upsurge of Islamophobic and anti-Semitic views. Even worse, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that these views seem welcome in the Conservative party. This fall the Conservative leader approved candidates who again and again expressed Islamophobic views, including one who compared Muslims to bank robbers. But this is nothing new. The Conservative leader was part of a caucus that openly attacked Islam. They stated that the niqab is firmly "rooted in a culture that is anti-women." He did nothing to speak up against such bigotry.

To all Albertans I say: let's fight racism and hatred together. The first step is to get to know one another. Don't let fear of the other inhibit you from learning more about your neighbours and their religious and cultural practices. Mr. Speaker, when we observe and protect the human rights of all, we prevent violence in all its forms, and if we abandon these rights and freedoms, we put people at risk, especially those from cultural communities. To quote one of my heroes, Nelson Mandela, "To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity."

Christmas

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, Christmas is my favourite time of the year. I love everything about Christmas. I love the traditions that are associated with this joyous season. I love that it represents the birth of the baby Jesus to the virgin mother, Mary, in a stable in Bethlehem. I love the strong element of family associated with Christmas. In fact, every year when my children were young, we would enact the nativity play, with the girls always wanting to be Mary and the boys always wanting to be the donkey. I'm not sure what that says about the boys, but I'll leave it at that.

I love the songs, both traditional and modern. One of my favourite songs is *Silent Night*, which was composed in 1818 by Franz Xaver Gruber to lyrics by Joseph Mohr in a small town in Austria. It goes:

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Now, I would have sung that for you, Mr. Speaker, if it weren't for the fact that my singing voice is roughly as bad as Elmer Fudd's.

In all seriousness, Mr. Speaker, I hope that we can take time this Christmas season to light up the world around us, to lift up the downtrodden, to share a meal with someone in need, to talk a little longer with an aging grandparent, to help in a soup kitchen, and maybe even get out and do a little carolling.

Mr. Speaker, to all my colleagues in the House and to all Albertans: may you have a truly wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year; may your holidays be spent roasting chestnuts by open fire with families and friends close by. As little Timmy says in Charles Dickens' classic, *A Christmas Carol*: May God bless everyone.

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

Smiles Thru Lindsey Foundation

Ms Miller: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to talk about Smiles Thru Lindsey, a charity started by Rick and Cindy More after their family experienced one of the most tragic losses a family could ever endure. Lindsey More was beautiful inside and out. She had a big heart, and she loved to laugh. She had an outgoing personality, and like 1 in 5 Canadians, she battled mental illness. Lindsey's passion for helping others masked the sadness inside her.

With the sudden passing of a friend who took his own life, Lindsey was determined to make a change. She wanted to start a foundation that would be able to help children, teens, young adults get the help they need to fight mental illness. Sadly, Lindsey did not live to see her dream come to fruition. On September 20, 2015, Lindsey More lost her battle with depression, and she took her own life. She was 22 years old.

One month later the Smiles Thru Lindsey foundation was created. The foundation is an endowment fund created under the Red Deer & District Community Foundation. Its mandate is to finance programs that will directly aid youth dealing with mental health and depression issues. Only 1 in 4 youth facing mental health challenges will receive treatment. Research has shown that half of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14 and that early support and intervention is vital to our children and youth. Thanks to Smiles Thru Lindsey over \$300,000 has been donated by businesses, citizens, and anonymous donors in central Alberta to help our children and youth living with mental health.

I personally would like to thank Rick, Cindy, and Stephanie, the Smiles Thru Lindsey team, for carrying on Lindsey's amazing legacy to help others. Lindsey, you may be gone from this earth, but your memory will live on forever in *Hansard*.

Thank you.

3:00 **Retrospective by the Member
for Bonnyville-Cold Lake**

Mr. Cyr: Mr. Speaker, on May 5, 2015, I had the immense honour of being elected to serve the people of Bonnyville-Cold Lake. When selected, I committed to my constituents that I would go to

Edmonton and serve their interests and make sure their priorities were heard. Specifically, I committed to improving relationships between our municipalities, moving forward the Bonnyville waterline that had stalled for 15 years, and advocating for improvements to highway 28. We've seen the headway in all of my commitments during my mandate as the MLA.

Mr. Speaker, I have tried to empower my constituents and my communities, raising issues that really matter to them. Part of doing this meant helping to fulfill my constitutional duty of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to oppose the government when they forgot the interests of the everyday Albertan, to voice the concerns of many Albertans who disagree with the direction this government has taken, and to uphold the tenets of our Westminster democracy, upon which our province and our country was built.

The other part of my job, as I saw it, was to work collaboratively with the government where possible and get things done for my constituents. Additionally, through hard work with both the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Education, which I thank adamantly, I was able to pass a private member's bill, finally providing Albertans with statutory protections against unwanted distribution of intimate images.

Following the next election, as I return to private life, I want to leave this House with two things: first, by thanking my family, friends, constituents, and all those who supported me through this wonderful journey that I've been on; and second, by saying that serving in this House, serving the people of Alberta has been and will always remain the greatest honour and privilege of my professional career.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish my oldest daughter, Amelia, a happy 13th birthday today. I love you.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member, and thank you for your service.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Soutien à la Francophonie

Ms McKittrick: Merci, M. le Président. Je suis fière d'être une francophone en Alberta. L'Alberta a une des plus larges et diverses populations de francophones.

Notre gouvernement a prouvé que nous sommes engagés à travailler avec les franco-albertains. Nous avons annoncé la première politique de service en français. Nous avons proclamé le mois de mars comme le mois de la francophonie. Nous avons désigné le drapeau franco-albertain comme un symbole de distinction sous la loi albertaine gouvernant les emblèmes officiels. Nous offrons un financement stable et prévisible pour les écoles à travers l'Alberta, incluant nos écoles francophones, qui s'accroissent rapidement. Nous construisons et modernisons également 11 écoles francophones. À travers la province j'observe l'immense contribution que la francophonie albertaine apporte à nos communautés, à notre économie, et à notre société en général.

Comme les autres francophones à travers le Canada, je suis choquée et déçue par l'annonce de Doug Ford portant sur la suppression du Commissariat aux services en français et l'université francophone. Ces attaques sur les minorités sont honteuses et auront des effets nuisibles et persistants sur la communauté franco-ontarienne. N'oublions pas que le leader de l'opposition albertaine dit que lui et le premier ministre Ford sont bon amis et chacun peut finir la phrase de l'autre. Je suis profondément inquiète quand je vois Doug Ford attaquer les droits des minorités et le chef de l'opposition albertaine et le parti conservateur uni observent assidûment et prennent note.

M. le Président, en regardant l'Ontario de Doug Ford, nous pouvons prévoir ce que le chef de l'opposition albertaine et ses collègues veulent dire quand ils planifient des coupures budgétaires qui vont faire du mal aux albertain. Ce qu'il dit aux franco-albertain c'est qu'ils ne comptent pas, leurs droits ne comptent pas.

Sous ce gouvernement cela n'arrivera jamais en Alberta. Merci, M. le Président.

[Translation] I am a proud francophone Albertan. Alberta has one of the largest and diverse francophone populations.

Our government has demonstrated that we are committed to working with francophone Albertans. We introduced Alberta's first-ever French policy. We proclaimed for the first time March as Alberta Francophonie Month. We designated for the first time the franco-Albertan flag as a symbol of distinction under the Emblems of Alberta Act. We have created the first Alberta Advisory Council on the Francophonie, to ensure Alberta's French-speaking population has a voice to help government enhance services in French in meaningful ways. We are providing stable and predictable funding for schools across Alberta, including our fast-growing francophone schools. We are building and modernizing 11 francophone schools. Across the province I see the tremendous contributions that Alberta's Francophonie make to our communities, our economy, and our society as a whole.

Like my fellow francophones, I am shocked and disappointed by Doug Ford's announcement that he will abolish the French-language services commission and the French university. These attacks on minorities are shameful and will have lasting, damaging impacts on the Franco-Ontario community. And let's remember that the Leader of the Opposition says that he and Premier Ford finish each other's sentence. So it is of deep concern to me, when I see Doug Ford attack minority rights, to think that the Leader of the Opposition and the UCP are watching closely and taking notes.

By looking to Doug Ford's Ontario, we can see what the Member for Calgary-Lougheed and his caucus mean when they say that they are planning cuts that are going to hurt Albertans. What he is saying to Franco-Albertans is that they don't matter, their rights don't matter.

Under this government, that will never happen in Alberta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [As submitted]

The Speaker: Thank you. Merci.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Official Opposition and Government Policies

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When a well-intentioned person provides good advice, most people will accept it with grace. Unfortunately, we rarely see that kind of wisdom from the NDP when the Leader of the Official Opposition provides this government with his wise counsel on challenging issues.

Let me give you a few examples. Our leader was ridiculed when he recommended that Alberta's government turn off the taps to B.C. He was attacked for suggesting the NDP government oppose Justin Trudeau's pipeline-killing Bill C-69. He was mocked when he and other UCP members called for emergency action on rural crime. He and the Member for Chestermere-Rocky View were criticized for pushing the government to protect patients from predatory doctors, and he was attacked in this House for urging the NDP to curtail oil production in the face of a record-high differential. The Premier actually suggested that our leader was advocating for collusion.

The NDP acted like the advice was worthless, ridiculous, uncalled for, but, Mr. Speaker, what was the end result? They introduced turn-off-the-tap legislation. They finally spoke against Bill C-69. They finally admitted rural crime had reached crisis

proportions. They not only introduced legislation to deal with predatory doctors; they buckled to our calls for a lifetime ban.

Each time the NDP finally agrees with the opposition, their decision-making improves. You see, we are the government's best advisers. The NDP's pattern of dismissing our leader's wise counsel only to adopt it a short time later does not concern him. You see, he's looking to help Albertans because, Mr. Speaker, that is the mark of a true leader.

Thank you.

Notices of Motions

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

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Respectfully I raise a question of privilege pursuant to 15(2) of our standing orders for the purpose of calling the Member for Leduc-Beaumont in contempt of Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j) of this Assembly for interfering in the lawful investigation conducted by an officer of this Legislature.

The purpose of raising privilege in either House of Parliament is to maintain the respect and credibility due to and required of each House in respect of these privileges to uphold its power . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, just to clarify, you will get an opportunity to speak to the substance of that. I would ask, though, that you read into the record the specific motion.

Mr. Gill: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Thursday the Minister of Municipal Affairs and especially the Minister of Transportation engaged in accusing me of the worst crime by an elected official. You ruled that the comments were out of order. However, the comments were never withdrawn and apologized for. All I want is just to take some time and clear my name. I have the requisite copies of the motion.

3:10

Introduction of Bills

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

Bill 209 Strategies for Unemployed and Underemployed Albertans Act

Ms McPherson: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce a bill being the Strategies for Unemployed and Underemployed Albertans Act.

Even though the economy is showing signs of recovery, many Albertans haven't found work since losing their job, or they haven't been able to find suitable work. Bill 209, the Strategies for Unemployed and Underemployed Albertans Act, will provide them with a framework to find jobs.

I've spoken to many unemployed Albertans looking to get back on their feet. They're frustrated by a lack of useful supports that recognize their employment situations. That includes many young men entering the workforce and experienced career professionals who've been out of work for years. I've spoken to employment-training providers who want to work with employers to retrain and upskill employees to meet the challenges of a modern economy but have experienced resistance when proposing their plans. I've spoken to economists who see opportunities for Alberta workers that aren't being developed. I've spoken to employers who are frustrated that they can't find qualified workers in Alberta.

This bill will enable stakeholders to pool their knowledge and insights in a quick and responsive manner to help address Albertans' employment needs with alacrity. I look forward to

debating this bill with my colleagues in the House, and I thank you for the opportunity.

[Motion carried; Bill 209 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Ms Fitzpatrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Apparently, my petition hasn't gone to the table officers, so I'll bring it at a future date.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the appropriate number of copies to table from the Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta, which calls on the government of Alberta to take quick action to reduce youth vaping simply by proclaiming a section of the Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act. I'll table the appropriate copies.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Any other returns or reports?

Hon. members, yesterday, you may recall, there was a point of order raised by the Government House Leader.

An Hon. Member: Mr. Speaker, she's been standing.

The Speaker: You have a tabling? Go ahead.

Ms Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite number of copies of two reports that I would like to table, the first being the Tar Sands Campaign that I referred to earlier today in my question, where Mr. Dan Woynilowicz gave a presentation to the Rockefeller Brothers meeting, where, amongst other things, he advocated for stopping and limiting pipelines and refinery expansion and reducing the demand for oil sands.

The second document I would like to table is a tweet from the minister of the environment from March 14, 2018, where she said, "Great to run into @DanWoy" and included a photo of them together. Considering that the minister of the environment said earlier today that she'd only met with him once, I believe that she perhaps has misled the House.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I think, give the members an opportunity to read that once you circulate it. That would be ample.

Are there any other tablings? The Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You have a point of order?

Mr. Mason: Yes.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I'm going to speak to this issue in a minute. Point of order is noted.

Mr. Mason: Thank you.

The Speaker: We will deal with it after the Routine.

The Member for Airdrie.

Mrs. Pitt: Yes. I have a tabling on behalf of my colleague from Drayton Valley-Devon, five copies of a Twitter thread where Dr. Lindsay Gibson explains his reasons for resigning from the social studies curriculum working group.

The Speaker: For the third time, hon. members, are there any other tablings?

I do hope that the members appreciated my going back to that item. We actually missed it by two turns, tabling returns and then Tablings to the Clerk, so I urge you to make those tablings at the appropriate time into the future.

Point of Order

Points of Order

Allegations against a Member

The Speaker: You'll recall that yesterday there was a point of order raised by the Government House Leader during, ironically, Tabling Returns and Reports. I took the matter under advisement as there was a question raised pertaining to the correct procedures to be followed on points of order during the daily Routine. To deal with the matter procedurally first, the usual practice, I'm told, is for points of order raised during the daily Routine to be considered following the conclusion of the daily Routine. The Speaker may on occasion hear a point during the Routine if the matter needs to be dealt with urgently, but the normal practice to wait until the end of the Routine is preferred as there is a limited amount of time to get through the number of business items prior to 3 p.m. Now, I know that yesterday both the Government House Leader and the Opposition House Leader had a different understanding of that, but the record seems to suggest what I've outlined.

The point of order raised by the Government House Leader related to comments made by the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake. While tabling a document, the member characterized the Minister of Environment and Parks as a Greenpeace activist. The Government House Leader rose on a point of order and clarified in his remarks that the Minister of Environment and Parks was not previously a member of Greenpeace. This clarification closes the matter in terms of the remarks made in relation to the minister. But this also – hon. member, it's important that you hear this part – provides an opportunity to remind all members of the manner in which documents should be tabled.

As I did on March 20, 2017, I will again cite Speaker Schumacher's ruling from April 11, 1995, at page 1159 of *Hansard* for that day.

The tabling should consist merely of a brief almost mechanical description of the document being tabled. Members should resist the urge to embellish, expound upon, decorate, editorialize about, emphasize, ruminate, extrapolate, [or] annotate.

Had this practice been observed while the document was being tabled yesterday, the comment leading to the purported point of order would, I believe, not have been made in the first place.

Again, I encourage all members during Tabling Returns and Reports to be brief and keep their comments limited to the document being tabled. I believe that closes the matter other than to reference again that a couple of times over the last couple of weeks we've had interactions in the House respecting personal comments about members. I want to underline the importance of staying away from that practice into the future.

Now, speaking of brevity, I think the next point of order might be related to that matter. I would recognize the Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

Point of Order

Brevity

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel a certain need to keep my point of order brief in the spirit of brevity. I will do so to the best of my abilities. Under Standing Order 7(2) and 7(3), citing

introduction of visitors and guests, it speaks of brief introductions made of groups or individuals, et cetera. We've gotten a bit out of hand here. I would just ask the Speaker to remind individuals that introductions are not members' statements and that we should really try to limit the use of introductions and keep them as brief as possible. I would leave it at Mr. Speaker's discretion to notify members who might be particularly less brief than others.

Thank you.

3:20

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In this particular instance I agree with the hon. member and regret that what happened today during introductions took up far too much time in the House. We will endeavour in the future to co-ordinate these activities more effectively so as to proceed through introductions in a timely fashion.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader. To the same point?

Mr. Nixon: Yeah. Very briefly, again, I completely agree, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that you could help us do that. We will also try to help the government and other parties in this House accomplish that goal.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I appreciate the exchange and the agreement in the House. I think it's important to underline. You'll note that I mentioned brevity, but we ought to remember, all of us, that when we take that amount of time, we may be showing disrespect to other people that are waiting to be introduced and also to your fellow members, so I wanted to encourage you. I chose not to interject today out of respect for the people in the Assembly, but please, I don't want to interject on this. Try and practise that brevity principle, which I realize is a relative point.

To point of order two.

Point of Order Factual Accuracy

Mr. Fildebrandt: Well, let's see if we can continue the spirit of brevity, Mr. Speaker. Referencing Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j), I want to refer – I don't have the benefit of the Blues at hand – to the comments from the Minister of Finance. It's not one for me to defend the previous government, but the Minister of Finance's comments, if I got them correctly, that he stated that the previous government introduced payday loan stores – I wasn't around when the Socreds came to power, but I do believe payday loan stores have been around longer than the previous ruling party or the previous Premier when he had come to power. Referring actually to a ruling you just made involving tabling of documents, you referred to the importance of making sure of, in addition to the brevity issue, the importance of factual information.

Many issues are for debate here and are matters of perspective, but some things are just very clear. The Government House Leader made the point that the hon. minister of the environment was not in fact a member of Greenpeace, and we take that at face value, but that was a matter of fact and setting the record straight. Just the other day the Government House Leader and Opposition House Leader corrected a small factual matter that I got incorrect around a paid advertisement. So I would just ask that on behalf of the Finance minister the Government House Leader would withdraw the comment or clarify that the previous government did not in fact introduce payday loan stores.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not intimately familiar with the history of payday loans in the province of Alberta. I could take the hon. member's comments with respect to that. Just to indicate, in my view, what the Minister of Finance meant is that the previous government had failed to deal with the problems with payday loans, something I am quite familiar with being in opposition and having raised that issue in the House and others outside the House trying to get some resolution to this difficult issue that the previous government failed to deal with. I don't know if they caused it or not. I remember when some of those stores first popped up. This was well after Social Credit, hon. Opposition House Leader, but it was during the PC period when these payday loans became more prevalent. Whether or not they existed in the ancient history I have no way of knowing.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I won't try to argue too much with the hon. Government House Leader on history. He's certainly been around a little longer than I have. I do appreciate the Member for Strathmore-Brooks trying to get a straight answer from the government, which are very few and far between in this Assembly, but this is very clearly a matter of debate.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the Blues said – and I'm just reading – "that's why ... in Alberta we've done things to make life ... affordable like axing payday loans, that were put in place by the previous government. We brought in \$25-a-day daycare to make life more affordable, and we froze tuition fees," et cetera. I acknowledge the Government House Leader and Opposition House Leader. I think this is a matter of opinion, and I certainly am not aware of the facts other than what members are. But, again, it seems to me that it's an illustration of blame. We all need to be responsible in here about making facts rather than just allegations.

I believe we have a third point of order from the Member for Strathmore-Brooks. No?

Ah, yes. I get confused, you know. You're always standing up.

Point of Order Allegations against a Member

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. During tablings the Member for Fort McMurray-Conklin tabled a copy of a tweet with the Minister of Environment and Parks with an individual and claimed that the minister had said that she'd only ever met with this person once and then suggested that the Minister of Environment and Parks may have misled the House. That is, as you well know and all members should know, completely unacceptable, especially on the basis of a photograph on social media of somebody that the minister clearly said she ran into. That does not constitute an additional meeting.

I think this is a ridiculous way of twisting things to make allegations against the minister, and to suggest that because she ran into somebody, posted a picture on social media, that constituted a meeting and therefore the minister was allegedly misleading the House is beyond acceptable, in my view, Mr. Speaker. The member is relatively new, but by now I think all of us should be familiar with some of the rules around suggesting that a member has misled the House, and on the basis of such sketchy evidence it's doubly bad, in my view.

The Speaker: The House leader for the opposition.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do find it a little weird that that same House leader once argued a point of order and a point of privilege in regard to a similar issue by saying that a picture on Twitter constituted a meeting, but I will not bother to go down that road.

Let me be very clear. The member said, and her exact words were: I believe that she may have misled the House. So the member did not accuse the minister of misleading the House. She was pointing out that she felt that she had some evidence that shows that the minister may have been mistaken or the facts that she presented may not have been factual.

Having said that, certainly, to use the words “misled the House” is something that we would avoid. It’s a serious accusation, certainly, within the tradition of this institution. The member is one of our newest members, so I would be happy to withdraw that comment on her behalf.

The Speaker: Thank you very much. Again, I remind about the point I made earlier: be cautious about the remarks you’re making about other members in the House. This is free speech, but it’s not unmanaged free speech.

I believe we are at the point of privilege. The Member for Calgary-Greenway.

Privilege

Obstructing a Member in Performance of Duty

Mr. Gill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m rising on a point of privilege. On Thursday the Minister of Municipal Affairs and especially the Minister of Transportation engaged in accusing me of the worst crime an elected official can be accused of, corrupting an election. You ruled that the comments were out of order. However, the comments were never withdrawn or apologized for. So I now rise at the earliest opportunity to present my privilege complaint and take a few minutes to clear my name.

3:30

An accusation of this nature goes beyond a point of order in that it goes to the fundamental nature of democracy. Being accused of stuffing a ballot box is such an affront to democracy, such a corrupt act that it impairs my ability to conduct my business as an MLA. It’s an obstruction, and it is an interference and an intimidation of the worst form.

In *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, page 111, Speaker Fraser ruled:

The privileges of a Member are violated by any action which might impede him or her in the fulfilment of his or her duties and functions. It is obvious that the unjust damaging of a reputation could constitute such an impediment.

Mr. Speaker, because I cannot use the courts to correct the ministers, I ask that you give me a few minutes to clear my name and to get the real story into *Hansard*. I have been accused of something ridiculous, something that no one in their right mind would ever do. I was subjected to a flawed investigation, just how flawed I did not know at that time. Even the flawed investigation only found one accuser against me.

I was threatened with a massive disruption to my personal and family life and with financial harm if I pursued my rights. The ambition and purpose of my friends and supporters would have also suffered if I had pursued my rights. In my weakness I caved in and agreed to quietly sit as an independent. But by not defending myself to the fullest ability, Mr. Speaker, I left the impression that I had done something wrong, and now the Minister of Transportation, who, to be fair, knows nothing about that issue, has left a permanent

record in this Assembly that I tampered with the ballot box and corruptly interfered with democracy. It will be there in *Hansard* forever, and I must have an opportunity to correct the record.

Mr. Speaker, the accusations against me all have to do with crooked and racist nomination politics. After my Calgary-Greenway constituency was radically redrawn, I considered which other areas to run in. I was told by Alan Hallman that the leader of the UCP wanted me to stick to ethnically Indian areas in Calgary and that they would not interfere in my nomination if I did so. In truth, they interfered a lot. They accused me of stealing blank AGM board ballots and running away with them to distribute them to ineligible supporters. When she made her accusation, there were no other witnesses who confirmed it, but within a short period of time Alan Hallman appeared on the scene and convinced the party official to cancel this meeting.

The party then called a sham of an investigation, which resulted in the investigator concluding that the situation was a he said, she said affair and that they believed my accuser. The investigator did not interview several key witnesses who were in immediate proximity at the time of the allegations, including employees of the Legislative Assembly and practising lawyers. These witnesses were sitting at a balloting table mere feet away from the individual who made the allegation, but they were denied the right to testify as to what they saw. I subsequently complained to the hon. Member for Calgary-Hays about this issue, but he was not willing to risk the wrath of the party leader and speak up for me.

After the sham of an investigation I was told in no uncertain terms that my political career was done, and it was suggested to me that if I continue to fight to defend my name, the party would use massive financial resources to bankrupt me in court. This was happening at a complicated time in my personal life. If I did not resign my position in caucus, I would be kicked out. I decided to go quietly and not risk disruption to my life and that of my friends and family. In doing so, I left the impression that I had done something wrong, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Transportation now has put the impression permanently in *Hansard* and, in doing so, obstructed and interfered with my ability to conduct my role as an MLA. Mr. Speaker, the accusations against me are part of crooked party politics inside the UCP. The grassroot UCP members have meddled with dozens of nomination races, backroom party elites interested in installing yes-men who will never object to the party . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I want to point out that you’re raising a point of privilege against a member that said something at an earlier sitting. I think you need to focus on that matter rather than the details.

Mr. Clark: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think that what we are hearing from the hon. Member for Calgary-Greenway is relevant to his arguments for privilege.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I’ve consulted with the table here. At this juncture that is not a point of order but one of guidance to the Speaker to facilitate this matter. I’m sure you would agree with that.

The hon. member.

Mr. Gill: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I will be very brief. The accusation against me is all part of crooked party politics inside the UCP. The grassroot UCP members have seen dozens of nomination races meddled with by the backroom party elite, interested in installing yes-men who will never object to the party leader and not the candidate who has the real support of Albertans. We all know that politics can be dirty, and the leaders and their

backroom operatives in the establishment parties have run the processes for their own interests. The Tory elite bosses of today are as bad as they have ever been. They are obsessed with appointing candidates based on race and sex in scores of constituencies across Alberta, and they have interfered in democracy to do so.

Only one person, who supported my opponent, accused me of this, and no one else confirmed her allegation. Independent observers in the room saw nothing, and all of this supposedly happened while I had blown out my knee and could only shuffle slowly from place to place. The investigation was a farce, and my reputation was harmed. But the truth should be in *Hansard*, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for letting me put it in *Hansard*. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Transportation should withdraw their remarks and apologize, like you asked them to do last Thursday. Not to apologize is to violate my privilege as a member.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity given to me.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising to address a purported matter of privilege raised by the independent Member for Calgary-Greenway. Many Speakers have ruled in the past that a point of privilege is one of the most serious matters that can be brought before the House and should only be brought in the most serious and grave of circumstances. I strongly submit that this is not a matter of privilege for three primary reasons. First, the allegation mentions the interference to a lawful investigation conducted by an officer of this Legislature, yet as far as we're aware, there is no such investigation. Secondly, the matter, I believe, is out of order in that it reflects on a decision of the Speaker that has been made and therefore ought to be considered closed. Finally, it alleges that the accusation of corrupting an election took place. No such allegation was made by myself or the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs. I'll try and deal with each of these three principles in turn.

First, the member's letter alleges that the minister should be guilty of contempt for interfering into a lawful investigation conducted by an officer of this Legislature. Mr. Speaker, we do not know what lawful investigation the member is referring to, nor do I know in what way it was interfered with. Had the House ordered an investigation into a matter, then perhaps the minister could be found in contempt for interference, but as far as we are aware, no such investigation has been ordered, and therefore no such investigation can have been interfered with.

Secondly, as I mentioned, the member ought to know that he should not be reflecting on decisions made by the chair, as outlined in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, edited by Bosc and Gagnon. At pages 620 and 621 it says:

Reflections must not be cast in debate on the conduct of the Speaker or other Presiding Officers. It is unacceptable to question the integrity and impartiality of a Presiding Officer and, if such comments are made, the Speaker may interrupt the Member and request that the remarks be withdrawn or immediately give the floor to another Member. Only by means of a substantive motion, for which 48 hours' written notice has been given, may the actions of the Chair be challenged, criticized and debated. Reflections on the character or actions of the Speaker or other Presiding Officers have been ruled to be breaches of privilege.

As the member has noted, the minister made a comment, the member raised a point of order, and the Speaker ruled that it was indeed a valid point of order. I can only presume that that concluded the matter.

3:40

Indeed, page 625 of the same book continues:

Should the Speaker find the utterances of a particular Member offensive or disorderly, that Member will be requested to rise in his or her place and withdraw the unparliamentary word or phrase unequivocally. The Member's apology is accepted in good faith and the matter is then considered closed. However, if the Member refuses to obey the directive of the Speaker to retract his or her words, the Chair may refuse to recognize the Member until the words have been withdrawn.

It is argued in the member's letter from this morning that the comments were never withdrawn or apologized for. Mr. Speaker, anyone who watches this place knows that not all points of order, even if found to be valid, result in the corrective action outlined above being taken. Now, the member might have had more of a case had the Speaker ordered the member to apologize and had the member refused, but that was not the case. Had it been the case, it would presumably have been dealt with immediately, not a number of days later.

Third, Mr. Speaker, the member claims that a serious allegation has occurred, the allegation of corrupting an election. No such allegation has been made. As I outlined when speaking to this matter last Thursday, I was of the view that the matter constituted a legitimate matter of debate given that reference was made to allegations that are now on the public record and have been documented in news reports. In your wisdom you ruled that there was a point of order, and rightly so. We will not revisit the argument other than to reiterate that only information on the public record was referenced by the minister and myself.

In conclusion, I'd also like to point out that in addition to not meeting the threshold for being a *prima facie* case of privilege, I don't believe that this motion is in order in the first place, Mr. Speaker. Standing Order 15(2) states that notice of at least two hours must be provided to any person whose conduct is called into question. My office did not receive notice until approximately 12:30 this afternoon. Further, the matter was not raised at the earliest opportunity. As noted in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, page 142:

A complaint on a matter of privilege must satisfy two conditions before it can be accorded precedence over the Orders of the Day.

First, the Speaker must be convinced that a *prima facie* case of breach of privilege has been made and, second, the matter must be raised at the earliest opportunity.

Now, Mr. Speaker, members know that the alleged breach took place on Thursday of last week, five full days ago. The member could perhaps have raised the matter at that time or yesterday instead of waiting until today. Apparently, what the member has done is to raise a point of order successfully and then attempted to deal with the same matter again several days later as a point of privilege. I would leave it to you as to whether or not that is the intention of the rules of this place.

Lastly, I should note that the specific allegation raised in the letter from the member states that the minister should be found in contempt of Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j), Mr. Speaker. These particular standing orders, of course, relate to points of order, specifically to when members ought to be called to order. I believe that this point further reinforces my view that the matter in question was a point of order and not a matter of privilege as indeed those very same standing orders were cited by the member in arguing the point last week.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, Speakers have consistently stated that a point of privilege is one of the most serious matters that can be brought before the House and ought to be done so only in the most serious of cases and with well-founded

arguments and evidence to support them. I would submit that this fails dismally with respect to that test, and therefore I'd argue that there is no point of privilege.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't belabour the point by resubmitting to you the same reference points that the Government House Leader has. I'd just, rather, reinforce a couple of quick points and then turn this over to you. The first is that I believe this is a matter that you already ruled on in this Chamber. It was a point of order. I really am indifferent to the content that went back and forth between the government and the independent member of the Chamber. But you did make a ruling. This seems to me like a backdoor attempt to revisit something that you've already made a decision on. That concerns me. I do think that that alone makes it out of order.

Second, I do not believe that we received notice in time either, which also would make it out of order.

I have another point that I'd like to make. It seemed to me that the hon. Member for Calgary-Greenway was referring to some sort of investigation by an independent officer of this Chamber. I'm not aware of any such investigation, and I certainly have not heard anybody speak about an investigation of that kind. I would also reinforce that the United Conservative Party and the members that I represent as their House leader in this Chamber have not referred to any such investigation in this Chamber. I do not know what bearing any investigation, whether it be a party or an independent officer, would have on this place because I don't believe it's part of our proceedings.

Lastly, the member makes some references to a situation that happened from a political or party side. I won't go through that here because I actually suspect that it has no relevance in this Chamber, but if at any time, Mr. Speaker, you need that information to help you with this point of privilege, I would be quite happy to provide that to you.

With that said, I do not believe that this is a point of privilege, and I would hope that you could rule it out of order. I await your opinion.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to add to this debate. Both the Government House Leader and Opposition House Leader have stated that they did not receive notice in time. The standing orders require that two hours' notice be given. I think that all members can reference the document placed on their desks, stamped that it was received by your office at 11:22 a.m., which, if I'm correct, is more than two hours before the beginning of question period and the daily Routine. Now, how quickly that got from your office to other offices is a matter for the courier, but I think that according to the document on all of our desks, unless the photocopy misleads us, this states that it was received at 22 after 11 today in your office.

Now, in reference to this, this is not dealing with necessarily the same matter as your point of order ruled last Thursday, Mr. Speaker. This is referring to the breach of privilege in that the Member for Calgary-Greenway successfully made the case that there was a point of order. In the standing orders in section 23, dealing with calling a member to order, if you'll just allow me to jump to 23, you ruled that there was a point of order under section 23.

23 A Member will be called to order by the Speaker if, in the Speaker's opinion . . .

In this case it was found under sections (i) and (j).

- (i) imputes false or unavowed motives to another Member.
- (j) uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder.

You ruled that there was, in fact, a point of order there.

The next section following immediately after, section 24, states:

Naming a Member

24(1) If a Member, on being called to order for an offence . . .

I do believe that Mr. Speaker did find there was offence, and he should therefore be called to order.

. . . persists in the offence or refuses to follow the Speaker's directions in the matter, the Speaker shall name the Member to the Assembly.

Section 2 prescribes escalating consequences to defying you, and your wrath from there, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I don't have the benefit of *Hansard* in front of me, but I do believe that you requested that the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs do apologize. I could be corrected if I'm wrong about that. I'm unsure if you requested that the Government House Leader apologize, but if I am correct, you did ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs to apologize, to which there was no apology, which would constitute under section 24(1):

If a Member, on being called to order for an offence, persists in the offence or refuses to follow the Speaker's directions in the matter, the Speaker shall name the Member to the Assembly.

In that case, it has not happened.

In reference to comments from the hon. Government House Leader, I would refer members and you, Mr. Speaker, to section 484(3) of *Beauchesne's*.

3:50

I will cite the very same section, actually, that the hon. Government House Leader has been citing.

In the House of Commons a Member will not be permitted by the Speaker to indulge in any reflections on the House itself as a political institution; or to impute to any Member or Members unworthy motives for their actions in a particular case.

Now, in this case, I believe the Government House Leader has been imputing that there are motives for the Member for Calgary-Greenway in trying to reraise an issue, so I do believe there would be an issue there, but that's not my point, Mr. Speaker.

I will skip ahead to: "[no member shall] question the acknowledged and undoubted powers of the House in a matter of privilege." It is, I think, very obvious that if this was a matter of privilege, the House would have the power to deal with it. The hon. Government House Leader has called into "question the acknowledged and undoubted powers of the House in a matter of privilege."

Mr. Speaker, it is your decision to decide if this is a matter of privilege or if this is a continued matter of a point of order. But I think it is very clear from your ruling on Thursday that there was a point of order and that the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs was called to order, asked to apologize, and in the event that he did not do so, that section 24(1) – I won't say requires – generally behooves you to require that the member abide by your rulings.

The Speaker: The House leader of the Alberta Party, you had at one point wanted to say something?

Mr. Clark: No. I certainly appreciate the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, but no. I think that both in the interest of time and I think that the landscape has been covered here. I will say that I think the Member for Calgary-Greenway does make a compelling point, and I'm pleased that he at least had the opportunity to put out his side, his version of events, which has been bandied about a lot in public and

in private. I think those were very serious allegations coming from the other side. I'm pleased that he had the opportunity to do so.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, just to repeat what several of the members have said, a point of privilege is probably the most fundamental principle that exists in this institution. There have been several over the last three to four years. In accordance with that principle I will take your views into consideration today and reflect upon the point raised, and I would hope to come back to the House and report at a future date.

I believe, hon. members, that now leads us to Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

Bill 28

Family Statutes Amendment Act, 2018

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Good afternoon. It's an honour to rise today and move third reading of Bill 28, the Family Statutes Amendment Act, 2018.

I want to thank my colleagues from around this room for acknowledging their commitment to this bill. The proposed legislation will modernize family law in our province and better support families and ensure that they are treated fairly. Conflict is hard for partners, and it's damaging for children. This legislation will allow couples to resolve their disputes more quickly. Passing the Family Statutes Amendment Act means that the justice system will work more fairly and efficiently for today's families when they need it.

Our legislation would provide clear rules about property division for unmarried partners. Generally the new rules would presume that property acquired during a relationship would be divided equally; they would also allow people who want to make different arrangements to make their own agreements. The proposed amendments would promote unmarried couples settling out of court, saving money and stress on these individuals and on their children.

Madam Speaker, I suppose it is somewhat of a lawyer thing to be excited about the orderly and sane and rational resolution of disputes, but I must say that I'm very excited to move this bill forward. I think it will help a number of Albertans to have clear rules to allow them to resolve their disputes more quickly and, at the end of the day, to not get into legal battles that will ultimately be very trying for them and very trying for their families.

Madam Speaker, another thing in this bill that I think is a very exciting story has to do with amendments that would make it clear in legislation that applications for child support can be made for adult children with disabilities or illnesses regardless of their parents' marital status.

Madam Speaker, when I think of this bill, I will always think of Emily and Christina, who are still waiting in the gallery to see this bill pass. Previously, Madam Speaker, a parent of some of our most vulnerable adult children with disabilities, like Emily, could not seek child support under the Family Law Act. When we introduced this bill, Christina told us: it's so important because my daughter is nonverbal, so for her to be able to change legislation is remarkable, and not many people get to do that. This amendment will make our laws more fair. Thank you to Emily for bringing to light this

important issue and to you and your mom for helping us to change a law that will benefit Alberta families for generations.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I will just note that this is truly an amazing story of how someone can, despite all odds against them, make a difference in the lives of those around them. Thank you.

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

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is a pretty emotional moment for us here in the Assembly, and we don't often get the opportunity to do something quite like this and to have Emily here to witness it, and Christina and Ron. So I just wanted to say thank you to the minister.

I won't go into all of the details, but this has really been a remarkable journey for Christina and Emily and Ron. You know, what is quite amazing is when the government takes up a cause that is an important one but doesn't require the courts to force the government to do something. It realized as this was making its way through the legal process that there was something fundamentally wrong with the way the legislation was set up such that someone like Christina needed to spend a tremendous amount of her own money, put a lot of herself out there to fight against the monolith of government.

To the government's credit, instead of fighting back and digging in their heels and waiting for the courts to force them to do something, they recognized that there was a fundamental injustice here and took up the cause. I want to thank the minister for her work on that and all the people behind the scenes, who we don't get to see and who don't get a lot of credit in public for this. I want you to know through the Assembly that I know that a lot of work happened behind the scenes and that there are a lot of people who deserve credit but none more so than Emily and Christina and Ron as well for their incredible bravery to get to this point. You've made a huge difference in the lives of many, many people.

Again, thank you to the hon. minister and to all members for supporting this very, very, very important bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

4:00

Mr. Sucha: Yeah. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll be very brief on the subject here as well. As many members in the House have alluded to, any breakdown in a relationship is never a pleasant experience, but it does happen from time to time. There are many reasons around it, but the one thing that I really appreciate, the focus that was on this, was really this thing that centred around the care and compassion around the children and making sure that we protect those who need to be taken care of within our society.

You know, one thing I'll touch on as a personal note. As I alluded to, just like many members in this House I've also been through a separation myself, and I remember saying to a member: "Well, maybe I should have been common law. Maybe I shouldn't have gotten married." And someone said to me: "Well, no. You should have gotten married because in Alberta it is a disaster to try to get separated if you're common law and you own property and you have kids." Now that has changed, and I feel blessed that no one has to worry about that moving forward.

To be honest, I'm very fortunate. When you go through a separation, you're very lucky to have the law, and it's very cut and dried and black and white when you go through this process. If you have someone who's a caring parent or people who are very respectful, just as I'm very fortunate to have someone who is a very good mother to my three kids, once you know what the law is, you can move through the process as amicably as possible because we

all know how the courts are going to rule. We all know how the process is going to move forward, and at the end of the day it's a lot more affordable to those who are going through a very stressful situation.

I want to thank the legal community, who has come forward and been very vocal on this. I want to thank the minister for ensuring that she listened to many of the stakeholders moving forward. Realistically, even though lawyers were the ones who under this circumstance were likely going to make the most money from it, the legal team, the family law teams, were some of the most vocal advocates around this, about improving it, because they do care about the compassion of their clients.

With that being said, I want to thank the House for moving this forward and for its co-operation, and I look forward to seeing this pass. Thank you.

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

Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

Ms Luff: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again, I'll be brief as well. I just wanted to get up and express my support for this bill. I think it's a good bill. You know, as time goes on, increased numbers of people are living in common-law relationships. Fewer people are getting married, so from time to time modernizations and changes to laws are necessary, and I appreciate that the government took this into account and looked at this and listened to lawyers who were saying that this kind of law was necessary and decided to make this change. I myself lived, I suppose, in a common-law relationship for 12, 13 years before my husband and I decided to get married, much to the consternation of my grandmother.

Dr. Starke: Was it the getting married part?

Ms Luff: The getting married part, yeah. She wanted it to happen before she died. I think that was the concern that she had. She liked my husband very much.

You know, we bought a house before we got married. The folks who live across the street from me, I believe, are in a similar situation. As more young people make different choices and don't adhere to traditional sort of mores of how we are supposed to go about things in life, this kind of change to law becomes increasingly necessary. I like that it has flexibility. I like that it provides the safeguards there for people who need them when they need them. If your relationship should break down and you manage to part amicably, then that is something that it allows for as well.

I think, you know, they listened to the experts. They listened to the people who were affected. It's something that is increasingly affecting more and more people in our society. I do of course particularly appreciate the changes to child support for adult children with disabilities. I think that's huge. It's very important. I can think of several of my constituents who've come and talked to me about things like this, and it will make a big difference. I just wanted to be on the record as being supportive of this bill, thanking the government for bringing it forward, and I assume that everyone will be supporting it.

Thanks very much.

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

Any other members wishing to speak? Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do not rise to speak. I rise to move the following motion, that we move to one-minute bells for the duration of the night both inside and outside of committee.

The Deputy Speaker: Just to clarify, no ruling has yet been made on a night sitting, so you can make it for ...

Mr. Nixon: Madam Speaker, I don't know what the procedure is, but I would be happy if that motion continued even into a night sitting. I don't know if that's legitimate, but what I am trying to do is at least make sure that between now and supper we are on one-minute bells.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much. I don't even know if I can do this. I would like to move to amend the motion to indicate that the first set of bells would be five minutes, just to allow members who may be outside the Chamber and unaware of this conversation to return.

The Deputy Speaker: You accept that as a friendly amendment? As I understand the motion, the very first division will be for five minutes, and then any subsequent division bells will be for one minute for the duration of the afternoon.

Mr. Nixon: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: That's correct. All right.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Hearing none, the hon. minister to close debate.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think that for the most part everything that needs to be said has been said on this bill. I'll just take one final opportunity to thank Emily for her contribution to all Albertans.

Thank you very much.

[Motion carried; Bill 28 read a third time]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

The Chair: Hon. members, I'll call the Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 22 An Act for Strong Families Building Stronger Communities

The Chair: Questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to speak today on Bill 22. As I have pointed out throughout the debate on this legislation, we've talked a lot about the fact that the child intervention panel, primarily through efforts by the NDP members on it, blocked the panel from being able to talk about Serenity during those panel meetings. But I do think there's another issue that panel members were forbidden from being able to speak about that is very relevant to this piece of legislation, and it is not directly

associated with the Serenity end of it, though. That, certainly, I would say, is the most important thing that was blocked.

As you know, Madam Chair, we were forbidden from discussing the publication ban during the panel. Panel members made it clear that we wanted to discuss the publication ban and how to properly balance transparency with privacy. It was an extremely complicated issue – I will grant that to the minister and to the government members on the panel – but it was fairly clear during the sessions the panel had that this was one of the most important issues that people wanted to see addressed. The suggestion from the NDP members and the minister was to leave that with the department. It was certainly the perspective of many people on the panel that that was a mistake and that we should have completed our mandate in regard to that.

Now, let me read the formal wording of a motion that achieved consensus, actually, on April 19, 2017, in the panel meeting. For some members that may be confused on how that achieved consensus, one of the things that was interesting about the ministerial panel is that it was not a standing committee, as you know, Madam Chair, but it also included outside experts. So while the government members who were on the panel did outvote the opposition members who were on there, there were certain circumstances where the experts managed to side, quite frankly, with the opposition members. This was one of them, and this is one of the reasons why it passed.

4:10

The motion said that the minister will bring a consultation plan to the panel within two weeks; that the minister will pull information related to the subject from the 2014 review, including details noted as available and information from other provinces regarding a publication ban; that the minister will also provide advice as part of the plan as to how this consultation can be incorporated into phase 2 of the work.

What that did, in addition to asking for that information, was that that then made a decision to take the publication ban issue and put it into the second phase of the ministerial panel. It allowed the panel to build a report on the first phase so that we can get some legislation to this Assembly on the first phase. If you recall, Madam Chair, the panel was broken into two phases. It was responsible to report to the minister twice.

Now, interestingly enough, Madam Chair, the information never came even though the panel went overtime and met for a year. It met longer than originally scheduled. There seems to be no circumstance where the minister can justify the fact that her panel asked for that information within two weeks. The panel certainly went well beyond that two-week period. It was clearly the will of the panel to discuss this issue in phase 2, but it kept being blocked by the NDP panel members, who, I can only assume, were taking orders from somewhere else, particularly because during the publication ban discussion most of the NDP members on the panel indicated they wanted to speak about it. Something changed.

The panel members were told that it was a complicated issue. I can assure you, Madam Chair, almost every issue that was addressed during that panel was a complicated issue. I think that you would concur with me on that. It's one of the most complicated subjects that had to be dealt with. Now, I would also say, though, that that is a fairly patronizing comment. Everything about the child intervention panel, of course, is complicated. As I said, the panel's mandate was incredibly broad, also one of the concerns that came out of the panel. But that panel consisted of several members of the Legislature and many experts that understood the issue significantly well and certainly should have been allowed to complete their mandate.

Now, UCP panel members were baffled as to why government members of the panel were being ordered to block discussions of the publication ban. That still has not been explained despite lots of debate during the process and questions from the media. At this point it was not about taking a position on what the publication ban regulations should look like. It was about discussing it, period – discussing it, period – which is all the panel wanted to do, make sure they could complete the mandate that they were sent there to do. We know for sure – I mean, the hon. Member for Calgary-Hays will verify this – that this came up several times from people who presented to the panel.

Again, a very complicated issue, balancing the privacy of children and their families during some very horrific circumstances but also balancing that with the need for transparency both within the media and the department to make sure that those horrific circumstances do not take place again. I would say that some of the witness presentations to the panel on that were some of the hardest to watch. I do not deny that it was a tough issue, but I do take offence that we weren't allowed to tackle that tough issue. At this point I still haven't heard anything from the minister or the ministry on how they've attempted to deal with it on their own.

Then we discover that back in 2014, when the current Premier was in opposition, the leader of the third party, I believe, she had an amendment to the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act pass in this House, in this very Chamber, saying that changes could not be made to the publication ban regulations without them first being considered by an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly. Now, to be clear, the panel was not that. The panel was not an all-party committee. As you know, the government fought to make it a ministerial panel and not have it as an all-party committee.

The NDP refused to let that actual committee of the Legislature look into the Serenity case, which is now history, obviously, instead setting up a consensus-based panel, which I have articulated to many members during my time in this Chamber on this issue was only a consensus-based panel when the opposition agreed with the government, but if there was any argument from the opposition side, then all of a sudden it was a voting panel. Basically, they wanted to have more control. That is the only reason why the minister would want a ministerial panel, to have more control. They didn't want to have it in a standing committee or someplace like that, where the control would have been a little bit more limited from the minister's office.

Now, a legislative committee would have met on *Hansard*, creating transcripts of the meetings, and adhered to *Robert's Rules of Order*, something that certainly did not happen during the process that we undertook. The opposition had to fight hard, as I've talked about before, just to have basic meeting summaries, just to even get that created for the panel meetings, let alone a proper record of the proceedings.

It really seemed to me, Madam Chair, that the NDP refused to let the panel talk about the publication ban because they did not want to bring attention to the fact that because they refused to make it a legislative committee to begin with, the panel's recommendations on the publication ban would then have needed to receive a seal of approval from the legislative committee because of the Premier's motion in this Assembly when she was the leader of the third party, something I would have voted for if I was in the Legislature. I think she is right, that that should have been dealt with in a panel. It could have been slightly embarrassing for the government perhaps – maybe that's why they chose not to do it – and this is honestly the only reason I can think of. There is no other reason why that issue should not have taken place.

Now, the opposition members participated in this process in good faith, and instead of being transparent, the NDP put politics and

self-interest ahead of good policy and honouring the wishes of the panel.

Madam Chair, the Premier is on record as saying, "The regulations as passed are deficient and do a disservice to the children in government care and to the public interest in improving conditions for them." That was in 2014. The Premier also noted while in opposition that a number of different concerns had been expressed about the publication ban regulations in their current form. The now Premier's concern, as I understand it, was that the statutory director, the government, can apply for a publication ban, so the director might apply in order to hide wrongdoing rather than to protect the privacy or the best interests of a child. So it is really too bad that the panel wasn't allowed to talk about those concerns that their current leader brought up in this very building.

Moreover, because the bill before us today does not open section 131.1, where the Premier's restrictions are listed in the legislation, I can't even move an amendment today to repeal this section so that we do not end up in the same situation again. I cannot endorse this government's deliberate oversight on the publication ban. While there are still some good measures in this bill that I am pleased to see, for this reason and for others, though, I cannot support this legislation, and I would suggest to my colleagues that we cannot support this legislation.

In addition to the publication ban, we have seen in this Chamber over the last few weeks this government repeatedly vote on this bill to block amendments to bring transparency to this process. The number one issue that the panel determined, without a doubt, was that transparency was the biggest problem that was happening within the system, the fact that things continue to be hidden from the public eye and that reporters had to break stories about murdered children in our care that nobody knew about, that sometimes, in some cases, like the case of Serenity, the police did not even have files for.

That was the number one issue, and in this Chamber over the last few days, underneath, I would assume, the minister's instructions, they have voted to block the Child and Youth Advocate from having more transparency in the process, making sure the public could see what was going on, and have continued to leave the solution, ultimately, to this great problem to the very people that already failed on this issue once in regard to Serenity and others.

So while I do applaud some of the issues within this legislation, it falls well short. It is troubling to see the government continue this practice, that they have done on this issue for several years, of avoiding transparency and of avoiding actually getting to work on this very issue. If we are fortunate enough and given the privilege by Albertans in a few months to form the government, we will get to work on this issue. We will stop sweeping it underneath the rug, which this government seems bound and determined to do.

As such, I cannot support their legislation.

The Chair: Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I was part of the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention. I sat with that hon. member and with the hon. Member for Calgary-Hays and later the Member for Chestermere-Rocky View, and I'm struck by the difference in tone by different members of that caucus when participating in the committee process.

You know, I've held my tongue as best I can when listening to the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre talking about this process. What this brings me back to is what we on the opposition side expect from government. We say things all the time like: "If only you'd listen to the opposition. If only you'd incorporate our feedback into government process. If only you'd

hold all-party committee meetings. If only you'd talk to stakeholders. If only we'd travel the province. If only you'd tackle the root cause issues that have caused challenges in the government." All of those are things that happened as part of this process, so while this is not a perfect process, it is not a perfect bill, it is a world better than what it could have been. Frankly, I wonder sometimes what exactly the UCP expects from government.

4:20

Now, I'm not going to be a permanent apologist for everything this government has done. There are plenty of things I disagree with this government on philosophically: job creation, on the way they've handled the carbon tax, on the electoral reform process. There are a lot of shortcomings in this government. But, Madam Chair, this bill and this process are not one of those shortcomings, and I find it frankly disingenuous for the UCP to continue to raise this bill and the issues surrounding this bill as some negative.

Frankly, let's just talk through some of the history of how it is we got to this point here on December 4, 2018. Almost exactly two years ago the government created an all-party panel, ostensibly, but the terms of reference were incredibly narrow, so myself, the leader at the time of the Wildrose Party, the then interim leader of the PC Party, and the leader of the Liberal Party at the time held a news conference in the basement of this building, and we said: we will not participate in this panel unless the government changes the terms of reference. So the government changed the terms of reference, and we participated in the panel. That's a good thing. That's a government being responsive to what the opposition says. That's what we should want.

Then as we went through the process, we found: "You know what? With the timeline that has been created for this bill under the leadership then of a new minister, the current minister, we just simply haven't got enough time to dig into this thing. It's a big, big, big challenge." So in response to the request from the committee the minister said: okay; we'll extend the timeline.

Then we found that, you know, it doesn't make any sense for us, as we dig deeper into this issue of indigenous kids in care – well, here we are sitting in almost literally an ivory tower in Edmonton, the representation of a lot of very tragic and shameful history in this province, and expecting indigenous people to travel here and tell us their stories and then wondering: why is it that we're not getting a representative sample of what actually happened? Well, that's because we needed to go visit and travel to where people live, so to the minister's credit she said: okay; let's find a way to do that. So we travelled on-reserve in treaty areas 6, 7, and 8. We engaged with Métis people as a direct result and as a response to what the opposition and the public and stakeholders had asked for.

As part of that process we discovered: you know, we really probably need more indigenous representation on this child intervention panel. What government, even this government, so often, far too often does is to say: "No, no. This is the way it's going to be. The answer we get depends on the question we ask, so we're going to form it in a way that gives us an answer that we want." Instead, the government asked an open-ended question and said: how are we going to fix what has been broken for so very long, what has been the subject of so many panels and so many reports, all of them thoughtful, all of them well intended?

All of those reports, in varying degrees, have ended up as a report on a shelf, no meaningful action, and nothing significant has changed over time. One of the big pieces of feedback we received through the process is that we needed more indigenous representation. So what did the minister do? She added Tyler White to the panel, added more expert representation.

The opposition likes to raise the Serenity case as a failing of this process. Well, there are some very legitimate reasons why that case could not be fully explored by the committee, primarily because it was before the courts and remains so. The government is legally prevented from raising that issue in any sort of fulsome way, but they still did offer an in camera review to Members of the Legislative Assembly who were part of that panel to provide whatever information they were legally able to provide as an update of the Serenity case itself.

The Serenity case is incredibly tragic – deeply, deeply tragic – and my heart breaks every time I think about that little girl, every time I think about her family, her mother, and I know that the minister feels the same way. It is not acceptable that that happened. We can never know if this bill that we're debating here means that that can never happen again. We can't know that. But I think that what I can say with some certainty is that this bill moves us closer to a place where the terrible situation that Serenity found herself in is less likely to happen.

When dealing with child intervention and the results of decades, more than a century of colonialism, dealing with poverty, with addiction, with the many, many, many complex issues that we're dealing with as it relates, in particular, to indigenous children but not just indigenous kids, we can never have a hundred per cent certainty. For those of us in opposition to somehow expect the government to be perfect on this file is not realistic.

At the same time we should never let up in holding the government accountable. I feel that through this panel process, through the Legislative Assembly we have done that. Frankly, I would like to see far more from this government that looks like the child intervention panel, far more legislation that is the result of a long and thoughtful process, far more times when the government actually accepts amendments from the opposition that seek to replicate that consultation process, just exactly like the government has done in this case.

I am not a New Democrat; I never will be. I don't agree with this government on a lot of things. But on this thing, on this particular bill, it is a vast improvement and a step on the road – it is not an end in itself but is a step on the road – to making things better for kids in care, to preventing children from coming into care in the first place, and for those kids who are already in care, to re-establishing family connection and becoming more connected with their culture, to genuine healing.

It's not perfect. It never will be perfect, Madam Chair. But this bill makes things much better for kids today. It will make things better for kids in the future, and I think it's important that this House recognizes that and recognizes the government for the work they did to get us here.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak?
Calgary-Hays.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I listened to that little bit with great interest. It's interesting to hear a member stand up and say, "I won't be an apologist for the government," and then immediately become an apologist for the government, which is what he did. Then he said, "We'll never let up on holding the government to account," after which point he immediately stopped holding the government to account. It was actually kind of sad for me to watch. We should all have been sad to watch and hear the performance that just went on here.

You know what? We've tried on this side to be fair, but the hon. member has an interesting recollection of some of the events. I've said, Madam Chair, that I believe that the government members and

all members, including the one that just spoke, tried during the panel to be nonpartisan when we went through this thing, and I stand by that because I really think that was the way it was. But what the member failed to say is that the terms of reference that we were stuck with – and he's right; we had a media conference. We went and talked to the world and said that we weren't happy with the government's terms of reference, and we changed them.

But the hon. member forgot to mention just now that we still weren't happy with them, and we actually had to make a decision: do we actually not be involved in an imperfect process, or do we stick with an imperfect process because it's a little bit better? We decided, for the sake of children in Alberta and the memory of Serenity and other kids, that we would do that. He makes it sound like the terms of reference were made perfect by the government. They weren't. They were barely workable, but we worked with them anyways because the issue was important enough.

He also forgot to mention some of the other shortfalls. We tried to talk to staff, and I believe they were either afraid to talk or told not to talk. I can never know that for sure. But it was pretty obvious to us that some of the staff could have actually shed light on a lot more of what goes on within the system. I had the feeling that they wanted to talk, but they weren't able to.

To make this sound like the member just did now, like everything is perfect – it isn't. The government didn't even say that it's perfect. They said that it's report 1 of 3. Good for them for saying that out loud. I commend them for that. But for the member that just stood up to try to paint this as some perfect process when we didn't get to talk about Serenity, when we didn't get to deal with the privacy issues is pretty disingenuous. He really is acting as an apologist for the government and has stopped holding the government to account.

The Chair: Any further questions, comments, or amendments? The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

Larivee: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do just want to take a moment to reiterate what is in this bill as opposed to a lot of conversation about the process of the panel.

Madam Chair, thank you for your role in it as well, and thank you very much to the Member for Calgary-Elbow for participating in that process in the way that it was intended and really contributing throughout.

4:30

You know, Madam Chair, this bill is giving First Nations standing in court in terms of their kids, something that they have been crying for.

It also deals with the fact that at this time, children who are in care – when a person is applying for private guardianship, there are two separate and possible, concurrent and conflicting processes that can happen. One of them, at this point, does not include a mandatory home study or a mandatory cultural plan, something that again our indigenous friends have cried long and hard for change on.

It's putting important and essential guiding principles in place that will ensure that all caseworkers and the courts, whenever they're making important decisions about children who are in care, are making them based on what is most important, and that is safety, embedding safety throughout the act as well as ensuring that they have that connection to family and community, that we have the voice of the child reflected in those decisions. As well, it also includes a number of matters to be considered, you know, that will ensure again that it's not just cherry-picking a few items to make

some decisions but looking at a comprehensive understanding as we make any decision about children who are in care.

Madam Chair, this is important work. This is important work that's based on the action plan. Cindy Blackstock, one of my own personal heroes – and it was my privilege to work with her through the ministerial panel – said that, you know, if we actually put it into action, it's going to be life changing. This is putting it into action. The Child and Youth Advocate for the province said virtually the same thing as Cindy Blackstock and, again, looking at the bill, couldn't believe that we were actually taking the kind of aggressive progressive action to make the real change that needs to happen with the child intervention system.

You know, Madam Chair, I have to say that I am disappointed with the Official Opposition's choice on that. This is not about the panel and whether they were happy with the panel process or not. This is about the fact that we are making real change on behalf of the child intervention system, taking the steps forward that should have been taken 40 years ago. I for one am incredibly proud of this bill and cannot wait to be able to vote on it.

With that, I will now be quiet, but thank you for allowing me to make those remarks.

The Chair: Any other questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The remaining clauses of Bill 22 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

Bill 23

An Act to Renew Local Democracy in Alberta

The Chair: Any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you. It's a pleasure to rise today and speak to the bill, Bill 23, An Act to Renew Local Democracy in Alberta. As you know, Madam Chair, I find some irony in the name, particularly given that it implies that local democracy is in some sort of massive need of a saviour in the form of the minister riding in on his white horse to save local democracy and to renew it.

Mr. Nixon: With his reindeer and his beard.

Mr. Cooper: Yes. In a very Santa Claus kind of way.

Yet at the same time it does the exact – maybe not the exact opposite. It has many consequences that don't in fact renew local democracy in Alberta and does a number of things that will actually create challenges to local democracy being renewed. So I'd like to propose a number of amendments this evening. I know that my colleague the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs, who is a thoughtful, well-rounded individual, will consider these amendments in the fullness of their completeness and support many of them.

In the name of time I will move the amendment, and then I will continue at your command.

The Chair: This will be amendment A4.

Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you. Madam Chair, the purpose of A4 is to create some similarities in the rules between making political contributions municipally that you can provincially. What the minister has done in this particular piece of legislation is that he's defined the campaign period as January 1 to December 31 of an election year. Donors are allowed to donate up to a maximum of \$4,000 in aggregate for a campaign period. What that does is that it limits an individual's ability to donate to a municipal candidate at any other time than in the year of an election.

Let me be very clear that we on this side of the House have supported donation limits at some length. You know, Madam Chair, that this government has introduced now seven pieces of electoral reform legislation, and on many occasions the Official Opposition has supported those.

Now I'm going to recommend to my colleagues that they join me in voting against this piece of legislation because I believe the unintended consequences of the legislation are actually greater than the good that it's going to include.

One of those things that I'm certain that we're going to hear from the minister in his response: doing this, allowing candidates to only receive donations inside an election year, actually is going to benefit new people to the table, and it will harm incumbents. But those that I have spoken to that are nonincumbents – and I know the minister has done, you know, every single piece of consultation that one could ever imagine, although he did have to amend his own piece of legislation because he didn't consult on that one little piece or whatever the case was. The folks who are the nonincumbents that I have spoken to actually firmly believe that this is going to create a greater incumbent advantage: to limit their ability to spend any money outside of a campaign period – correction: \$2,000, which is virtually nothing – and to not raise money outside of a campaign period.

This amendment: what it does is that it actually extends the campaign period so that individuals could donate to those campaigns on a year-over-year basis. As you know, Madam Chair, an Albertan can donate \$4,000 to your campaign in the north, or they can donate \$4,000 to any political party of their choosing, or they can break that up, or they can also donate \$4,000 in the municipal field of politics. They can do that year over year over year over year provincially, but municipally they can only do it one time in the year of the election.

4:40

That doesn't make such an impact in communities like Carstairs or Olds or Didsbury or Carbon or Acme or Linden, all of the small communities across our province, but in areas like Red Deer, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, particularly those areas where candidates don't represent a ward system but they run in the city and the top six across the line are elected, you know, a simple mail-out to the whole city can cost a significant amount of money.

The other challenge in some of the large municipalities: for example, if you were looking to take on the incumbent mayor of Edmonton in the form of Mr. Iveson and you wanted to start doing some market research, some polling, some focus grouping, these sorts of things, the way that this legislation will likely be passed would prevent a nonincumbent from doing that. I firmly believe that we're going to see PACs or political parties engaging at the municipal level as an end around to this particular problem that the government is now creating, that is limiting people's ability to donate to a municipal politician in the previous years leading up to an election and only allowing them to do it in the year of the election.

I also question the constitutionality of such a piece of legislation, that essentially limits an individual's ability to engage in the

political process at the municipal level outside of the year of an election, which is exactly what the minister has done.

I think that this particular amendment allows transparency. It allows openness. It also creates similarity in the rules between the municipal government and provincial government. I think that it's common sense.

I would never speak on behalf of the minister, but I can assure you that I am most likely to be disappointed by him in the fact that, you know, I can only imagine that he's going to say, "No, no; the member from the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills couldn't be more wrong" and that he's actually going to help nonincumbents and that he's going to help get big money out of politics and all of these talking points that they like to deliver. But just like so many other pieces of legislation that this government has passed, they've either had to come back and fix it, or they've created all sorts of problems inside the process.

So I strongly encourage all members of the Assembly. If you believe that municipal politicians are equally as honest and should be treated as equals to provincial politicians, then they should have similar or the same donation rules and donation limits. We should support this amendment, which does just that.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the member for his amendment and for his comments. You know, I appreciate where he's coming from. I'll just make a few comments here. He won't be happy at the end of it, but I'm sure he'll get over it pretty quickly.

When we talk about who we consulted with and who we went out and spoke to, there were over 1,500 responses to our survey, overwhelmingly in favour of getting big money out of politics. I will give a list of some of the people that we consulted with so that he has an understanding: AUMA, RMA, city of Edmonton, city of Calgary, Local Government Administration Association, Alberta Rural Municipal Administrators Association, Alberta Municipal Clerks Association, the Association of Summer Villages of Alberta, Alberta School Boards Association, and quite a few more.

What I will say is that there are differences with provincial and municipal elections. What we have found is that when we did an analysis of who is raising funds outside of that one-year campaign period, it was overwhelmingly incumbents, so it gives them the advantage. They already have the advantage of being there, their name, their face. They're already in the public. That's great for them, of course, but we know that that will benefit them to raise this money. If we extend it outside this one-year campaign period, it will overwhelmingly benefit them.

So this is one way, out of a multitude of ways through this legislation, that we are trying to level the playing field, and we heard this loud and clear. These are not things that I just magically thought up. These are things we went out and consulted on and that we heard directly from the people out there that they wanted.

Unfortunately – I know the member was hoping differently – I will have to say that I do not support this amendment, but I do thank him for bringing it forward.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[Motion on amendment A4 lost]

The Chair: Any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to the bill? Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Madam Chair. After this amendment I will cede to my colleague from way down the bench there.

I would like to move another amendment, that is equally as amazing. I'll just make sure I get the copies here for you. This is a good one. The last one was good, too, but the minister doesn't agree.

The Chair: This will be known as amendment A5.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that Bill 23, An Act to Renew Local Democracy in Alberta, be amended in section 56 in the proposed section 162(1)(e)(i) by striking out "May 1" and substituting "January 1." Again, this comes to a point of creating continuity, and the minister has spoken at some length about his desire to create continuity. In fact, just last week we had the ability to work together, and you know that teamwork makes the dream work. We passed an amendment because we needed to change something from "election expenses" to "campaign expenses." This particular amendment does similar sorts of things in creating the same rules for third-party groups or other groups as for those who would like to contribute to a campaign.

This amendment amends section 56 in the proposed section by extending the period in which campaign expense limits are placed on third-party advertisers to align with the same period as for the candidates. The amendment would move the start date of the campaign expense limit from May 1 to January 1, which is when the expense limit is proposed for candidates. This amendment is simply about levelling the playing field and fairness. It's a common-sense, no-brainer amendment. The same rules should apply for everyone, both third parties as well as the candidates. Currently the candidate campaign period begins January 1, and for the third-party advertisers or additional groups – like we spoke at some length about last week, with the minister creating one set of rules for certain organizations and another set for others – this particular amendment would make the dates the same, being January 1.

4:50

The current bill provides a huge advantage for third-party advertisers over candidates as their campaign period wouldn't begin until May. As such, candidates are already limited to a \$2,000 spending limit outside of a campaign period while third-party advertisers have absolutely no limits on what they can spend. On top of that, their campaign expense limit doesn't begin to start counting until May. As such, the third-party advertiser could be spending at some length during the months of January, February, March, April, and May, and we've already heard that the last amendment that this government defeated is quite likely to lead to more third-party advertisers at the municipal level.

Given that the third-party advertisers can actively campaign for or against a candidate, it seems totally unfair, the result of this particular section. I hope that this was a small oversight since during the tech briefing the minister's staff originally stated that third-party advertisers' expense limit would be the same as for candidates. However, inside the legislation they have not been treated the same. My proposal in this amendment would be that we treat both organizations the same.

I encourage the minister to do the right thing and make this small adjustment.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is an incredibly interesting bill. I don't know why nobody else wants to speak to it, but of course I'll go back and forth with the member.

I do appreciate the intent of this amendment – of course I do – to reduce the risk of third-party influence in local election campaigns. The amendment to this act does aim to increase transparency and accountability among third-party advertisers while striking a balance with the right to free speech. Provincially restrictions on third-party spending are only in effect for between four to six months leading up to the election. The proposed LAEA timeline would enact restrictions for five and a half months, lining up with the time frame used provincially and set out in the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act.

Unfortunately, I have to recommend that all members not support this amendment.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? Seeing none, I'll call the question.

[Motion on amendment A5 lost]

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

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to introduce an amendment as well this afternoon.

The Chair: This will be known as amendment A6.

Go ahead, hon. member.

Ms McPherson: Thank you. I'd like to move that Bill 23, An Act to Renew Local Democracy in Alberta, be amended in section 33 as follows:

- (a) by adding the following after clause (a):
 - (a.1) in subsection (4) by adding "or relative" after "the elector's friend";
- (b) in clause (c), in the proposed section 78(5), by adding "or relative" after "accompanied by a friend."

I believe this is simply an oversight in drafting this bill, and I'll provide a little bit of background.

The current Local Authorities Election Act states in section 78(3):

The deputy, if requested by an elector described in subsection (1) who is accompanied by a friend or relative who is at least 18 years of age, shall permit that friend or relative, on making the prescribed statement, to accompany the elector into a voting compartment for the purpose of marking the elector's ballot and the ballot when marked shall be delivered by the elector or the friend or relative to the deputy to be deposited in the ballot box.

However, in section 78(4) of the LAEA it refers to an elector's friend only and not to their relative.

The deputy shall not permit an elector to vote under subsection (3) until the elector and the elector's friend have made the prescribed statements.

The bill before us proposes to make a small change to 78(5) of the LAEA using the following language:

If an elector who is blind is not accompanied by a friend into a voting compartment under subsection (3) and the municipality has passed a bylaw setting out the blind elector template in accordance with subsection (4.1), the deputy must

- (a) provide the elector with a blind elector template, and
- (b) instruct the elector in its use.

The amendment I'm proposing is to make references to "friend" in subsections 78(4) and 78(5) consistent with references to "friend or relative" in subsection 78(3).

We, I think, intend to have electors who need assistance be able to request the help of a friend or relative under subsection (3). Mechanically, if an incapacitated elector chooses to bring a relative to help them vote instead of bringing a friend, we want the elector's relative to be able to make the declaration under subsection (4).

With the act's current wording, only an elector's friend could make the statement.

Similarly, the bill proposes that an election official must provide information to a blind elector about how to use the voting device if the blind elector is not accompanied by a friend, but it is silent about when a blind elector is not accompanied by a relative. This amendment would make sure that a blind elector would still receive instructions on how to use the voting device if they are not accompanied by a relative.

I assume that this is simply an error of omission, and I hope that everyone in the House supports this amendment to make voting work better for all Albertans.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill bringing this amendment forward. A goal of this legislation is to remove barriers for Albertans to enable further participation in our elections and democracy. Voting is a democratic right in this country, and we want to ensure that we make it as accessible as possible. This proposed amendment helps to ensure consistency throughout the section where it references "friend" to also include "relative" and does not change the intent of the legislation or this particular section.

On that basis, I am prepared to support this amendment, and I encourage all other members to support it as well. I thank the member for bringing it forward.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? Seeing none, I'll call the vote.

[Motion on amendment A6 carried]

The Chair: Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I'm glad that we provided that clarity, because very few of my relatives are also my friends. I'm just kidding. Love you, Mom. I'm pretty certain that if I wasn't wearing this amazing Christmas tie, I would have worked my way off all of my relatives' Christmas lists and card lists, but since I am wearing this awesome tie, I'll be safe.

I would like to propose another amendment this evening. I hope that I will have the success that we have just seen previously. I'll wait for your instructions.

The Chair: This will be known as amendment A7.

Go ahead.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you. Madam Chair, I rise to speak to amendment A7. This particular amendment provides some clarity around who, when, why, and how one can vouch for an elector. I think that it is very important that the integrity of our elections is upheld. I want to reiterate, as I've said in the House on numerous occasions, that most people want to follow all election laws and have no desire to do an end around, usurp, or work against the democratic process.

Having said that – and I know it's hard to believe, Madam Chair – there are some people who don't have the same respect for the electoral laws as others. Sometimes people make bad choices with respect to elections. Sometimes they even do things that are untoward that may or may not get them removed from political organizations. So we can ascertain from that that it's possible that people won't do the right thing on election day.

5:00

In Bill 23 there is no certainty around ensuring that that happens with respect to vouching for an individual who is not on a voters list or may or may not have ID or may or may not have a residence, all sorts of scenarios like this. I know that I heard on some radio interviews that the minister spoke at some length about how he would be ensuring that all polling stations had voters lists. I know that a particular radio host on QR77 asked that particular question, about whether or not voting stations would have voters lists, and the minister assured us although that's not included in any piece of this legislation. So I have some concerns about that, and I hope that he can provide some clarity around that voters list.

But let's just say that there was no voters list and that someone who wanted to vote didn't have any of the appropriate ID or that sort of thing. I also think that it's reasonable that those people can still vote if they have someone who can vouch for them to prove their identity. This particular amendment will create some limits on the ability of individuals to do that. As such, they couldn't vouch for a whole group of people, like tens and tens and tens or hundreds or whatever, I suppose, busloads, or however they arrive.

In the current legislation it says that a person can vouch for a person, but it doesn't create any limit on the number of times they can do that or the number of polling stations they can do that in. This particular amendment would limit the number to three people. So you could vote, and you could also vouch for three other individuals.

I will be the first to admit that three was selected as a number that seemed reasonable, that wasn't over the top but also would allow an individual who, you know – like, let's say that I was taking my grandma and grandpa to the polls and they forgot their wallets. I'm not suggesting that we make vouching so restrictive that I couldn't bring my grandma and grandpa, two people, to the polls and still have them vote but not so wide open that you could vouch for literally a bus full of people. We selected three because it seemed like a reasonable number, not too big, not too small. That is how we arrived at that point.

I think it's important, though, that we provide some checks and balances in what some would say is the most important process that the public engages in, the election of those who represent us. I think that this is important.

I know the minister has liked to pick and choose when he creates certainty and similarities at the provincial level and the municipal level, and he hasn't applied that same rule all across this piece of legislation. So my sense is that he'll rise and say: listen, we don't have any checks and balances at the provincial level. My words; not his. He might use some slightly different words but essentially say that, you know, you can vouch for as many people as you want provincially and that we shouldn't be doing things to restrict access to democracy and a number of other points. But I would also submit that when we made changes to previous pieces of legislation, we had suggested that this vouching challenge was also an issue then, and it wasn't adhered to. I would say that now would be a great time to do that, to adhere to a good, common-sense, balanced approach that doesn't say no one, that doesn't say just one person but provides you some flexibility, even a family of individuals: mom, dad, or aging parents, and another relative, an uncle or whatever, who lives at the same house.

I think that this makes good, solid sense. I would encourage all members of the Assembly to go ahead and support this amendment as I think that protecting our democratic institution and elections is exactly what we need to do. It would be my strong recommendation

that the minister heed the advice of the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills and support this amendment.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It is true that these elections that we do with municipalities, irrigation districts, schools, Métis settlements are very complex, so there are subtle differences here and there between provincial and municipal elections. As I've said before, this bill is about increasing transparency and aligning municipal campaign rules with those that currently govern provincial elections as much as possible. This proposed amendment would result in different rules between municipal and provincial elections, and these current provisions align with the provincial Election Act.

As in the Election Act we will be clear that a person may only vouch for another person if that first person has the appropriate identification. In other words, a person who has been vouched for may not then vouch for another person. The Election Act does not place any restriction on the number of persons someone may vouch for, and to our knowledge this has not created any significant problems in provincial elections since the turn of the century. In fact, these particular rules have been in place since 2000. We've also added teeth to the legislation, which has empowered the Election Commissioner to investigate any and all complaints brought forward.

With that, I won't be supporting this amendment.

The Chair: Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have another amendment I'd like to move this afternoon.

The Chair: We're still on amendment A7.

Ms McPherson: Oh. I'm so sorry. It's been a long sitting.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A7?

Seeing none, we'll call the vote.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A7 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:08 p.m.]

[Five minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

For the motion:

Cooper	Fraser	Stier
Dreeshen	McIver	Taylor
Drysdale	McPherson	

Against the motion:

Anderson, S.	Horne	Nielsen
Babcock	Jansen	Payne
Carlier	Kazim	Phillips
Carson	Kleinsteuber	Renaud
Connolly	Larivee	Rosendahl
Coolahan	Littlewood	Sabir
Cortes-Vargas	Malkinson	Schmidt
Drever	Mason	Schreiner
Eggen	McCuaig-Boyd	Sucha
Fitzpatrick	McKittrick	Turner
Ganley	Miller	Westhead
Hinkley	Miranda	Woppard
Hoffman		

Totals: For – 8 Against – 37

[Motion on amendment A7 lost]

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

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Madam Chair. Obviously, I need to meditate more so I can be more present. I do have another amendment I would like to introduce.

The Chair: This is amendment A8.

Ms McPherson: I'd like to move that Bill 23, An Act to Renew Local Democracy in Alberta, be amended in section 51 in the proposed section 147.22 (a) in subsection (3), by adding "Subject to subsection (4)," before "Subsections (1) and (2) do not apply" and (b) by adding the following after subsection (3):

- (4) Subject to subsection (5), an elected authority may, by passage of a bylaw on or before June 30 of the year following the year in which a general election occurs, adjust the amounts specified in subsection (3) to which subsections (1) and (2) do not apply for
 - (a) that local jurisdiction, or
 - (b) one or more wards in that local jurisdiction.
- (5) An elected authority in adjusting the amounts specified in subsection (3) may consider only
 - (a) the number of electors in that local jurisdiction or its wards, and
 - (c) the geographic size of that local jurisdiction or its wards.
- (6) A bylaw made under subsection (4) may not increase either amount specified in subsection (3) to an amount greater than \$7500.

This amendment makes candidacy more accessible to new participants by addressing the \$2,000 precampaign fundraising and spending limit proposed in the bill for nonincumbents. This amendment would allow local election authorities to set precampaign fundraising and spending limits according to local conditions if they do not find that the default \$2,000 limit is appropriate for their circumstances. On the one hand, incumbents in large cities have a huge advantage in using public resources to communicate with electors, which can be worth far more than \$2,000. On the other hand, some local positions in remote areas struggle to attract any attention or candidates, so the \$2,000 limit may be too high. We also need to consider how many electors must be reached and how they're distributed in a local jurisdiction or ward. Travelling around a large municipality has different costs than canvassing apartments.

The amendment would enable an elected authority to set the precampaign spending limit well in advance of future elections so that the limit is known to challengers ahead of time. Practically speaking, in the absence of a sensible precampaign limit, folks interested in becoming candidates might choose to be really active in their own communities on a particular issue, to become well known that way. Meanwhile they're raising and spending unlimited funds to get attention and collect information about potential voters, and all they have to do is declare their candidacy at the last minute in order to avoid this \$2,000 precampaign limit.

5:20

This amendment was born of conversations with recently elected municipal officials who expressed concerns about the ability of people who are not incumbents to be able to be elected. It was identified that the \$2,000 limit really was a problem. It would prevent people from being encouraged to put their names forward. Democracy, you know, dictates that positions should be available

to people to take a chance, to put their name forward. Based on that, I would encourage all members of the Assembly to support this amendment.

Thanks.

The Chair: The hon. minister.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Madam Chair. Although I understand the intent of this proposed amendment, unfortunately I cannot support it. We've given this particular section a lot of thought and consideration, and we feel that this is an adequate amount to allow individuals to take part in precampaign activities.

I'd like to remind all members that one of the key intentions of Bill 23 is to reduce the impact of big money in the local election process and make running for office more accessible to those without deep pockets. Increasing the amount of money that can be spent in the years leading up to the campaign period isn't consistent with that objective. I would also point out that increasing the amount that can be spent prior to the official campaign period generally tends to create a significant advantage for incumbents whereas our intent is to create a more level playing field for all candidates.

I also worry that this proposed amendment will create greater confusion across the province and even within individual communities because not only could each municipality and school board have the potential to have different limits, but those amounts could vary between individual wards within local jurisdictions, and that would make transparency and clarity for local electors much more difficult to achieve.

For all those reasons, I am not able to support this amendment.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A8?

Hearing none, I will call a vote.

[Motion on amendment A8 lost]

The Chair: Any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill?

Mr. Cooper: Well, it truly is the most wonderful time of the year, and it is a pleasure to rise at such a time as this to move an amendment. I will provide it to the page and await further instructions.

The Chair: This is amendment A9.

Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you. Well, Madam Chair, what we have seen here this evening and over the last week is this minister, you know, not materially accepting changes to his legislation. I say "materially" because we did accept an amendment today which basically defined a friend as a relative or a relative as friend, and we did find in the last week that the minister meant to call something a campaign expense, and he called it an election expense, an election expense a campaign expense. So we fixed some grammar in his legislation.

Broadly, the minister has introduced a piece of legislation in the House called An Act to Renew Local Democracy in Alberta. It is a bold title. It is a broad, self-congratulatory title where he essentially implies that the legislation, in fact, will do just that, renew local democracy, as if it was broken.

The reality is that the consequences of this bill are going to not do what he says. In fact, in many cases I believe it's going to do the opposite. I thought that what I would do is do the minister a favour and allow him the opportunity to actually change the name of the

legislation so that in a period of time, certainly after the next election – you know, there's a good possibility that one of us will remain in this House, and in all fairness we're going to miss him. But I think that as a legacy, if you will, of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, when he looks back and sees that the changes he has made don't renew local democracy and do the opposite, create third-party advertisers, engage political parties in the municipal process . . .

Mr. McIver: Put a lot more dark money in.

Mr. Cooper: Put more dark money in, less transparency as a result of his legislation.

I think that he will want to not bear the burden of implying that he was going to renew local democracy but failed at that. As such, the local authorities election amendment act, 2018, would be a much more appropriate title for such a piece of legislation as this. He still gets to accomplish everything he wants, but we depoliticize the title and also create an opportunity in the future, when the results aren't as he'd hoped they would be, that the title will just reflect what we actually did, which was amend an already existing piece of legislation in the Local Authorities Election Act, and refer to the year.

You know, frankly, so many pieces of legislation should be titled such that we are amending legislation that already exists, but we've seen time and time again – and not just this minister. I don't mean to pick on him specifically. I would never want to do that for obvious reasons. But time and time again the government continues to overpoliticize the names of legislation. They overpoliticize so much about the process.

This would accurately communicate what we are doing here, what we did do. It's an easy change. It doesn't change anything to the mechanics of the legislation but names it more appropriately. I strongly recommend that all members of the Assembly vote in favour of this amendment.

Mr. Shepherd: Madam Chair, though I recognize given some of the events today that this may be a fraught request, I just wanted to see if I might be able to get unanimous consent of the House for what I assure them would be an extremely brief introduction.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests (reversion)

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the House some constituents of mine who are here for the Legislature light-up ceremony: Heather MacKenzie, who is a local community advocate, consultant, and a former municipal and federal candidate; her husband, Justin; and her two children Grace and Jaycen who join us here today. Please give them the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Bill 23 An Act to Renew Local Democracy in Alberta (continued)

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A9?

Mr. McIver: No. I just wanted to thank the hon. member for making that short, and perhaps he could give lessons to some of his teammates.

The Chair: Any further speakers on amendment A9? The hon. minister.

5:30

Mr. S. Anderson: Yes. I will try to be brief on this, Madam Chair. Thank you to the member for his comments and for his humble way of talking about this House. I really appreciate it over there. I'm not sure why he thinks the name of this is highly politicized. I mean, we didn't call it making democracy great again, or anything. We could have made it highly political. We chose not to.

Madam Chair, I appreciate all the comments in here and the commentary on this bill. I heard loud and clear. I've had many, many messages from before the last municipal election and since about what the public has seen and what they want to see in this province. It's accountability. It's transparency. It's people getting into politics for the right reasons. It's people getting in there to help one another, to help their communities, and to push their communities forward. We think that this bill is a huge step towards that.

The member likes to say that I say that everything is perfect. Well, nothing is perfect, Madam Chair. I'm sure that in the future there might have to be changes, but with the amount of consultation we've done and the people we've spoken to, we feel that this is a good piece of legislation. I am very proud of the people that have worked on it. My staff has been incredible.

I will not be supporting this amendment today.

The Chair: Any other speakers to amendment A9?

Seeing none, I'll call the vote.

[Motion on amendment A9 lost]

The Chair: We're back on Bill 23. Are there any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill?

Hearing none, are you ready for the question?

[The remaining clauses of Bill 23 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would move that the committee now rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bills with some amendments: Bill 22, Bill 23. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official record of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed? So ordered.

Government Bills and Orders
Third Reading
(continued)

Bill 31
Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2018

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the Government House Leader I would like to move third reading of Bill 31, the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2018.

The Deputy Speaker: Does anyone wish to speak to this bill?
Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[Motion carried; Bill 31 read a third time]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Larivee: Thank you, Madam Speaker. At this time I would like to notify the House that pursuant to Government Motion 36 no evening sitting will take place and the House shall adjourn until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Deputy Government House Leader, go ahead.

Larivee: Okay. I'd like to move that we adjourn.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:35 p.m.]

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