



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday evening, July 28, 2020

Day 52

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature

Second Session

Cooper, Hon. Nathan M., Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP), Speaker
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UCP), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Milliken, Nicholas, Calgary-Currie (UCP), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Allard, Tracy L., Grande Prairie (UCP)
Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UCP)
Armstrong-Homeniuk, Jackie,
Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UCP)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Bilous, Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)
Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UCP)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (NDP)
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)
Dreeshen, Hon. Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)
Eggen, David, Edmonton-North West (NDP),
Official Opposition Whip
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP),
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Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)
Fir, Hon. Tanya, Calgary-Peigan (UCP)
Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
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Glasgo, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Glubish, Hon. Nate, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UCP)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche (UCP)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UCP)
Hanson, David B., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UCP)
Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)
Horner, Nate S., Drumheller-Stettler (UCP)
Hunter, Hon. Grant R., Taber-Warner (UCP)
Irwin, Janis, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP),
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Issik, Whitney, Calgary-Glenmore (UCP)
Jones, Matt, Calgary-South East (UCP)
Kenney, Hon. Jason, PC, Calgary-Lougheed (UCP),
Premier
LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, Red Deer-North (UCP)
Loewen, Todd, Central Peace-Notley (UCP)
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UCP)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UCP)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Luan, Hon. Jason, Calgary-Foothills (UCP)
Madu, Hon. Kaycee, QC, Edmonton-South West (UCP)
McIver, Hon. Ric, Calgary-Hays (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader

Nally, Hon. Dale, Morinville-St. Albert (UCP)
Deputy Government House Leader
Neudorf, Nathan T., Lethbridge-East (UCP)
Nicolaidis, Hon. Demetrios, Calgary-Bow (UCP)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Nixon, Hon. Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre
(UCP), Government House Leader
Nixon, Jeremy P., Calgary-Klein (UCP)
Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),
Leader of the Official Opposition
Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (UCP)
Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
Panda, Hon. Prasad, Calgary-Edgemont (UCP)
Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Pon, Hon. Josephine, Calgary-Beddington (UCP)
Rehn, Pat, Lesser Slave Lake (UCP)
Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UCP)
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Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UCP)
Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UCP)
Sabir, Irfan, Calgary-McCall (NDP)
Savage, Hon. Sonya, Calgary-North West (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Sawhney, Hon. Rajan, Calgary-North East (UCP)
Schmidt, Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)
Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UCP),
Deputy Government Whip
Schulz, Hon. Rebecca, Calgary-Shaw (UCP)
Schweitzer, Hon. Doug, QC, Calgary-Elbow (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Shandro, Hon. Tyler, QC, Calgary-Acadia (UCP)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Sigurdson, Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)
Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UCP)
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UCP)
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP)
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UCP)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP),
Official Opposition House Leader
Toews, Hon. Travis, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UCP)
Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UCP)
Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UCP)
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UCP)
Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UCP)
Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UCP)
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UCP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)
Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

Party standings:

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Pancholi
Rutherford
Sigurdson, R.J.
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Lovely
Nixon, Jeremy
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Sweet
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Deol
Ganley
Goehring
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Neudorf
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Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Schow

Glasgo
Horner
Irwin
Neudorf
Nielsen
Nixon, Jeremy
Pancholi
Sigurdson, L.
Sigurdson, R.J.

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Lovely
Loyola
Rehn
Reid
Renaud
Turton
Yao

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Ms Phillips
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Dach
Guthrie
Hoffman
Reid
Renaud
Rosin
Rowswell
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Toor

Select Special Public Health Act Review Committee

Chair: Mr. Milliken
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Gray
Hoffman
Long
Lovely
Neudorf
Reid
Rowswell
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Dach
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Rehn
Rosin
Sabir
Singh
Smith
Yaseen

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, good evening. Nice to see all of you. Please be seated.

Government Motions

Time Allocation on Bill 30

33. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in Committee of the Whole, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. We, of course, are at a stage now where we have to make a decision on how to be able to continue with the House moving forward. I believe it's become clear that the opposition is intentionally trying to delay legislation through the Assembly, which is fine when they have something productive to do on that legislation, but as we saw last night, they spent 6.5 hours of debate last night on this bill alone, and they only managed to introduce two amendments. Despite telling the media that they have dozens of amendments, they only managed to get two amendments on the floor of the Assembly in 6.5 hours.

It's pretty clear they're not serious about doing their role inside this Chamber at all, Madam Speaker, so hopefully, by moving to a time allocation motion, we can encourage the opposition to get on with the work of Albertans inside this Chamber and bring forward their amendments if they really do have them. If not, an hour after we return to Committee of the Whole, we will be able to move on with third reading of this important piece of legislation.

The Deputy Speaker: The opposition has up to five minutes for comments. The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I don't think I need to say it, but obviously we object very strongly to this particular motion. We do in fact have many, many amendments, amendments which we were prepared to bring forward, but as the Government House Leader may recall, they brought forward an amendment that the opposition had no notice on. We had to figure out how to deal with that amendment and how to alter some of our amendments to become subamendments. That was a lot of work. It was a lot of work on the part of Parliamentary Counsel. So I think the suggestion by the hon. Government House Leader that it is our intention to do nothing more than delay is absolutely false. We do have a number of amendments to bring forward on these bills.

I think it's worth considering that the issue isn't the number of hours of debate but the time that a bill is before the House because as opposition one of our fundamental duties is to communicate to the public and to communicate with stakeholders. Before we tend to form a position, we like to go out and talk to people and get their opinions and form an informed opinion about those bills. We have seen a remarkable amount of legislation come forward, some bills upwards of 75 pages. We need time to digest them, to consult with stakeholders, and to talk to people out there in the world about how they are impacted by it. People out there who are impacted need

time to raise their voices and to have a say because that is how democracy works.

This, Madam Speaker, is nothing more than an attempt to short-circuit that democratic process. The government doesn't want to talk about these bills because they're not good bills. This bill, in particular, is a bill that has been brought forward intentionally to Americanize our health care system. They know that Albertans are upset about it, so they don't want to talk about it anymore. It has absolutely nothing to do with any heel dragging on anyone's part. It has to do with the fact that they don't want to talk about their legislation. I mean, if you're proud of your work, normally you don't try to hide it. That's all I have to say about that.

Madam Speaker, I think this is a huge concern. I think Albertans should be concerned, not just about the substance of the bill but about the fact that these moves have been made to cut off debate in advance of amendments being able to come forward, amendments that have come from people out there in the public, from people who are experts in health, in health law, in health policy, in all sorts of different areas, who deserve to be able to communicate with their MLAs and to bring forward their ideas on how to improve something that the government is doing. That's not an unreasonable ask. We live in a democracy. People out there in the public have a right to have the time to digest and understand the bill. They have a right to have the time to bring forward changes that they would like to see to the government side or to the opposition side.

Madam Speaker, I think that this is a very sad day that we are seeing this come forward because I think, at the end of the day, this is one of the fundamental issues that I think is important to all Canadians, public health care. Public health care is one of the things that defines us as Canadians. I understand why the UCP don't want to talk about their attack on public health care. I understand why they want to slide it through under the radar. I understand why they don't want Albertans to know about it, but they have an obligation. They have an obligation to Albertans to allow them to have time to consider the substance of the bill and to have their say.

I think it is incredibly concerning to see this move. I would urge all members who think that democracy in this province is important to vote against this motion.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 33 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 7:36 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Amery	Lovely	Sawhney
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Luan	Schow
Barnes	Neudorf	Schulz
Fir	Nixon, Jason	Sigurdson, R.J.
Getson	Orr	Smith
Glasgo	Reid	Walker
Horner	Rosin	Wilson
Jones	Rowswell	

Against the motion:

Feehan	Loyola	Schmidt
Ganley	Notley	Sigurdson, L.
Hoffman	Pancholi	

Totals:	For – 23	Against – 8
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[Government Motion 33 carried]

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

Ms Ganley: I would like to move that we move to one-minute bells for the remainder of the evening.

[Unanimous consent denied]

Time Allocation on Bill 32

35. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in Committee of the Whole, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I also rise to move Government Motion 35. As the government, of course, we need to use our time wisely in the Chamber. However, we also need to make sure that the Official Opposition has some time to do their role. This bill has been in this Legislature for three sitting weeks. Last night alone the opposition had this bill for over eight hours in Committee of the Whole and was only able to bring forward three amendments despite telling everybody in the world that they had all these amendments to bring forward and instead continued to go with the repetitive process inside the Chamber and not move forward in the best interests of Albertans. Hopefully, by bringing forward allocation, we'll be able to get the opposition back working on legislation for the people of Alberta.

I have to point out that more than 20 hours of debating Bill 32, including 13 hours that happened in second reading, is significant. I also want to briefly mention – I was listening with interest to the Deputy Opposition House Leader as she spoke in regard to time allocation and the horrors of time allocation being used inside the Chamber. That, first of all, Madam Speaker, is ridiculous. Time allocation is a reasonable tool to be used by the government, particularly when the Official Opposition is not doing their role. We need to be able to make sure that the government mandate is not being plugged up in the House from the opposition going through repetitive speeches while not working on legislation.

I will note that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, has voted for time allocation in here. The Official Opposition House Leader has voted for time allocation inside the Chamber. The Member for Edmonton-Decore voted for time allocation inside the Chamber. The Member for Edmonton-West Henday has voted for time allocation in this Chamber. The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has voted for time allocation in this Chamber before, as has the members for Edmonton-Riverview, Edmonton-McClung, Edmonton-Ellerslie, Edmonton-Rutherford, St. Albert, Edmonton-North West, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, Calgary-Mountain View – that's the Deputy Opposition House Leader – Edmonton-South, Edmonton-Castle Downs, Calgary-McCall, Edmonton-Glenora, Calgary-Buffalo, and Edmonton-City Centre. Oh, a couple more, actually: Edmonton-Mill Woods and Lethbridge-West. They have all, in their time in government, used time allocation and, Madam Speaker, never gave us, when we were Official Opposition, anywhere near this amount of time when they moved time allocation inside the Chamber before.

This is a process that we need to do to get the NDP back to work inside this Chamber. They've told everybody that they have lots of

amendments. Let's see more than three moving in eight hours and get back to work on behalf of the people of Alberta.

The Deputy Speaker: The Official Opposition has up to five minutes to reply. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I, of course, am steadfastly opposed to this heavy-handed approach of managing this Legislature. Let's be clear. We are in the middle of the summer in the middle of a pandemic. If the members opposite wanted there to be a thorough debate where people could have a full understanding of the depth and breadth of the changes that are being proposed through Bill 32, the number of constitutional rights which are being violated through Bill 32, the number of different ways in which money is coming out of the pockets of Albertans through Bill 32, they might have considered introducing the bill before the July long weekend. They might have considered allowing debate, the vast majority of debate, to happen not in the middle of the night. They might have considered those things, but they did not consider those things. They very clearly hid it until as deep and as dark into the summer as they possibly could so that people wouldn't be around to register their concerns.

At the same time, it's an omnibus bill which addresses many, many different issues, which was never the subject of consultation with regular working people, which was not shared with working people before it was introduced in the middle of the summer, and which, as I've said before, makes historical attacks on the rights of working people, so it is, in fact, a bill that warrants roughly 20 or more amendments. We will do everything we can to get as many of the amendments that we have crafted so far into place before we run out of time, but let me be very clear that the one occasion where, when we were in government, we used closure, there was much more debate that was allowed than what has happened here. Moreover, the frequency with which this government uses time allocation in the middle of a pandemic in the middle of the summer is unprecedented. People are very concerned about this bill, yet they're not in a position to be able to fully register their concern because it was introduced at the time that it was without any kind of significant consultation beforehand.

There are so many ways in which this bill detracts from the rights of working people, and quite frankly it's complex having a conversation about the minutiae of how, for instance, an averaging agreement works because clearly the minister of labour doesn't appear to understand it. It is important for us to be able to walk through the elements of the legislation and explain why, for instance, the language around the averaging agreement effectively means that overtime has been eliminated for the vast majority of working people in this province through the passage of this bill. There are a number of similar kinds of changes, statutory changes, that require time to draft the amendment and then time to debate the amendment so that it can be fully considered by members of this Assembly.

As for the parts of the bill that take away the constitutional rights of unions and, through them, union members and individually union members as well as many other third-party organizations, well, constitutional law is complex. Yet I think, certainly, when this bill is struck down, in the many ways that it will be because of its violation of the constitutional law, the decisions themselves will be as long as one conversation about these amendments, let alone 100 conversations about these amendments. It will be rather unfortunate that the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada that will strike down this legislation will in fact be longer than the amount of debate that was allowed to happen on the pieces that will ultimately

form the backbone of that striking down by the Supreme Court of Canada and other courts between here and there.

8:00

This is an exceptionally antidemocratic move, as are many things that have been done by this UCP government. I still am mostly impressed by the way in which they ripped up the rules around how you debate a budget and short-circuited that, but, I mean, there are a number of different omnibus bills that this government has brought in. As much as they claim that they hate Ottawa, they've brought in a number of tools that their leader learned at the foot of their friend in Ottawa, and it's unfortunate for Albertans.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 35 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 8:01 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Amery	Lovely	Sawhney
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Luan	Schow
Barnes	Neudorf	Schulz
Fir	Nixon, Jason	Sigurdson, R.J.
Getson	Orr	Smith
Glasgo	Rosin	Walker
Horner	Rowswell	Wilson
Jones		

Against the motion:

Feehan	Loyola	Schmidt
Ganley	Notley	Sigurdson, L.
Hoffman	Pancholi	

Totals:	For – 22	Against – 8
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[Government Motion 35 carried]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

The Chair: Hon. members, I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 30 Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020

The Chair: Are there any members wishing to join debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I actually have an amendment that I'd like to introduce, so I'm going to hand that over. If you'd like, I'll wait until it reaches you there.

The Chair: Please. Thank you.

Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A4.

Hon. member, just please note that you're moving on behalf of another member. No names. Please proceed.

8:20

Member Loyola: Thank you very much for the reminder, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. I move on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-City Centre that Bill 30, the Health Statutes Amendment

Act, 2020, be amended in section 11(4), in the proposed section 5.1 by adding the following immediately after subsection (2):

(3) A regional health authority shall, as soon as practicable, make public the following items of each agreement entered into by the regional health authority with a person under subsection (1):

- the name of the person who entered into the agreement with the regional health authority;
- the duration of the agreement;
- the services to be provided by the person to the regional health authority;
- the health region in which the services will be provided;
- the cost of the services or remuneration to be paid by the local health authority to the person.

Madam Chair, this particular amendment will ensure that the regional health agreements are indeed public. I'll speak a little bit more to that effect in a moment here. This has to do with the fact that more and more power is being concentrated in the hands of the minister, and here we see yet another example of the many, many times that – and I know that I'm probably starting to sound like a broken record to the members across the other side, but most literally with almost every piece of legislation that has come through this House on behalf of this United Conservative Party, you have more and more of the power being concentrated in the hands of the ministers. I don't see how this is democratic at all. In this particular case it's that the Minister of Health wants to privatize our Alberta health care system. Regardless of that fact, I mean, this is my one last-ditch effort to at least – if we're going to move in this direction, these regional health agreements should be made public.

Of course, you know, although the members on the other side like to speak a good game when it comes to transparency, with a lot of the pieces of legislation that they've actually introduced into the House there's less and less transparency, and that has to do with the fact that more and more power is being concentrated in the hands of the minister. The minister will have the authority to make decisions for the entire province on that particular ministry, and here we have yet another example of that. Really, this is just about making sure that the existing standards of transparency remain in place. These contracts are currently available online, and any Albertan can actually see these contracts. Albertans deserve to know where their tax dollars are going and which companies are making a profit off providing health care to the Alberta public.

Now, we believe that the public health care system and the doctors that this minister is so set on attacking are the people who are best positioned to provide high-quality, accessible health care. This government disagrees, as they want the ability to give sweetheart deals and \$4.7 billion handouts to profitable corporations and their party insiders. If this government has nothing to hide, then they should indeed support this amendment.

I just wanted to cover this section 11(4) in a little bit more detail and just go into a little bit more detail on specifically how the minister will have all this power. In this particular section it says:

- (4) A person who submits a claim for benefits in accordance with subsection (1)
- has all the duties of a practitioner with respect to the provision to the Minister of information required to facilitate the handling, assessing and payment of that claim for benefits.

The whole thing is being brought inside. The minister will have authority over this whole process. You know, I look at the members on the other side, and I ask them: "Like, seriously? This is where you want to take the province? This is where you want to take the province so that the people who are providing the service will only have to provide that information to the minister, and the minister

will be required to facilitate the handling, assessing, and payment of the claims for benefits?"

Now, I understand that as the ministry, but of course what's happening here is that – before, these agreements were completely transparent, and Albertans could actually see what these agreements are. They could see how much money was paid. They could see who was providing the service. Now this government will have to adhere to none of that as we move forward.

With this particular amendment it's my hope that members from the other side, if they truly believe in the principle of transparency – I mean, they're already running roughshod over democracy here in the province of Alberta. But I would believe, because so many times when these other members were on this side of the House, when they were in opposition – and, you know, I'm looking at the members here to my right because I've heard them say it so many times. They believe so much in transparency. I remember. Those were the good old days of the previous session, right?

Mr. Schmidt: They were a lot more vocal back then.

Member Loyola: They were a lot more vocal back then. That's for sure. That's for sure. I mean, like, every second word out of their mouth was "transparency," I believe. You know, I'd think that at least these members would be willing to support this here particular amendment, perhaps these members but not this cabinet.

It's my hope that all members of this House will vote in favour of the principle of transparency and support this here amendment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any members wishing to join debate on amendment A4?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion on amendment A4 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main bill. Any members wishing to join debate? The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise to propose a further amendment to Bill 30, which is an amendment to section 1, and I will endeavour to get them to you so they can be distributed.

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A5.

Please note you're moving on behalf of another member. No names, please. Thank you.

Ms Notley: Okay. Yes. I am introducing this on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-City Centre. What this amendment would do is that it would amend Bill 30 in section 1 of that bill by striking out subsection (10) and in subsection (11), in the proposed section 20.1(1)(a), by striking out "established an arrangement" and substituting "arrangement."

In essence, what this bill is attempting to do is to restore the language around the minister's authority to come up with alternative payment arrangements with physicians so that it says that they may enter into an agreement with those physicians. The implication of that language is that that agreement would be voluntary on both sides, that the physicians themselves would agree to be part of that agreement; hence, enter into an agreement.

But what this Bill 30 does, of course, as members opposite know full well, is that it also attempts to break the relationship between doctors and the AMA. Also, it is part of a long pattern of attempting to force doctors to work in places they don't want to work and also now be paid under certain arrangements that they don't want to be paid under. By injecting the new language in Bill 30 of establishing an alternative relationship plan, it removes from the language the

expectation of it being a jointly-agreed-to arrangement. In fact, it gives the Minister of Health the ability to impose an alternative relationship plan on doctors.

You know, if people think, oh, we're just reading too much into it, witness merely the shocking behaviour of the minister last week, where he attempted to bully the College of Physicians & Surgeons into using their authority of the holder of physicians' licences as a means to threaten doctors if they should choose to exercise their constitutional rights and leave their practice, particularly if they're leaving their practice because, of course, this government has driven them out of it. We know that this minister and this government absolutely have a record of trying to force doctors to work in places where they don't want to, and this language that currently exists in Bill 30 would allow for the minister to establish alternate relationship plans that were not agreed to by doctors.

8:30

Let me just say that in some cases alternate relationship plans can be a good thing in principle. Like, I've got a big problem with this whole corporatization arrangement that is found in other parts of Bill 30, and, of course, members opposite spent much of last night resisting our call to inject the criteria of corporatization only if it doesn't hurt the public health care system. That was apparently a bridge too far for these folks, who obviously don't see the health and sanctity of the public health system as being a thing that is worthy of protection by way of legislation.

Nonetheless, we know that kind of relationship is definitely one that is going to lead to a whole bunch of negative outcomes for the public health system and for Albertans and for patients, but the alternative relationship plan is different than that, and in some cases I can see them working. We've seen examples of where that can work, and, frankly, clinic models of physicians on staff where the physicians are in an arrangement where they are able to actually provide health care in the way they see fit and they're not trying to make money for people and all those other kinds of things: it could potentially work. There are lots of settings where it can work.

It doesn't work, however, if what happens is that they are forced into that relationship by the minister, and this bill allows the minister, that oh-so-wise and steady-handed kind of guy that we've all been observing over the last year, to force doctors into a relationship that they would not otherwise choose. That is why we are proposing an amendment simply to restore the language to where it was before, where the minister may enter into an agreement with physicians to allow for an alternative relationship plan. It is a nod to the notion that some day this government may stop attacking doctors and some day may actually attempt to re-establish a respectful relationship with these very, very important public health servants, public servants who do so much for so many Alberta families each and every day.

With that in mind, then, I would urge the members to agree to this very simple amendment that would simply get us back to a place where both the doctors and the minister have to agree to an alternative relationship plan before they are forced into an arrangement with the minister. Also, of course, it allows for the doctors to continue to consider that kind of alternate relationship in conjunction with the AMA, which is the organization which they have chosen to have represent them in the vast majority of their discussions with the provincial government although the provincial government is also attacking that relationship. I suspect that, too, will be found to be unconstitutional.

I tell you, you know, they wake up in the morning; they don't get both feet out of bed before they've found a way to breach the Constitution. It's really quite striking, but nonetheless this amendment would be an effort to avoid this particular breach of

constitutional rights that is found within the two pieces of legislation that we are here discussing tonight, so I urge all members to join with us in supporting this proposal.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to join debate on amendment A5?

[Motion on amendment A5 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main bill. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: May I get a time check, please, on time allocation?

The Chair: We will go until 9:18.

Ms Hoffman: Time is flying, and we have several amendments that the government seems so committed to defeating without even giving rationale, so I will table more amendments. [interjections] I appreciate the cross talk. Last night we did spend considerable time on an amendment brought forward by the government themselves, so that's interesting.

Anyway, we have an amendment here on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-City Centre. Thank you very much.

The Chair: This will be known as amendment A6.

Note moving on behalf of another member. No names. Please proceed.

Ms Hoffman: I'm moving on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-City Centre that Bill 30 – I won't bother saying its title – be amended in section 5(4)(b)(iv) by adding the following after the proposed section 3(2)(d):

- (d.1) undertake an assessment of Alberta residents' health care needs that require the provision of health services by physicians and nurses and, based on that assessment, develop a labour workforce plan that, if implemented, would ensure that those health care needs can be met.

Why are we bringing this forward? Well, it certainly seems that over the last 18 months there's been considerable strife between health care providers and the government of Alberta. This is something that, especially in rural Alberta, seems to be a particular area of attack in undermining the professionalism and the integrity of physicians and others who provide care in these communities.

Members on the other side boast about how they represent the vast majority of rural constituents in this province of Alberta, but I will remind them that they were elected on a mandate to protect public health care. There was a massive public health care guarantee that they shopped around the province. It's nice to say you have the trust of these communities, but the trust was created on a promise that has not been fulfilled by this government, to say it parliamentarily.

I have to say that I think at a bare minimum the appropriate steps would be to ensure that there is an assessment done. It does take time to draft these amendments, as you heard all the subsections and the sections and the renumbering. I think it's important that we acknowledge that we're on the brink of what I would say is a rural health care crisis in this province.

In the Government House Leader's own riding many doctors have left already and have given up privileges at their local hospitals, which of course impacts care in rural communities. I was proud to be the Minister of Health in partnership with the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre at the time to work to improve the local hospital in Sundre, to actually bring new lab services there. It seems to have been undermined quite quickly by

the very same MLAs at present. That also has been done when interviewed about the situation by the doctors. The member said: you know, I'm going to advocate for you, but I might not win; I might not be able to do the things you want us to do to keep our hospital open. This was broadcast, you know, through Facebook, through a live event.

I think that it would only be fair and appropriate to have this assessment to ensure that we know what the needs are throughout the province, that this is done independently, so we naturally would like to see this as we move forward in the face of this pandemic.

I think health care has never been more important to the people of Alberta than it probably is right now, making sure that we are well and that we are meeting the needs of one another. Being able to do this, we're proposing through this amendment that we make sure the Health Quality Council can track this important issue and make sure that it's reporting publicly back to the people of Alberta on the original assessment of what the needs were . . .

Mr. Schow: That's a lot of amendments.

Ms Hoffman: There sure are a lot of amendments, hon. member, and this is one of the reasons why we're so disappointed, through the chair, that the government has acted so ham-fistedly to bring forward closure when it was very well known that we were still working with Parliamentary Counsel to draft some of the specific amendments.

With that being said, I think I've made a case to the deputy whip as to why it is that Albertans deserve to have an assessment of what the health care needs are for physicians and nurses, and the labour force plan should be created publicly. It should be monitored publicly, and it should be reported back to the people of Alberta so that they indeed can keep track and measure the impacts that this government is having on their health care system, or any subsequent government, to be very honest. Amendments are written at one point in time, but the intention is to make this law to make sure that there's a public accounting for what's happening for Alberta residents in terms of their health care needs. I think that that would be fair and transparent and respectful of the people who voted for each and every one of us.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

8:40

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A6?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion on amendment A6 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main bill. Any members wishing to join debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to rise to introduce yet another very thoughtful amendment that the government won't even consider today, but I'll bring it forward anyway so that Albertans can hear what the Official Opposition has to say in our efforts to protect our public health care system. I'll provide copies to you right now.

Thank you.

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A7.

Please note that you're moving on behalf of another member. No names.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm moving this amendment on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Manning, and it moves that Bill 30, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, be

amended in section 2(a) by striking out subsection (6), (b) in subsection (8) by striking out clauses (b) and (c), and (c) in subsection (10) by striking out clause (a).

Madam Chair, of course, to be brief, because we are being forced to close our debate on this in a very abbreviated fashion because the government doesn't want to consider thoughtful amendments to the changes that they're making to our public health care system, basically, Bill 30 removes the requirement that where the minister is designating a surgical facility or withdrawing the designation of a surgical facility or deleting one or more surgical procedures from a surgical facility – right now Bill 30 amends the existing legislation to say that no longer does that have to be done by order, but it just may be done in writing. While that may seem like a minor change, it actually speaks to what the government's approach has been from the get-go when it comes to, well, all actions that they take, but specifically with respect to Bill 30 and their attack on our public health care system. They are basically removing the requirement that Albertans have some transparency around the exercise of the minister's authority by designating or withdrawing designations of surgical facilities.

By order means, Madam Chair, of course, that it's done by a ministerial order, which may either be published in the *Alberta Gazette*, which is available to any person to search online, but also, where it's not published by the *Gazette*, they are available for public access within the ministry responsible for those orders. Again, this is so that Albertans have a clear understanding of which facilities have been designated as well as where those facilities have lost their designation, and this is important because we need to have transparency when the government is going full steam ahead by making it very easy for private surgical facilities to be opened that do not have to consider the adverse impact on our public health care system. Albertans deserve to know which facilities these are or where they're located, and they deserve to know when a particular surgical facility is no longer meeting the accreditation standards or is no longer able to offer a particular surgical procedure. This is very important, again, for transparency.

Now, by the changes proposed in Bill 30, all of those changes can be made, again, by the minister in writing, which means that if an Albertan wanted to know what agreements or designations had been made or withdrawn, they'd have to make a FOIP request, which, of course, is subject to fees and time delays. The government could use extensive authorities under the freedom of information and protection of personal information act to basically withhold some of that information, and I imagine that they would use that authority to withhold information quite liberally because it seems very clear that this government is intent on keeping as much of the exercise of their authority tightly held within a particular minister's hands, perhaps within Executive Council's hands, and not providing transparency to Albertans.

This is a minor amendment. Again, if there's no concern around being transparent about the decisions that they're making and that the Minister of Health is making, there should be no concern with accepting this. But I imagine, Madam Chair, given the abbreviated time that we have to actually consider amendments and given that we're likely not to hear even a rationale as to why the government won't accept this, it further reinforces for Albertans that really the intent behind Bill 30, behind much of the legislation that this government has brought in since they've been elected, is to actually keep more Albertans in the dark. When we're talking about our public health care system and the way they're sneaking in a lot of things to make it harder for Albertans to know what's happening and to stand up for the protections of our public health care system, all Albertans should be concerned.

So I urge the members, all members of this Assembly, to consider this amendment thoughtfully and to vote in favour. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to join debate on amendment A7? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you . . .

The Chair: Hon. member, we're on amendment A7.

Ms Ganley: I apologize. I will sit down.

The Chair: I will call the vote on amendment A7.

[Motion on amendment A7 lost]

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to offer a few comments with respect to Bill 30. I do have an amendment that I would like to move at this time.

The Chair: This will be known as amendment A8.

Hon. member, please proceed.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to rise and propose the following amendment on behalf of my friend from Edmonton-City Centre, who moves that Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, be amended by striking out section 5(17). Now, for those of you following at home, section 5(17) of the Health Statutes Amendment Act amends the Health Quality Council legislation to change the reporting that that body does on an annual basis from reporting to all Members of the Legislative Assembly through the Speaker of this Assembly to reporting to the minister. This is a significant change in the way that the reporting for the Health Quality Council has been done for a number of years.

You know, I think back to earlier in this debate on this legislation. My friend from Edmonton-Strathcona gave a quite succinct but insightful summary on the history of the Health Quality Council of Alberta. The Health Quality Council of Alberta exists in its current form because of a number of health care system related scandals that previous Conservative governments found themselves in. They amended the health care quality council reporting structures and procedures and related legislation in an effort to get themselves out of those scandals. I think, the reasons that the government chose to do that aside, that the improvements that they made as a result of those scandals actually did a lot to serve Albertans. Now we have a Health Quality Council of Alberta which is relatively arm's length from the current administration and submits its annual reports to all Members of the Legislative Assembly. I think that even though it's not legislatively required, the Health Quality Council of Alberta also submits copies of the other reports that it generates from time to time to all members of the Assembly via various means. They're certainly a frequent visitor in my inbox, Madam Chair.

That apparently is too much transparency, and we can't have that any longer when it comes to the Health Quality Council of Alberta, so the minister is proposing in Bill 30 that we change the legislation to require the Health Quality Council of Alberta to report directly to him instead of all members of the Assembly. You know, I think it's quite worrisome because, as my friend from Edmonton-Strathcona said in her comments with regard to the amendment that she brought forward here not too long ago, there is a significant lack of trust in the ability of the minister to carry out his job with a great deal of transparency, and she, in fact, referred to some of the distasteful behaviour that he engaged in when it came to light that

he apparently directed the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta to do everything that they could in their power to stop physicians from leaving our province.

8:50

You know, this isn't a one-off. We know that the minister has a pretty solid track record, after being in the job for 16 months, of bullying behaviour. He hasn't just bullied the College of Physicians & Surgeons. He takes it upon himself to actually go in person to individual doctors' homes to attempt to bully them into silence, and if he can't find their addresses through the information that's available to the Health department, then he takes to social media and attempts to bully them and silence them, or if it's not himself, then it's the staff in his office, the issues managers and the press secretaries and the people who make \$200,000 a year to bully people on social media.

This amendment is intended to limit the ability of the minister to bully at least one organization in his sphere of work, and that's the Health Quality Council of Alberta because . . .

Mr. Schow: Point of order, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Schow: I rise on 23(i), "imputes false or unavowed motives." The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar clearly just stated that the purpose of this legislation was for the minister to bully. I recognize that if he was suggesting that the government is bullying, I can see how that might be permissible in this Chamber, but I know the NDP does like to ride a very fine line between what is and what is not permissible. That, in my opinion, is certainly a point of order. It is said in order to cause disorder within this Chamber, and I would ask that that member retract those comments, apologize, and smarten up.

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much. I did appreciate that little reference there to the "simmer down, kitty cat" comment from earlier.

I think that in this particular instance it's quite clear that the member was speaking about what the legislation enables the minister to do, so not necessarily the intention of the minister but what the legislation would allow the minister to do. Again, I mean, we've been over this and over this, and we've split this hair 17 gazillion ways, but I think the Speaker has been quite clear in his rulings on a number of occasions. Particularly, I reference the recent rulings around "war on women" and those sorts of comments as made by the hon. minister for status of women. I think that the Speaker has been fairly clear that this is not a point of order in this instance.

The Chair: Hon. members, while certainly not helpful for debate, and I'm certain the member will choose his words more carefully, at this time this will not be a point of order. Moving forward, I very well may think differently.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar to proceed.

Debate Continued

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to proceed with my arguments. As I was saying, I think the legislation as proposed and the amendment that we are trying to

bring forward does address the ability of a minister to direct the Health Quality Council of Alberta to do whatever the minister feels is appropriate, and we don't know – we can't, of course, read the mind or understand what motives he possibly would have, but it certainly would be interesting. It's certainly not true that Albertans trust the minister with the kind of power that Bill 30 is giving to him, and this is an attempt to curtail that power somewhat and maintain the current structures and reporting requirements that the Health Quality Council of Alberta has that I think Albertans generally trust and have faith in.

You know, Madam Chair, in moving this amendment and certainly in listening to the debate so far, it's disappointing to me that the Minister of Health hasn't intervened in this debate yet this evening. The Government House Leader spent a lot of time talking about how the opposition should do our jobs, so I'll return the favour and suggest some improvements to how the government can do its job. One of the things that I think the government could do to improve the job that it's doing on behalf of Albertans is to actually stand up and share with us the careful consideration that they're giving the amendments that we've brought forward.

Certainly, I don't think that's breaking with past practice, Madam Chair. I know that in previous debates we've seen other ministers of Executive Council engage quite thoughtfully in debate. Earlier this afternoon we had debate on Bill 32, and the Minister of Labour and Immigration was quite actively engaged in the debate. While, you know, obviously, we don't agree with the points that he made, he made arguments as to why these amendments shouldn't be considered. I recall that earlier this session we had the Minister of Service Alberta, when we were dealing with the Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Act, very actively engaged in that debate. He stood up and gave very thoughtful, reasonable arguments that, of course, we didn't agree with, but at least he took the time to participate in the debate. We've seen that from the Minister of Municipal Affairs. We saw that from the Minister of Justice in the debate on Bill 21.

I would certainly hope that if, you know, the government is intent on telling us how to do our jobs, they would listen to us when we tell them how to do their jobs. We could at least have somebody from Executive Council stand up and tell us why they can't accept these debates so that we can explain to Albertans exactly why they haven't accepted any of these amendments and why the bill should stand as is.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to join in on amendment A8? I will call the question.

[Motion on amendment A8 lost]

The Chair: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you for the opportunity to rise. I know that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar was excited to have the Minister of Health rise, and I'm sure he will rise later to speak on his bill. I do know that yesterday inside this Chamber into the wee hours of the evening, the hon. Minister of Health spent a considerable amount of time speaking about Bill 30.

It has been interesting to listen to the debate so far this evening, particularly around concerns from the Leader of the Official Opposition and some of her colleagues in regard to time allocation and the concern of not being able to have time to do the job that the opposition feels they could. I think it's important, you know, given that this continues to be raised by the Official Opposition, to point out that the Leader of the Official Opposition was mistaken when she said that when she used allocation she provided more hours of debate on the legislation that was involved with that. The maximum

amount of debate that she allowed on a bill that her Government House Leader brought forward time allocation on was 10 hours, I would point out for you.

Ms Notley: Twenty-four hours. Read *Hansard*.

Mr. Jason Nixon: It was 10 hours, Madam Chair, when they brought forward the very first . . .

Ms Notley: Twenty-four. Read *Hansard*. Read *Hansard*. It's in *Hansard*.

Mr. Jason Nixon: The Leader of the Official Opposition heckling away. She's mad. As the Premier always points out, she's mad because she was fired. I get it. But the reality is that she can't help . . .

Ms Notley: Read *Hansard*. It's in black and white.

Mr. Jason Nixon: She's angry, Madam Chair. She's mad. She's mad at Albertans, and she shows it every day. Team Angry. Team Angry right there.

The reality is that when they moved their first time allocation motion when she was Premier, it was on Bill 6, and there had been 10 hours of debate when they moved their first time allocation. There are 20 hours of debate on this bill, and we're a long way from done. The reality is that they could only bring forward three amendments in almost six and a half hours of debate last night. They say, Madam Chair, that it was because they couldn't get ready. Well, they've had the bill since about July 6, which is three sitting weeks. I don't know about you, but my constituents expect us to get ready for work a little faster than three weeks. I would suggest, if that is the case, that the Official Opposition should have started to work on their amendments three weeks ago, when they got the legislation, not last night late at night. That's quite disappointing.

9:00

But back to this important piece of legislation. At its core it's about trying to help Albertans. You know, there is a heavy-duty mechanic who lives in Ponoka county. His name is Lou. Lou comes and visits me quite often both in my Rimbey office, and occasionally he will jump on his motorbike and drive all the way down to Sundre to have a visit. I enjoy the time with Lou.

Lou could not work at one point. He's in his mid-50s. He's a heavy-duty mechanic, very busy, has a pretty successful shop, as I said, in Ponoka county, north of Rimbey. I don't know, Madam Chair, if you've ever had the opportunity to come up to Ponoka county. It's a great place, good people. Lou does a great service for them running his heavy-duty mechanic shop. But he had a hip problem, and his hip had begun to deteriorate. The pain got so bad that he could not work no more. He couldn't make a living no more, couldn't keep his shop going, had to bring in other mechanics to help, to be able to deal with his clients' needs, which made him have trouble paying his bills and being able to provide for his family.

He went on a waiting list. The then NDP government was in power. We sent letters to try to get Lou help. We were quite concerned. Lou sat on that waiting list and sat on that waiting list, sat on that waiting list, sat on that waiting list, sat on that waiting list. No help from the NDP, no comments from the NDP, no reaching out to say: how can we help you, Lou? No explanation, no plan, Madam Chair, no explanation of why wait times for surgeries went up under the now Member for Edmonton-Strathcona when she was the Premier of Alberta. They went up. People like Lou were spending more time in pain on the wait list

underneath the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona when she was the Premier of Alberta than they were under the previous Progressive Conservative government. In pain on the list.

So here we have the Minister of Health trying to bring forward a way to be able to get people more help, people like Lou, who need help. Now, I see many of my colleagues nodding because they all know that they hear from constituents on a regular basis. Like, it's a pretty regular thing at the constituency office to hear the frustration with waiting lists. It's always hard to hear somebody who's struggling to be able to keep working or they're in danger of losing their livelihood because they can't get in for surgery.

Now, what happened during that period of time? The NDP did use charter health centres, which is what the Official Opposition is now calling private health care or their scare tactic of – what do they call it?

Some Hon. Members: American style.

Mr. Jason Nixon: American style. Yeah.

But they used the same technique when they were in power; 15 per cent of surgeries went through chartered health centres underneath the NDP government. Fifteen per cent went through underneath the NDP government. While the Member for Edmonton-Glenora was in power as Health minister and my constituents suffered because they couldn't get into surgery, she was at least using chartered health facilities to help with it. But the wait list – the wait list – Madam Chair, underneath that member when she was Health minister went up. It went up not just for minor surgeries; it went up for heart surgeries and knee surgeries and hip surgeries and eye surgeries. That's that hon. member's record. That's her record. Terrible legacy.

Now you've got the current Health minister, who comes in and says, "Look, we need to beef up this process," a process that already exists, a process that was used by the NDP government, not to enough impact, obviously, because people like Lou were still hurting, but it was a process used by the NDP government. Now the hon. Health minister comes in and says: "No; we're going to get wait times dealt with. We're going to get people like Lou in, and we're going to give an opportunity, and we're using the same technique the NDP did."

But the NDP comes to the Chamber, and what do they do? They go right to Team Angry. You saw it already tonight from the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. She gets mad, mad. She doesn't like to get it pointed out, her brutal record when she was Premier when it came to issues like this.

Ms Notley: I just hate it when you mislead people.

Mr. Jason Nixon: She just hates it. She says that she hates it when it's pointed out. She admits it right there in her heckling, but her record when it comes . . . [interjections] Whoa. There she is being unparliamentary. All right. Well, that's not new when it comes to the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika.

Point of Order Parliamentary Language

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Madam Chair. Now, this time it was very clear that the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, in her anger, said: I hate it when you mislead people, "you" referring to the hon. Government House Leader and Sundre's favourite son.

Now, I would prefer if the rest of this evening doesn't go along that road, but maybe we can again raise the decorum, as members on this side of the Chamber have been trying to do for so long. I think we've done a very good job on this side of the Chamber. Unfortunately, Team Angry on the other side continues to berate members of our side while they're speaking. I want to hear a little more about Lou because I think every member in this Chamber knows a Lou. We all know a Lou.

Madam Chair, I would ask that the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona apologize for those remarks that were directed directly at the Government House Leader: why you are misleading people. That is unparliamentary, and it is certainly out of order.

The Chair: Hon. member, there is a certain limited amount of time left in this debate. While I certainly agree that the level of decorum is very low at this point in time, I will expect all members to turn that ship around. Let's see if we can get some more time back to the Official Opposition to finish this debate.

But the hon. Government House Leader does have some speaking time left.

Debate Continued

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, it was very important to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar that a member of Executive Council got up to speak about this legislation. In fact, Madam Chair, he went on at length about that and accused the Health minister of not debating his bill, which, by the way, he did debate in this House many times, and he will yet again. It's quite shocking to hear anything from the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar in regard to him calling out behaviour of the Minister of Health. I mean, this is a member who celebrated the death of Margaret Thatcher in this very Chamber, so I think we'll take that for what it's worth.

Now back to Lou, though. The reality is that we got a health . . .

Mr. Schmidt: Let's compare records.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Happy to compare records.

I've never stood inside this Chamber and had to apologize nearly as much as the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. Maybe one day we'll have to get some of the comms guys to do just a rolling videotape of how many times the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has had to apologize for saying outlandish things inside this place. It will be a long video.

Back to Bill 30, which is the point of today. We are dealing with a situation where the now hon. Health minister is trying to get people like Lou off waiting lists into surgery in a reasonable period of time, back to reasonable health and being able to go on with their lives. Lou has grandkids that he wants to see. He's got a business that he still wants to run. As I said, he likes to come down on his motorbike for a visit. The ride from the top of my constituency is almost three hours from the bottom of my constituency, so it's a long trip when he comes down for a visit, for us guys down all the way in Mountain View county. It's a long way from Ponoka county. I'm always happy when he does it.

That's what the hon. the Health minister has been trying to do using the same techniques that the former one-term NDP government used when they were in power: 15 per cent of surgeries to chartered health centres. So it was okay when the NDP did it, but now when the new minister is going to use that technique to try to get people like Lou off the waiting list, it's somehow Americanizing health care. It is such a ridiculous argument by the NDP.

Again, they don't focus on facts, just like when the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona rose today and said that she time-allocated

not after 10 hours and said that it was 20 – well, that's not a fact; that's easy to verify; that's the reality, that they only went with 10 hours – just like the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona glossing over the fact that her party couldn't get their amendments ready for this bill that they said was so very important to them, so important to them that they waited, by their own words, their own words in this Chamber, till last night to start to prepare their amendments. They had the bill for three weeks. In fact, we gave them these pieces of legislation a little bit early to be able to help them with their work. They just – I don't know – showed up for work late.

Well, Lou can't count on the NDP no more. Lou can't count on the NDP, who spent their time and power making sure that heart surgeries went up and cataract surgeries went up and knee surgeries went up and – wait times. The surgeries themselves didn't go up. That would have helped. The wait times went up. That's the legacy of the Member for Edmonton-Glenora. Wait times went up, through the roof, while people like Lou couldn't go to work.

Now you've got a minister coming forward with a solution and a way forward to be able to use chartered health centres and to begin to make sure that our citizens can receive help at a reasonable rate, but the NDP wants to fight that. They want to fight that because all they can do is focus, Madam Chair, on their main goal, which is to protect their union friends, people like Gil McGowan, to spend their time fearmongering and making Albertans scared and say: this legislation will Americanize health care. Well, it won't, but at the end of the day, as I said, do you think Lou cares if he has surgery inside a chartered health centre or not? What Lou cares about is that there's still a publicly funded health care system and that he gets a surgery at a reasonable rate of time. He can get back to work.

9:10

The hon. members across the way in the NDP, in their comments, continue to spend their time trying to imply that the Alberta government wants to bring in a two-tier system or go to an American type of system – that's the language that they often use; again, I think, through you to the hon. deputy whip, I believe "Americanization" is the term that they've been using, something like that, along those lines – but they don't want to actually talk about the real people that are being impacted by their policies when they were in government.

Now, if I was an NDP supporter – and they seem to be indicating that a lot of their supporters have concerns with this legislation – I would also be extremely disappointed in the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, in her leadership of her party, that she could not get amendments done in advance of a debate inside this Assembly for three weeks, that for over 20 hours of debate inside this place they could only bring three amendments forward on this legislation. Madam Chair, they've done, I think, at least four or five in the last 40 minutes, but that's because they showed up for work late when it came to these amendments. It's disappointing. At least, they didn't prepare the amendments. They were here, certainly, in the Chamber – I would never want to refer to the absence of a member; that's not what I'm doing – but you need to do more than just be here inside your seat if you want to move amendments. You've got to stand up and move an amendment. You've got to stand up, make sure that your amendments are prepared in advance.

Instead, what they did was that they waited until the last minute yet again and then had the nerve to stand up in this place and ask for more time, on one hand, to be able to debate their amendments. But then to have their speaker stand up and ask members of Executive Council to stand up and respond and accuse members of Executive Council of not doing their job and accuse the hon. the Health minister of not doing his job: what a shame. What a shame.

That's the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, I think, who has the most apologies in the history of the 30th Legislature, certainly.

The reality, at the end of the day, is that they don't care about Lou if they don't want to help get surgery wait times fixed. They don't want to have a conversation about why people like Lou had to spend so much time in pain. That is a reasonable conversation to have. The NDP may have a better idea of how to handle it. Then one would have to ask the question why they didn't do it when they were in government 15 months ago. Why did they sit idly by as the wait times went up for people like Lou? I don't know. I don't know if they care about people like Lou, but what I do know, Madam Chair, is that their actions don't show that they care about people like Lou. They don't show it.

Their focus instead is to be in here, dragging out six, seven hours of debate without even bothering to move one amendment, not one amendment, and then, as they get near the end of Committee of the Whole, to stand up and say that the hon. the Health minister won't stand up and answer their questions at the very moment they're asking for more time to try to jam through their amendments, that they didn't prepare in advance. It's a bizarre NDP strategy. It just doesn't make any sense.

What I can tell you, Madam Chair, is that Alberta's government won't tolerate that. We're not going to sit around anymore and allow the NDP to block things like Lou getting help. Lou is going to get help, and I want to thank the hon. the Health minister for that, thank him for doing that, thank him for taking that seriously. I also want to thank him for spending time in here late last night with so many members of the Chamber, actively communicating his piece of legislation, talking about it in great detail. I don't know if the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar didn't hear his comments. I mean, I don't know if he wasn't paying attention. Maybe he was reading up on Margaret Thatcher, finally, so he could learn about her great legacy. I don't know. But I do want to thank the hon. member, the hon. the Health minister, my friend for many years, for taking the time to debate in this House his important piece of legislation despite the fact that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has tried to say that he hasn't. I just want to stand up for him and say: thank you very much for taking your time to speak inside this House.

The other interesting thing about the hon. member, the hon. the Health minister, is that he moved an amendment for this piece of legislation last night, that was debated and was ultimately passed, I think, the next day, and he had his amendment ready when he came to the Chamber. If the Official Opposition is looking for some help on how to prepare amendments, maybe the hon. the Health minister can give them a little bit of help on how you get ready when you come to the Chamber because what you just saw from the opposition – and I used to be an Opposition House Leader. I've never seen an opposition prepare on a bill of this importance to them, that they say – and, I suspect, pretty important to their base: I won't argue with that. Then they prepared it last night in the middle of the night. That's the hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader who has said that in her speeches, Madam Chair. She said that the reason that they were struggling to get all those amendments done in six and a half hours of debate alone last night was because they started to prepare the amendments when the House was sitting. I mean, that's like kind of trying to fuel the airplane when it takes off. It's crazy. That's the great NDP plan. Led by the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, they're going to show up inside the Chamber without their amendments. I mean, Gil McGowan has got to be furious.

An Hon. Member: He's mad.

Mr. Jason Nixon: I don't want to be at the NDP's next AGM because I guarantee it that he's got to be mad about that performance.

An Hon. Member: That's going to be a bad AGM.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Yeah. I mean, if he can take a break from calling Conservatives "Nazis" and calling religious parents "nutbars," he's going to have to have a conversation with the NDP on why they can't get their amendments ready and then they run out of time to bring forward amendments on this legislation.

The last thing I want to close with, Madam Chair. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora complained about the Health minister's amendment and that she didn't have enough time to review it. That was debated for several hours last night. The Official Opposition did not provide the government or the hon. Health minister with one of their amendments. Not one of their amendments. It takes a lot of – I don't know what you would call it – to come in the Chamber and say about . . .

Mr. Shandro: Chutzpah.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Yeah. That's right. That's certainly what the hon. Premier would use. That's what you get from the NDP. Can't be ready for work, can't get your amendments ready, and then you're going to come and stand in the Chamber and say: "Hey, we need more time to talk. We're frustrated because the debate is being time allocated after we delayed and couldn't get amendments done, and then we're going to put up a speaker, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, and then call on Executive Council to stand up and talk about the bill. Then when Executive Council stands up and talks about the bill, we're going to heckle them because they're talking about the bill."

Lack of planning. Lack of planning by the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. It is shocking. Maybe what she should do is let her House leader take over because it isn't working very good. Lack of planning. Lack of planning. It's shocking.

The Chair: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt, but pursuant to Government Motion 33, agreed to earlier this evening, I must now put every question necessary for disposal of Bill 30 in Committee of the Whole.

[The voice vote indicated that the remaining clauses of Bill 30 were agreed to]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 9:18 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

For:

Amery	Luan	Rowswell
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Madu	Sawhney
Barnes	McIver	Schow
Dreeshen	Neudorf	Schulz
Fir	Nixon, Jason	Shandro
Getson	Orr	Sigurdson, R.J.
Glasgo	Rehn	Smith
Horner	Reid	Walker
Jones	Rosin	Wilson
Lovely		

Against:

Feehan	Loyola	Schmidt
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Ganley	Notley	Sigurdson, L.
Hoffman	Pancholi	
Totals:	For – 28	Against – 8

[The remaining clauses of Bill 30 agreed to]

The Chair: We will now continue with voting.

[The voice vote indicated that the title and preamble were agreed to]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 9:35 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

For:

Amery	Lovely	Rosin
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Luan	Rowswell
Barnes	Madu	Sawhney
Dreeshen	McIver	Schow
Fir	Neudorf	Schulz
Getson	Nixon, Jason	Sigurdson, R.J.
Glasgo	Orr	Smith
Horner	Rehn	Walker
Jones	Reid	Wilson

Against:

Feehan	Loyola	Schmidt
Ganley	Notley	Sigurdson, L.
Hoffman	Pancholi	

Totals:	For – 27	Against – 8
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[Title and preamble agreed to]

The Chair: We shall continue. Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Any opposed?

[The voice vote indicated that the request to report Bill 30 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 9:39 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

For:

Amery	Lovely	Rosin
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Luan	Rowswell
Barnes	Madu	Sawhney
Dreeshen	McIver	Schow
Fir	Neudorf	Schulz
Getson	Nixon, Jason	Sigurdson, R.J.
Glasgo	Orr	Smith
Horner	Rehn	Walker
Jones	Reid	Wilson

9:40

Against:

Feehan	Loyola	Schmidt
Ganley	Notley	Sigurdson, L.
Hoffman	Pancholi	

Totals:	For – 27	Against – 8
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[Request to report Bill 30 carried]

Bill 32

Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020

The Chair: Are there any members wishing to join debate? The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair. I regret having to rise at this point and to try to condense my comments to 20 minutes. It is quite unfortunate. Of course, I have to begin that condensation just by responding to a couple of things that we heard the House leader saying in his most recent rant.

Of course, I wasn't actually being angry. I was just sort of trying to point out the fact that even though the House leader kept saying things that were contradicted by the record in front of this House, it was not helpful that he wasn't listening when I was pointing out or trying to helpfully point out that his comments were contradicting the record in this House and simply that if he were to go to *Hansard*, he would see that, in fact, the last time allocation with respect to Bill 6 actually occurred after 24 hours of debate, not the 10 hours that the member refers to. It's helpful to look at the record and try to align your comments with the facts that appear on the record in black and white. I just wanted to comment on that.

Also, you know, I too worry about Lou, and I just wonder how he's doing in Sundre with the shortage of doctors that we now see in Sundre. It must be quite frustrating for him.

That being said, Madam Chair, I'd like to talk about the many amendments that we are not going to get a chance to introduce tonight because they are complex. In some cases we haven't been able to get them back from Parliamentary Counsel. They all relate to the rights of the unions, and they are complex because they involve numerous breaches of the Charter and the Constitution of the country.

Now, I know that the House leader and others over there think that the way in which a good opposition does opposition is that they just sort of walk in, they drop an amendment on the table, they talk about it for four minutes, and then the folks over there do a big stamp on it and go, "Reject," and then we move on. Well, that's actually not a very robust type of democracy. Actually, what you try to do is sometimes talk about the facts and the foundation and the history behind the amendments in order to have folks on the other side hear what's going on, because sometimes they don't hear at all from the people that are telling them when to stand, when to sit, how to vote, all those things. That's what you do when you're in opposition. So I'm sorry that it's inconvenient or that the pace of amendments being introduced is inconvenient for the House leader. Nonetheless, it's democracy.

For folks over there who have been pounding their chests with great passion over how they are the saviours of democracy, just to be clear: most people don't buy that. Nonetheless, I'm glad that you believe it. It makes you happy, so it makes me happy, too, that you're able to feel warm and fuzzy about that. But it is a bit ironic to say that you're the saviour of democracy when, in fact, you're doing the kinds of things that are going on here.

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Chair: A point of order has been called. The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika.

Point of Order Misleading the House

Mr. Schow: Sure. The member opposite is saying and claiming that the Government House Leader claimed that they didn't bring in amendments. We're saying that you didn't bring them in last night. She's actually misleading the House. I would encourage that member to refrain from misleading the House. I know that it's so difficult when you don't have the truth on your side.

Ms Ganley: I think that we've had this conversation with the Speaker on several occasions about instances in which members are quite clearly trying to eat into the time simply by raising spurious points of order. He literally stood up and said, "That member is misleading the House," which is itself a point of order, and calling a point of order on absolutely nothing and just wanting to jump in on the debate. Perhaps, Madam Chair, if you might be willing to warn the deputy government whip that he should not be using points of order to attempt to engage in debate.

The Chair: Hon. members, this is clearly a dispute of the facts. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition still has the floor.

Debate Continued

Ms Notley: Well, thank you. There are a number of amendments that, had we had the opportunity to get them through or had Parliamentary Counsel had a chance to look through them fully, we would have introduced as it relates to protecting the rights of unions. I'm going to try to go through them very quickly.

We had an amendment that was going to change the clear, obvious intent within Bill 32 to bury unions in red tape with respect to the nature of the financial statements that this bill requires them to provide to their members. Let me be very clear that (a) we're fine with there being statutory obligation for unions to provide financial statements to members; (b) unions already do this; (c) the way this is written, it is done in a way to allow people to essentially paralyze the unions' operations, and it is written that way intentionally.

What we would have done was that we would have still allowed for that obligation for the financials to be in there, but we would have removed the opportunity for the matter to be tied up endlessly, thereby paralyzing the union in its efforts to do its work. We also would have brought an amendment that would have changed the dues structure from an opt-in model to an opt-out model.

The members opposite are fully aware that the broad range of activities that they require individual union members to opt in on amount to an elimination of the Rand formula as well as are part of an overall regime that would, again, paralyze the union from doing anything at any given time. It would also actually paralyze the employers who are unionized because they, too, would be required to constantly check and recheck the ever-changing rules that the government reserves for itself the power to make and also just the timing of all the things. I won't get into it in great detail because I don't have the time. Again, this was constructed in a spurious way and definitely intended to paralyze the union in its activities of any type. This is effectively union-busting legislation, and this section, of course, will be absolutely found to be unconstitutional so quickly. Nonetheless, we had hoped to have a chance to propose an amendment that would have stopped that particular unconstitutional amendment from passing this Legislature, which, unfortunately, is going to be used in such an unfortunate way.

9:50

We also would have introduced an amendment that would have specifically allowed unions to continue to donate to charities.

Again, the UCP doesn't seem to believe that unions should be allowed to donate to charities. It's strange. I don't know what they have against charities. I don't know if they think that money that comes from unions is actually radioactive. I'm not exactly sure what the problem is. Nonetheless, the current bill is essentially going to put a limit on unions donating to charities. We don't know why. We wanted to change that. Members opposite, we could have had a good debate. We could have asked questions. We could have heard why it was that you wanted to do that, but now we can't.

Anyway, then we had a couple of amendments that were going to undo the opportunities that are now introduced into this legislation, which are unlike anything anywhere else in the country, which essentially invite employers to engage in unfair labour practices and then at the same time prohibit the Labour Relations Board from providing equitable remedies, a long-standing common-law principle, to those unions once the employer, through their intimidation tactics, has effectively poisoned the well and made it impossible for a union to ever organize because everyone is scared to death for themselves and their jobs. This was an effort to undo the invitation for that kind of behaviour, but unfortunately we will not be able to bring those in.

One of the things that the bill does, that we would have eliminated, is that it allows for certification drives and revocation drives to go on endlessly and for there to be opportunity after opportunity after opportunity for them to be delayed. That, of course, is what employers using unfair labour practices often rely on, and it flies in the face of legal decisions which articulate the reason to avoid that kind of process.

We were also going to propose some amendments to eliminate what is now in this bill, which is very limited circumstances under which the board can provide a remedy when the employer's unfair labour practices have resulted in a representational vote that does not reflect the wishes of workers. Again, this is something that's been part of labour relations laws across the country forever. It actually has previously been part of the labour relations scheme in Alberta even before our changes four or five years ago. What these guys are now doing through Bill 32 is that they're making it almost impossible for the Labour Relations Board to provide an equitable remedy when they find that either party, actually, the union or the employer, engages in an unfair labour practice such that the representational vote can no longer be done in a democratic way, again interfering with the authority of the Labour Relations Board.

Now, here's an interesting one, actually. You know, the whole alleged reason for this horrid collection of union-busting, Alabama-esque attacks on labour rights is that we have to do everything we possibly can to support the democratic rights of individual union members and that that's what this whole scheme is about. Now, that is hooey. Nonetheless, if one were for a moment to just follow along with the notion that this is correct, then you run right up against this brick wall of two things that are within Bill 32 which fundamentally undermine the democratic rights of individual union members to choose their union. There used to be a thing where typically employer-dominated unions would come up with a deal with the employer, and they would negotiate a deal before the open period. And by doing that, there was never an opportunity for union members to go to a different union and try to have an organizing drive or, conversely, to actually decertify the employer-dominated union or any union, frankly.

Eventually what happened was that the courts said: "This is ridiculous, these closed periods. That's really bad. It undermines the fundamental democratic rights of the individual worker, who might not like their union." Oh, my God. That sounds like the very group of people that the UCP is out there to defend except – you know what? – they've actually put that back into the legislation, so

now you can have unions work together with employers to negotiate away open periods. So now the individual worker has lost their ability to choose their union, something that was built into the system before but now is gone.

Just in case any of you folks back there were thinking, “Hey, we agree with the boss; what he’s trying to do is stand up for individual union members’ rights,” note to self: actually, the opposite is what’s happening in this legislation. That’s something that we would have proposed changing. Now we don’t have the opportunity.

We were also going to make a number of amendments that would have brought these particular changes into the Police Officers Collective Bargaining Act, the Public Education Collective Bargaining Act, and the Public Service Employee Relations Act. All of those were amendments that we had hoped to be able to bring in front of this House in order to stop the government from breaking the Constitution and also stop them from undermining the democratic rights of individual working people. Unfortunately, that is not something that’s going to be allowed as a result of the imposition of time allocation by this government.

Now, there were a few other things that we were also going to bring in – just a second; they are right here – again, the whole issue of time limits and allowing for opportunities for union members and/or employers and/or unions to engage in additional adjudication in the course of either a certification revocation or a certification process.

Another thing that has been removed by Bill 32, which we would also have brought an amendment around, was the limitation of the use of a first collective agreement, binding arbitration. This was a thing that, frankly, was brought in in B.C. by the NDP back in the day, where you have a first contract, and there’s a strike because the employer is shocked and appalled that they’ve actually been unionized and the last thing they want to do is negotiate. Things get really heated, and it’s really bad, and nobody ever works, and there’s much disruption of business activity.

In B.C. back in the ’90s the NDP government brought in what was referred to as first-contract arbitration. It just basically meant that if you meet a certain point in your first contract, you must go to arbitration, and you will get an agreement of some type with certain fundamental basic rights, and the rest has to either be arbitrated or negotiated. But it gives the basic element of it, and then they can sort of learn how to start negotiating with each other from there.

Now, of course, at the time the Liberals/Conservatives were appalled at it and said: “Oh, my God. This is the worst thing ever. Blah, blah, blah.” Interestingly, once they took over government, they decided not to get rid of it. Why? Because it reduced the number of lost days of industrial activity and lost days of productivity and lost days of just contribution to the whole overall economic world by something like 80 per cent. So those picket-lined conflicts disappeared because they had that first-contract arbitration language, and it was something that both sides agreed worked. Bill 32 significantly limits the circumstances in which that first-contract arbitration will now happen at all, so it’s a huge loss, again, to the notion of a functional, collaborative labour relations scheme.

Anyway, those are the primary things that we are not going to be able to talk about. Suffice it to say, I think that if I had the time, I could probably walk you through about nine different constitutional violations as it relates to the rights of unions in here. It is truly unprecedented and quite shameful.

10:00

That being said, I am going to introduce an amendment to Bill 32 that relates to the averaging agreements and the regime through which this government in the absence of this amendment is taking overtime away from at least half a million to a million working

Albertans. I will take this opportunity now to provide the original copy of this amendment and copies to members of the House to take a look at that.

The Chair: This will be known as amendment A4.

Hon. member, please proceed.

Ms Notley: Okay. This is moved on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods and our labour critic. What it would do is amend section 1(11)(a)(i) by striking out “the employer may require or permit the employee or group of employees to work an averaging agreement” and substituting “the employer may, following consultation with the employee or group of employees, require or permit that employee or group of employees to work an averaging agreement.”

In essence it just goes back to the stated play that members opposite valiantly argued in this House that they were in favour of last fall when they said: “Oh, we don’t know why you’re talking about this taking away overtime. This would only happen if the workers agreed to it. That’s the only thing that’s in here. You guys are all about fear and smear. Oh my goodness, you’re just so hysterical, and you’re so angry and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.” Lo and behold, it turned out that the language didn’t work quite the way they thought, so they had to change it to actually do what we said we thought they were going to do, which is force employees to work an averaging agreement, which takes away their overtime.

Bill 32 forces employees to work an averaging agreement with no ability to say yea or nay; the employer can just do it. Instead of doing it for three months, they can now do it for 12 months, and they get no choice. This is exactly the thing, in fact, that we said to Albertans that this government was bent on doing. This absolutely goes after the ability of working people to earn overtime in cases where they might work 80 hours in a week. It is an attack on working people and absolutely contrary to what the Premier promised Albertans in the election campaign itself, because we actually raised it in the election campaign as well.

We have to think that the members opposite didn’t actually mean to say something that wasn’t accurate at the time, whether it be in the election or whether it be last fall. On that assumption, we believed that the members opposite would be very pleased to accept this amendment because the acceptance of this amendment would align with the statements they made in the House last fall. It would also align with the guarantees and the promises the Premier made to Albertans in the last election.

I know that the members opposite are super proud of the fact that they won the last election, and are very super proud that it was based on the things that they said. What they said is that it would look like what it would like if you pass this amendment. What they did not say is that they would bring in Bill 32, with the imposed averaging agreement for 52 weeks. Knowing how much they are so proud of that victory, presumably they want to still align with what they said to Albertans when they earned that victory. I’m sure that they would very much enjoy the opportunity to support this amendment, which will actually allow working people to choose whether an averaging agreement on overtime works for them as well as the employer suggesting that it would be helpful to them. Of course, to listen to folks on the other side, it’s a partnership, and both partners, the employer and the employee, should agree to that kind of flexibility in the workplace.

I certainly hope that members opposite will agree to support this amendment.

The Chair: Any members wishing to join debate on amendment A4?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion on amendment A4 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main bill. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I will begin by distributing the amendment, including the original, through the hard-working LASS. While it's making its way up, if I could get a time check, I'd really appreciate that.

The Chair: We will go to 10:43.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A5. Please proceed.

Ms Hoffman: I move on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods that we amend Bill 32 by striking out section 1(9). For everyone's awareness, that's the section that changes rest periods.

Under current legislation, which this bill is attempting to amend, there is a rest period that says that if you work 10 hours, you can receive a 30-minute rest period. This is what we think is a minimum. The amendment strikes that proposed section 1(9) so that the previous set of rules applies. Sorry; the government is proposing that it be only 30 minutes, and under the previous set of rules it could be a greater period of time, Madam Chair. I'll walk through some of those changes.

If you want to ensure that you have the ability to work a fair and reasonable hour – 10 hours is certainly a long period of time. It states that the rest period could take place in an agreed-upon time, but if not, then the employer gets to decide what works best for them in the current section 1(9), and those times that could be best for them are at the end of five hours or, if there is a second five-hour period, another break in an unspecified time. There is no reason, then, to assume, if a 30-minute rest period can be at the end of the shift, that the second rest period couldn't be at the end of the 10 hours. Essentially, you would get only one 30-minute rest period. Under Bill 32 a worker could be scheduled to work from noon until 11 p.m. and get a break from 5 to 5:30 and another break from 10:30 to 11. That certainly wouldn't be the kind of rest period that would enable them to achieve their greatest productivity.

This is one of the reasons why we believed it was so important that there be agreement rather than imposed directives on this when we originally brought in the legislation that the government is attempting to amend. Under the previous legislation you would be at work for 11 hours, and you would definitely get two breaks, not have one of them scheduled at the end of the shift.

Again, the point of breaks is to make sure that people have the ability to recharge, refocus. I know I appreciated that we had one tonight, as I'm sure so did my colleagues, an opportunity to get some fresh air, maybe return some phone calls, do other things to help one sort of sharpen the saw and get ready for another period of work and focus. I think that that is the original intent of having breaks when one works, and that intent should be met. That's why we're bringing forward this amendment.

I wish I could go on at great length because I think that this is something that – taking away people's breaks definitely wasn't in the campaign platform, I'll tell you that much. It isn't something that I think most people would agree with. I think that's one of the reasons why the government has chosen to introduce this in July in the midst of a pandemic, calling most of the debate in the late evening, knowing that people aren't spending a lot of their time focused on what's happening in this Assembly, although I know that many people are tonight. I think that's one of the reasons why the government ultimately has brought in closure, to try to ram

through these kinds of changes in hopes that people won't pay attention.

I think that in an 11-hour shift you should definitely be entitled to two actual breaks rather than having one scheduled at the end of a shift. I think that this is a way to make sure that that happens, and I thank the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods for bringing it forward.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any members wishing to join debate on amendment A5?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion on amendment A5 lost]

The Chair: We're back on the main. Any members wishing to join debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to address the House again on Bill 32, and I have an amendment, so I'll begin with that.

10:10

The Chair: This will be known as amendment A6.

Hon. member, please proceed.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will read the amendment on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods, to move that Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, be amended in section 1 by striking out subsection (15). Now, this subsection has to do with the notice for temporary layoffs.

In the present circumstances workers would be given two weeks' notice before a temporary layoff occurred. In this bill the direction is to have the employer be able to begin temporary layoffs without that two weeks' notice. This is very significant as it takes people who are already in a precarious position, being vulnerable to temporary layoffs, therefore people whose work is not always consistent and therefore their income is not always consistent, being put in a place where the little planning and safety that they had in place before, the opportunity to do some planning to take care of themselves, has been taken away. In this case it means that if you lose two weeks of notice, it also means that you lose the last two weeks of your work, so they're losing two weeks of pay. It means that you do not have two weeks to plan your application for EI and to get in the proper documents to ensure that your EI comes in a timely manner, and it puts you in a situation where you are without work and do not have two weeks to begin the process of trying to seek work while you are approaching your termination date, your layoff date.

So it really is a situation where a hundred per cent of the pain is put onto the worker, workers who are already vulnerable, workers who are already living a precarious life in terms of the security of their employment and again puts us in this position that power is shifted from the hands of workers, who are those vulnerable people, to provide that power to companies to take away some important options for the individual workers, take away some of their pay, take away some of their options for planning, for taking care of their families, planning, whether it would be EI or planning to get new work. All of this I think is, really, completely unnecessary. I think that when temporary layoffs are coming, that tends to be a well-planned-out process on the part of corporations and businesses. As such, they certainly have the time to offer the employees notice that this is coming down the pike.

I think that it is very important that we go back to respecting workers and respecting the difficulties that workers will experience

if this part of section 1 were to go ahead. This amendment withdraws those pieces of the bill and puts back into place the protections that were offered previous to the application of this bill.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any members wishing to join debate on amendment A6?

Seeing none, I will call the question on amendment A6.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A6 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:14 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

For the motion:

Feehan	Loyola	Schmidt
Ganley	Pancholi	Sigurdson, L.
Hoffman		

Against the motion:

Aheer	Jones	Rowswell
Amery	Lovely	Sawhney
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Luan	Schow
Dreeschen	Madu	Schulz
Fir	Neudorf	Sigurdson, R.J.
Getson	Nixon, Jason	Smith
Glasgo	Orr	Walker
Hanson	Rehn	Wilson
Horner	Rosin	

Totals:	For – 7	Against – 26
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[Motion on amendment A6 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main bill, Bill 32. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 32. Of course, we know that this bill is about creating greater inequality in our province, which should not be anything that any government is proud to do. Even though we already have the greatest income inequality of any province in Canada, this UCP government is continuing to pick the pockets of workers, do whatever they can to keep tipping the scales of power more and more into sort of those top percentiles, and this legislation before us continues to do that. I have an amendment to take part of the legislation and make it better so that it doesn't actually do that. I do have the original on top.

Thank you.

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A7.

Hon. member, please proceed.

10:20

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you. Before us we have amendment A7. I'm doing it on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods. I'll just read it into the record. Member Gray moves that Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, be amended in section 1(11) by striking out clause (a) and substituting the following:

(a) by striking out subsection (1) and substituting the following:

Hours of work averaging agreements

23.1(1) Subject to subsection (1.01) and the regulations, if an employer and an employee or a group of employees are not bound

by a collective agreement, the employer may require or permit the employee or group of employees to work an averaging arrangement that provides that the employer will average an employee's hours of work over a period of one to 52 weeks for the purpose of determining the employee's entitlement to overtime pay or, instead of overtime pay, time off with pay.

(1.01) The period referred to in subsection (1) must not include any period that exceeds 4 consecutive weeks during which the employee did not work for the employer.

That, in short, will make some changes for this legislation.

This current legislation is allowing employers to force workers to accept their hours being averaged over an entire year, which could result in no overtime pay at all even though someone might work 12 hours a day. This means seasonal workers, part-time workers, or workers whose schedules fluctuate. They may be working those long hours, but they could have those hours averaged out over the whole year or perhaps months where they would not be working, which lets their employer avoid paying overtime. Of course, we know lots of jobs like that: jobs in the oil and gas industry, job in the landscaping industry. Some people work only in those summer months. With this legislation, because they're not working in those winter months, the employer could average out their working hours over those months, up to the whole year, and even though they may have worked extremely long hours, they will not get any overtime. Of course, this amendment corrects that and makes sure that people are paid fairly and that they do receive overtime.

Before these changes workers and employers could agree to averaging agreements, but the maximum period that hours could be averaged over was 12 weeks. It's quite a dramatic difference between 12 weeks and 52 weeks. Most importantly, Madam Chair, workers had a choice. Agreements have now been replaced by arrangements, and there's a big difference between an agreement and an arrangement. An agreement is, of course, between the worker and the employer, and they come to an agreement about something. Both have input into the end result. But with an arrangement, that means that the employers can just say: this is how it is. The worker, again, has no power to have any input into that. Of course, that decreases their ability to influence, and the employers can do what they want.

Just to reiterate, because the new averaging arrangements can be for up to 52 weeks, those weeks off could be used to average down the weekly hours worked and overtime. The minister says that these new provisions will not remove overtime, but their own FAQ documents state: "There is more flexibility ... to determine how and if daily overtime applies," more flexibility for the employer so that they can do what they want. Remember that it's not an agreement anymore, an agreement between the worker and the employer; it's just an arrangement. The legislation has changed it so that the worker doesn't have a say, and the employer can just impose that on them.

Certainly, if the government is serious that their intention is not that hours, including overtime, be averaged for up to a year or longer with the new, easier exemption period, they should have no problem agreeing to this amendment. You know, people who do seasonal work: they work very long hours, and they should be compensated for that. They should be able to get overtime. It is certainly what's fair.

The new averaging agreements put all the power into the hands of the employers. Again, even in the government's own FAQ docs, it says, "Employers can start or change an hours of work averaging arrangement by giving employees two weeks' notice, without getting employees' consent."

Once again, you know, we're tipping the scales always in favour of the employers, not supporting workers, picking the pockets of workers here in Alberta. This is something that we've seen time and again with this government, and this amendment goes a long way to creating more fairness for workers so that they can be remunerated properly for oftentimes working very long hours. If they're seasonal employees, they're still working those hours, and they deserve to have that overtime.

I encourage all members of this House to support the amendment that's before us, amendment A7, and with that, I'll take my seat.

The Chair: Any members wishing to join debate on amendment A7?

Seeing none, I will call the question on amendment A7 as moved by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview on behalf of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

[Motion on amendment A7 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main bill. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to introduce another amendment to Bill 32, and I've got the copies here to provide. I'll wait till you get a copy of it.

The Chair: This will be known as amendment A8.

Hon. member, please proceed.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm moving this amendment on behalf of my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods. The amendment reads: the member moves that Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, be amended by striking out section 1(18)(c).

Madam Chair, the purpose of this amendment is to address the fact that Bill 32 removes from the Employment Standards Code the requirement that when a director is considering an application by an employer or group of employers to seek an exemption from the requirements of some portion of the Employment Standards Code, the director, before approving such exemption from the application of the code, must be satisfied that issuing the variance or exemption meets the criteria established by the regulations. Bill 32 removes that requirement, that the exemption has to meet these criteria set out in the regulations, which clearly suggests that there will no longer be criteria set out in the regulations.

As a reminder, Madam Chair, currently in the regulations, before an employer can seek an exemption from the application of the minimum standards, which are there to protect the employer but also, most importantly, the employee – we recognize that there is a power imbalance between employers and employees, and that's the purpose of the Employment Standards Code, to provide those minimum protections – the director has to be satisfied that certain criteria are met.

These criteria are currently set out in the regulations, and they describe various things such as ensuring the employer's compliance history relating to employment standards legislation and occupational health and safety legislation. They'll consider the track record and the compliance record of that employer. They'll look at the rationale for the request for the exemption. They'll look at whether or not there is support for the proposed variation or exemption from the code by either the bargaining agent or union, if the employees are represented by a bargaining agent, or, where there is no bargaining agent or union, that the employees to which the application would apply have also provided some support for the exemption from the code. As well, the director would look at

any effect that such a variance or exemption from the Employment Standards Code provisions could have on the safety, health, or welfare of the public or the employees to which the application relates.

This is important, Madam Chair, because it sets out that we need to be sure, when we're exempting employers or groups of employees from the minimum standards set out in the Employment Standards Code, that some consideration is given to whether or not it is appropriate to do so. That's why criteria is set out in the regulations. It's there to make sure that the employer is not taking advantage of the Employment Standards Code and that there's not a vulnerability of either the public or the employees to the exemption from those provisions. This is really, again, about basic protections for workers under the Employment Standards Code. By removing this under Bill 32, all an employer has to show to the director is that the area of the code or the subject matter of the code to which they're seeking a variance or exemption is one of those areas which can be subject to a variance or an exemption. It certainly does not require the employer any more to establish that the criteria which I just described have been met, and we have significant concerns that this means that exemptions will be given out much more freely. We need to make sure that there's some thoughtful consideration given by the director under the Employment Standards Code to make sure that workers are not being exempted from the minimum standards of the Employment Standards Code without a proper consideration of the context, the history of the employer, and the effect of such an exemption on employees or the public.

10:30

That's the purpose of the amendment that we brought forward, Madam Chair, simply to strike this out to make sure that there are still some protections when employees are seeking exemptions from the Employment Standards Code. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to join debate on amendment A8?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A8 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:31 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

For the motion:

Feehan	Loyola	Schmidt
Ganley	Pancholi	Sigurdson, L.
Hoffman		

Against the motion:

Aheer	Jones	Rowswell
Amery	Lovely	Sawhney
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Luan	Schow
Dreeshen	Madu	Schulz
Fir	Neudorf	Sigurdson, R.J.
Getson	Orr	Smith
Glasgo	Rehn	Walker
Hanson	Rosin	Wilson
Horner		

Totals:	For – 7	Against – 25
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[Motion on amendment A8 lost]

The Chair: We're back on the main Bill 32 in Committee of the Whole. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would also like to move an amendment to Bill 32 at this time.

The Chair: It's a two-pager. This will be known as amendment A9. Hon. member, please proceed.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Chair. On behalf of my friend from Edmonton-Mill Woods I move that Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, be amended in section 1(5) by striking clause (a) and substituting the following: in subsection (2) by striking out "an employer may" and substituting "subject to subsection (5), an employer may"; by adding the following after clause (a):

- (a.1) a recovery of an overpayment of earning paid to the employee resulting from a payroll calculation error,
- (a.2) a recovery of vacation pay paid to the employee in advance of the employee being entitled to it;

in clause (c) by adding the following immediately after the proposed section 12(4):

- (5) Unless a written authorization under subsection (2)(c) is provided by an employee in respect of a deduction of which the employer is required to give notice under subsection (4), the employer

- (a) must not, in respect of the employee's earning for any pay period to which the deduction is to be applied, deduct from those earnings a sum of money that is equal to more than 10% of those earnings, and
- (b) subject to subsection (2.1), may apply the deduction to the employee's earning for more than one pay period until the total sum of money in respect of the deduction has been collected.

- (6) For greater certainty, an employer is not required to provide notice to an employee under subsection (4) in respect of deductions made in accordance with subsection (5)(b).

A lengthy amendment to be sure, but I can summarize it quite succinctly, Madam Chair. This amendment makes changes to section 1(5) that would limit the amount that an employer could deduct from any given cheque to 10 per cent of the total earnings without employee approval.

What Bill 32 allows and what this amendment is trying to limit is employers deducting payroll errors made to their paycheques without consultations with the employee. I'm sure that we've all been in the situation where a potential payroll error has been made, and, you know, we've probably spent that money before we even realized that the payroll error was made and then the employer wants to claw that back. There are a number of Albertans, Madam Chair, as you know, who can't even cover a \$400 emergency expense much less whatever the payroll recovery is the employer wants to give.

We think it's only fair that this power be curtailed to limit the extent to which an employer can deduct earnings in the case of a payroll error to 10 per cent to limit the amount of damage that these kinds of clawbacks would have on the bottom lines of employees. We think that this is only fair, and we think that this legislation, if it was truly about creating balance in the workplace, would recognize a significant power imbalance between employers and employees and give employees more power in these cases. That's what we believe this amendment does.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any members wishing to join debate on amendment A9?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion on amendment A9 lost]

The Chair: We are back on the main bill, Bill 32. The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

10:40

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Madam Chair. You will not be surprised to discover that I, too, rise to move an amendment. I move this amendment on behalf of my hon. colleague . . .

The Chair: Sorry. Just wait until I have a copy.

Ms Ganley: I move this amendment on behalf . . .

The Chair: Sorry. This will be known as amendment A10. Now you can please proceed.

Ms Ganley: On behalf of my hon. colleague for Edmonton-Mill Woods I move that the act be amended in section 1 in subsection (22) in the proposed section 137 by adding the following after the proposed subsection (2):

- (2.1) An employee who gives notice to the Minister under subsection (1) must, immediately after giving that notice to the Minister, provide a copy of it

- (a) in the case of an employee subject to the notice who has a bargaining agent, to that bargaining agent, and
- (b) in the case of an employee subject to the notice who does not have a bargaining agent, to the employee in accordance with the regulations;

in subsection (23)(c) by striking out the proposed clause (d.3) and substituting the following:

- (d.3) respecting the manner in which notice must be given to an employee under section 137(2.1).

The intention with this particular amendment is to ensure that individuals are given notice about large group terminations. Bill 32 removes the need to notify employees or their bargaining representatives about large group terminations, but they do still have to notify the minister for reasons that I will not speculate on. The employee would still get their statutory notice of termination, but the minister will know ahead of time, before either the bargaining agent or the employee knows.

There isn't, Madam Chair, in my view, any good justification for this particular change. I can't imagine why it is that the minister would need advance notice of what's happening to a group of employees being laid off or why it would be more relevant to the minister than it would be to the people who are losing their jobs. I have a series of theories, but I won't go into them right here. I think this would certainly allow a certain, shall we say, issue management of the issue. I think this is a huge concern, and I think it is the individuals who are being terminated who have the right to know about this.

With that, Madam Chair, I would suggest that all members vote in favour of this particular amendment.

The Chair: Hon. members, pursuant to Government Motion 35, agreed to earlier this evening, I must now put every question necessary for the disposal of Bill 32 in Committee of the Whole.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A10 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:43 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

For the motion:

Feehan	Pancholi	Shepherd
Ganley	Schmidt	Sigurdson, L.
Loyola		

Against the motion:

Aheer	Jones	Rosin
Amery	Lovely	Rowswell
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Luan	Sawhney
Barnes	Madu	Schow
Dreeshen	McIver	Schulz
Fir	Neudorf	Sigurdson, R.J.
Getson	Nixon, Jason	Smith
Glasgo	Orr	Walker
Hanson	Rehn	Wilson
Horner		

Totals: For – 7 Against – 28

[Motion on amendment A10 lost]

The Chair: Now on the clauses of Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, in Committee of the Whole.

[The voice vote indicated that the remaining clauses of Bill 32 were agreed to]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:47 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

For:

Aheer	Jones	Rosin
Amery	Lovely	Rowswell
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Luan	Sawhney
Barnes	Madu	Schow
Dreeshen	McIver	Schulz
Fir	Neudorf	Sigurdson, R.J.
Getson	Nixon, Jason	Smith
Glasgo	Orr	Walker
Hanson	Rehn	Wilson
Horner		

10:50

Against:

Feehan	Pancholi	Shepherd
Ganley	Schmidt	Sigurdson, L.
Loyola		

Totals: For – 28 Against – 7

[The remaining clauses of Bill 32 agreed to]

The Chair: Now on title and preamble.

[The voice vote indicated that the title and preamble were agreed to]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:52 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

For:

Aheer	Jones	Rosin
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Amery	Lovely	Rowswell
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Luan	Sawhney
Barnes	Madu	Schow
Dreeshen	McIver	Schulz
Fir	Neudorf	Sigurdson, R.J.
Getson	Nixon, Jason	Smith
Glasgo	Orr	Walker
Hanson	Rehn	Wilson
Horner		

Against:

Dach	Irwin	Schmidt
Feehan	Pancholi	Shepherd
Ganley	Sabir	Sigurdson, L.

Totals: For – 28 Against – 9

[Title and preamble agreed to]

The Chair: Just a friendly final reminder. There will be silence when the vote is being called.

Next, shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Any opposed?

Some Hon. Members: No.

[The voice vote indicated that the request to report Bill 32 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:56 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the committee divided]

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

For:

Aheer	Jones	Rosin
Amery	Lovely	Rowswell
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Luan	Sawhney
Barnes	Madu	Schow
Dreeshen	McIver	Schulz
Fir	Neudorf	Sigurdson, R.J.
Getson	Nixon, Jason	Smith
Glasgo	Orr	Walker
Hanson	Rehn	Wilson
Horner		

11:00

Against:

Dach	Nielsen	Schmidt
Ganley	Pancholi	Shepherd
Irwin	Sabir	

Totals: For – 28 Against – 8

[Request to report Bill 32 carried]

The Chair: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I'm so excited about the progress tonight. Let's see how much further we can go with this. As such, I will move that we rise and report bills 30 and 32.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Mr. Barnes: Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 32. The committee reports the following bill with some amendments: Bill 30. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

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

Hon. Members: Aye.

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

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 30 Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a privilege to rise on behalf of the Minister of Health to move third reading of Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020.

You may have heard of it already, Madam Speaker. Bill 30 will ensure we can modernize our health legislation so that it's more nimble and helps us achieve three important goals. First, we must create more opportunities for Albertans to be involved in our health system opportunities; second, we are committed to reducing surgical wait times so every Albertan receives their surgery within medically recommended time frames, reducing wait times; and third, we must modernize the health system so that it is more effective, both for the people and families who need its services and for those who provide those services. Bill 30 supports our efforts in ensuring Albertans have access to safe, high-quality health services delivered in a more sustainable and efficient manner.

Let me address some concerns raised during earlier readings of this bill. There was much noise made about introducing American-style private health care through these amendments, yet underneath the previous NDP government wait times ballooned for cataract surgeries and for hip and knee replacements. Here in our province 43 chartered surgical facilities already provide 15 per cent of publicly funded surgeries under contract with Alberta Health Services. No patient pays for these medically necessary surgeries. Patients simply go to one of these facilities rather than to a busy hospital, and they then receive the care they need. The previous NDP government's socialist ideologies were a barrier to universal access and to people getting the care that they needed. Those choices left people behind. The NDP, Madam Speaker, left people behind.

Amendments to the Health Care Protection Act will make it easier for chartered surgical facilities to work with us and for AHS to provide publicly funded surgeries to people who need them. As chartered surgical facilities perform more low-risk surgeries, more space will be created in hospitals, which can instead focus on getting wait times down for more complex surgeries. More partners in the health system who provide publicly – publicly – funded surgeries at no cost to the individual patients improves and strengthens the entire health care system. To suggest that this is introducing American-style health care to Alberta does a disservice to an innovative solution that will help drive down the wait times.

In terms of the Health Care Insurance Act we are giving physicians more choice in how they are paid based specifically on the request of physicians and the Alberta Medical Association. We

are in no way forcing doctors to sign service contracts with us or forcing them to be paid through salarylike agreements. We are providing more compensation options that are easier to sign up for should they wish to, Madam Speaker. We recognize that doctors are independent practitioners and run their clinics as private businesses, and we have repeatedly said that we support doctors to continue to be the best and highest paid physicians in Canada. But we also need to have sustainable health care systems and sustainable compensation models that boost physicians and the care they provide and also drive future innovation. Our amendments in Bill 30 allow for that. This is about more options, more innovation, and more choice for patients and their medical providers.

This is also good in particular for our rural and remote docs, who often need to spend more time with complex patients and families. To suggest that this is not person-centred care but profit-centred care disregards and undermines the doctors who are providing the best care possible in our province.

Another amendment that the Health minister was pleased to see pass in the Legislature last night will add necessary provisions to allow for the government to disclose payments made to practitioners under the act for publicly funded health care services. This will increase transparency and accountability for these payments.

Physician compensation disclosure is not new in Canada. In fact, the NDP brought forward similar amendments in 2015, but then failed to act. Most other provinces already publish payments to physicians, including B.C., that has an NDP government, Ontario, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland. Our intention is to create the most comprehensive disclosure in Canada to add to Albertans' understanding of the important work that physicians do and how we support our publicly funded health system. As we've said before, we believe that Alberta doctors should be among the best paid in Canada. These amendments do nothing to change that view or the view of the Alberta government.

But we also need to have a sustainable health care system and a sustainable payment model. Health care is one of government's largest expenses. Albertans deserve to know how these dollars are being used. Our proposed amendments to the Health Professions Act also put people at the centre of important discussions and decisions on governance, complaint reviews, and disciplinary hearings. Medical professionals will still have independence to appoint their own members and do their own work, but involving more members of the public opens up the health system, making it more transparent, Madam Speaker, and making sure that it works best for everyone.

Changes to the Health Quality Council of Alberta will also ensure that we hear more directly from Albertans about any gaps they encounter in seeking health care. We are empowering the HQCA to expand their work and mandate to include person-centred care on top of their current focus on patient safety and health quality. This means the HQCA will have space to really engage with Albertans in new ways, moving beyond patient surveys. This is about strengthening the role of the HQCA to help us transform the health system and drive system improvement. This council will remain an independent body and will continue to launch public inquiries when and where needed.

Slates of other amendments will also modernize the health system and make sure that it works smoothly for Albertans with proper accountabilities in place. Our repeal of outdated legislation removes legislation that is no longer used so that we can focus on the future and building a stronger health system built around the people and the families who need help on their health journey.

Madam Speaker, our government, Alberta's government is committed to building a more responsive health system that puts

patients and their families at the centre. It's committed to engaging more Albertans to ensure that our health system meets their needs. Alberta's government is committed to a surgical wait time guarantee and increasing access to physicians and other health professionals. The Health Statutes Amendment Act will create us a strong, made-in-Alberta health system that is more accessible and sustainable.

Madam Speaker, I move third reading of Bill 30, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, on behalf of my colleague the hon. the Minister of Health. I would close with a couple of quick thoughts also on the debate that is taking place in the Chamber tonight.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has spent considerable time on Twitter tonight, claiming that time allocation of only one hour has been moved when it comes to third reading of Bill 30 and of Bill 32. Madam Speaker, as you know, nothing could be further from the truth. We have not moved time allocation at this stage. We moved it for Committee of the Whole after 20-some hours of debate. There's still more debate to come inside this Chamber.

It was shocking to see the Leader of the Official Opposition claim that on Bill 6 she never moved time allocation until 24 hours, when, in fact, she moved it after 10 hours in second reading of Bill 6 after only a couple of days. These pieces of legislation, including bills 32 and 30, have been in the Chamber for over three weeks and are currently well into 20-some hours of debate with more debate to come. I would encourage the Official Opposition, who has admitted on the record that last night when they showed up for our debate they did not have amendments ready – and one of the reasons that they were struggling with us moving time allocation is that after six and a half hours of debate on each bill last night they still had not been able to get their amendments ready and that this was somehow a problem that the government had created. Madam Speaker, again, you need to get your work done before arriving in the Chamber. I was the Official Opposition House Leader in this Chamber. I can tell you that we had our amendments ready when we came to the Chamber, and we had to work with Parliamentary Counsel with three other parties in the Legislature, and we still managed to get our work done.

11:10

The government under the leadership of the hon. Premier has been clear. We will do everything possible to allow the Official Opposition to do their job. We respect the role, but they need to show up and they need to do their job. Eventually we have a mandate from Albertans to pass our platform through the Legislature, and we will not allow them to plug it up.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre to respond.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak to Bill 30 at third reading. The hon. House leader suggested that nothing could be further from the truth. One thing could be: pretty much everything that gentleman just said. Mr. George Orwell indeed I think is probably rolling in his grave tonight having listened to the prepared speech read by the hon. Government House Leader about the intentions and what this government is in fact doing with Bill 30.

Indeed, just tonight we found out about an RFP that was issued by this government through Alberta Health to create a brand new health contracting secretariat in the province of Alberta. I understand that RFP just closed today. The purpose of that secretariat is to create more room for American-style, private profit in the midst of our public health care system indeed, Madam Speaker, to bring profit-centred care to the province of Alberta in

place of patient-centred care. This health contracting secretariat is going to be advising Alberta Health Services, apparently, on designing and implementing innovative – so that's more private profit; that's what this government means when they use that word – procurement, approaches, contracts, funding models for clinic services with independent providers. This government is dedicated to carving up every piece of our public health care system to put out for profit.

The secretariat is going to be doing this on a number of fronts: on chartered surgical facilities, primary care. Indeed, that's what we see in Bill 30. This is making more room for corporate shareholders to take over doctors' offices. People will not receive the same level of personal care from their family physician that they receive now. This government has spent months attacking physicians, undermining them at every single turn, again, to make more room for private profit, corporate profit on people's health in the province of Alberta, to take that out of the hands of actual health professionals and move it into the hands of corporate shareholders. It's only a matter of time, Madam Speaker, I'm sure, before we're going to hear the stories of the cronyism and the backroom dealings and the friends of government who are getting these contracts. It's a matter of time.

Let's be clear, Madam Speaker. This is not innovative. This government wants to pat themselves on the back and talk about how clever they are being, this unique, brand new solution they've brought. We have been here before, as I've said many times during this debate. This has been the Holy Grail of Conservative governments in this province for decades, looking for the ways that they could try to dance around the principles of the Canada Health Act, take every opportunity they can find to shovel more public money to their friends in private corporations on the backs of Albertans' health.

Indeed, we think back to 1996. Premier Ralph Klein tried. He struggled, Madam Speaker, to get private, for-profit operators to take over lab services in Calgary, but due to a lack of interest from the private sector only three private corporations actually came forward. They didn't have enough capacity to actually take over those lab services from the public sector, so two of the corporations entered into a deal with the Calgary health authority. So we again had public dollars from the public health care system going to help a private company get set up so that it could make profit off Albertans' health. You know what? By 2006, 10 years later, that project was a failure. Testing and other projects through Calgary lab services were more expensive than through the public system, and indeed those corporations pulled out. All lab services were returned to the public sector.

The Health Resource Centre in Calgary, Madam Speaker, another one of the vaunted projects of Premier Klein, a private facility performing surgeries on the public dollar and again another failure, faced bankruptcy, had to be bailed out by the Alberta taxpayer. It was, again, public dollars going to subsidize private profit, just as this government intends to use public dollars to set up their little secretariat to, literally, go out and request corporations to please come in and take over parts of our health care system so that we can shovel more public taxpayer money out, to continue to undermine our public system for the private profit of many who, I'm sure, will be found to be friends and acquaintances of this government. This has been the pattern that we have seen from Conservative governments in the province of Alberta in their ideology.

The hon. House leader spoke of how this bill would bring more opportunities for Albertans, not for Albertans who need care, Madam Speaker, but for Albertans who are sitting as corporate shareholders, for Albertans who perhaps own shares in Telus or

Albertans who are looking for that opportunity to build that additional private clinic and get their contracts from this government to make their padded profits off Albertans' health while the public system gets left with the more complex cases while we see our limited number of doctors and anaesthesiologists lured away from the public operating rooms. This is not going to provide more opportunities for Albertans to be involved in the health care system, as this gentleman claimed. It's more opportunities for corporations, for private shareholders, profit-centred, not person-centred, care.

It's clear that this has been a strategy and this has been a plan that's been laid out by this government from those first attacks undermining physicians in the province of Alberta, those guardians of the public health care system, displacing family doctors, displacing health professionals throughout the system, taking them out, sidelining them so that they would not be there to stand up for public health care in the province of Alberta, for the quality of care, to replace them instead, Madam Speaker, with far lower quality corporate care as this government through Bill 30 is now giving corporations the ability to bill the government of Alberta directly for medical services. Taking health care professionals out of the driver's seat in providing care for Albertans and putting corporate shareholders in: this is the beginning of a degradation of the public health care system in the province of Alberta.

[Mr. Amery in the chair]

I said in a member's statement that I made early on, when this bill was first introduced in this House, that the health care system we have today will not be here in a year from now. We are going to have a decidedly different health care system in this province. This government makes claims about innovation. They talk big about more choice, more opportunity. I can tell you that this will not be a better system for Albertans. We are not going to see more opportunities for Albertans to access care, Mr. Speaker. What we are going to see is more private providers, more corporations, more people making profit off the public system, more public dollars subsidizing and building private infrastructure, private health care infrastructure here in the province of Alberta, as this government is intent on building up a level of private health care infrastructure like no province in this country has seen, to try to build so strong a footprint that it could never be erased.

11:20

Mr. Speaker, not one – not one – expert in health policy or actual front-line health care provider has spoken in favour of this bill, but many, many have sounded the warning bells. Many have spoken out to warn that this is the first step in an utter erosion of the public health care system in the province of Alberta, a quality system that just saw us through a global pandemic because of the investments that had been made, the capacity that had been built. This government, through Bill 30, is set on undermining it, on tearing it down.

This is not what Albertans voted for, Mr. Speaker, and I know because my office has received hundreds of e-mails from Albertans who are deeply concerned about this bill, and I know that this Premier, the Minister of Health, and government members are getting those e-mails, too. I've seen the kinds of responses they send to their constituents, full of the same talking points which they bring forward in this Assembly, which, I have no doubt, some government member, perhaps the Premier himself, perhaps some other member, is going to get up and spout again as they talk about me spreading fear and smear. But it's just going to be a matter of time before the truth comes out.

Indeed, we already see much of it here. The writing is on the wall. We see how this government is looking to undermine the Health Quality Council of Alberta utterly, to put it under the thumb of the Minister of Health, much as in so many other ways they've sought to undermine every other individual practitioner or agency that might hold them to account, that might actually monitor the damage they will be doing to our health care system, much as we have seen this minister try to exert his influence and pressure on the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta, much as they are going to give themselves the ability now to appoint, themselves personally, 50 per cent of the board of every health profession college in the province of Alberta.

Again, this is a government that is hiding from transparency, that hides themselves from the same scrutiny that they insist all others should be under, indeed even as they in the dead of night yesterday suddenly came forward with the amendments to add the transparency pieces around physician compensation to this bill. If that was something they truly believed in, they had plenty of time to bring that forward, but they waited until they had been fighting for months with doctors and, frankly, Mr. Speaker, coming out on the losing end, with the Health minister himself standing in this place and saying that he had to bring that forward now to try to rescue his credibility, a bit of a lost cause at this point, certainly amongst anyone who has paid any attention to the health care system, anyone that actually works in the health care system in the province of Alberta.

But we will see – in a year from now, in two years from now, indeed in the coming months – as this government continues to charge forward with its transformational plan in the middle of a global pandemic, continuing to create chaos and uncertainty across the province that is affecting rural communities like the hon. Government House Leader's – many physicians in his constituency, Mr. Speaker, are deeply concerned and troubled by the damage that his government is doing. Rural communities are going to feel this. They already are, whatever denials this minister and his government put forward, whatever false claims they choose to make. But Albertans see it.

Mr. Speaker, this may well be my last opportunity to speak to this bill, but we have been clear with Albertans about what the agenda of this government is, and we will continue to speak out. We will continue to defend our public health care system in the province of Alberta against this government's attacks, ensure that all Albertans know the steps this government is choosing to take, and we'll be here to stand with Albertans and fight for their care.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Are there any other members who wish to speak? I see the hon. the Premier.

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak in support of Bill 30, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, at third reading. I can see the NDP doesn't like to hear rebuttals of their points. That is not unusual.

What we just heard was that this was a bill to "subsidize private profit" in the health care system. That came from the Health critic for the Official Opposition, the Member for Edmonton-City Centre. Over the last several months, well, really, since before the last election – let's face it, Mr. Speaker – he and his party have just resorted to repeating ad infinitum the classic NDP medi-scare clichés that I've heard. As long as I have been an adult, every election, every year, every day of my life the NDP's stock-in-trade to raise money from their supporters, to scare people is the classic medi-scare argument. They've been saying it not for days or weeks

or months or years but for decades. They've been saying it for decades, that free-enterprise parties of various hues in every jurisdiction in Canada intend to, quote, privatize and Americanize the Canadian health care system. Some people never get tired of telling the same old, comfortable lies. They just get used to it. And the more habituated they become to telling those lies, the bigger the lie becomes. The lie metastasizes into a big lie. I actually think, to be sympathetic, to be considerate, that they begin to believe the big lie themselves.

You know, what we have in the context of this debate at this time in Alberta is a profound and, I would submit, stark irony. The member who just spoke – apparently, he is not prepared to defend his remarks – has been for weeks attacking this government daily, sometimes hourly, in this place and elsewhere of, quote, attacking physicians and commencing, quote, a war on physicians. And now he attacks the same government of seeking to introduce profit into the health care system.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out to the member and the NDP, as I and members of the government have done on multiple occasions, the physicians in question, Alberta physicians, who are the best compensated in Canada – according to every objective data point, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, according to Dr. Janice MacKinnon's panel, according to the Ernst & Young audit, according to all of the objective data – are almost entirely professional corporations who, quite literally, seek to profit from the public health care system.

Now, here's the difference between this government and most Albertans on our side and the socialist NDP and the angry special-interest minority on their side. On our side of Alberta politics, the free-enterprise side of Alberta politics, the mainstream side of Alberta politics, we do not believe that "profit" is a dirty word. We believe that profit is a healthy incentive. It is a healthy incentive for people to dream, to aspire, to improve themselves, to educate themselves, to train themselves, to work hard and to work harder, to invest, and to take risks.

11:30

Mr. Speaker, yes, I admit it with pride: we Albertans, not the socialists but we Albertans, believe that profit is an essential element in a free-market economy because it incentivizes the kind of choices which lead to a more prosperous and generous society, and that belief is embedded in our health care system and has been since the creation of the universally insured publicly accessible single-payer health care system in Canada.

This is the profound – the Member for Edmonton-City Centre, the Health critic for the Official Opposition, I have enormous respect for him. I don't know him terribly well personally, but he's always struck me as a very intelligent individual, and I don't understand how he could not, therefore, grasp that the compensation for the physicians, which he defends hourly in this place, is in fact a profit for corporations. Almost every single one of those physicians is incorporated as a professional corporation. They're not taxed for their income, Mr. Speaker, for example, at the personal income tax rate that normal folks are; they're taxed at the corporate tax rate, the same corporate tax rate that the NDP wants to raise by 50 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, let me recite some of the facts I offered in this place in debate on Bill 30 last night. I pointed out that Alberta has, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the most generous compensatory package for physicians in Canada, that on average our physicians receive 20 per cent greater compensation than amongst other Canadian provinces. On average they receive – I have the data right here in my desk – \$443,100 in gross billing compensation from Alberta Health Services versus, by comparison,

\$375,000 in British Columbia, \$349,000 in Ontario, \$414,000 in Quebec. So to take our most proximate comparator, British Columbia – similar in scale, geography, older population admittedly – our physicians on average receive 18 per cent greater gross billings per annum than our counterparts over in B.C.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I should point out that at that level – granted, as I said last night, physicians typically, like general practitioners, family physicians, surgeons, and specialists, obviously, all incur overhead costs – rent, staff, and other related equipment costs, for example – so that does not represent their individual net compensation, but it is indicative of the relative compensation across the country, and ours are the best compensated.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I hasten to add, as both I and the hon. the Minister of Health have said repeatedly, that we do not regard that necessarily as a problem. We honour our physicians. We acknowledge that they constitute an essential part of our health care system. I acknowledge, as I did last night, that these are individuals who have made choices to incur student debt, to do multiple years of postsecondary education, and in so doing have deferred income, and they have rare and specialized skills which are essential to our society, and therefore they deserve not only to be compensated fairly but indeed generously. This government has no grief against the physicians being amongst the best compensated in Canada or, for that matter, in relative terms, amongst the best compensated in the world amongst single-payer universal health care systems. Let's just establish that as a first principle.

Now, having said that, Mr. Speaker, physicians in Alberta have seen their overall gross compensation increase by 292 per cent since 1992. Let me repeat that: 292 per cent since 1992, compared to less than a hundred per cent increase for total physician compensation in the province of British Columbia over the same 17-, 18-year period. In other words, Alberta physicians, God bless them, many of them my friends, essential Albertans, great Albertans, who deserve to be compensated fairly and generously, have seen their compensation grow three times higher, faster, than their counterparts in their neighbouring province of British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, I remind you and, through you, the Official Opposition that in the last five years Alberta has been living through a period, pre-COVID, of economic decline and stagnation, which has now reached catastrophic proportions. Since 2014 the gross domestic product of Alberta has declined from roughly \$363 billion per year to, we estimate currently – and my colleague the hon. the Minister of Finance will provide an update to this place in exactly a month – a gross domestic product of approximately \$300 billion. There has been roughly a 20 per cent decline in the size of Alberta's economy. Let me repeat that a second time. The members opposite, I think they believe that economic statistics are some kind of weird voodoo. They think these numbers are just weird abstractions that we can wish away through good wishes, that we can somehow conjure up into reality – I don't know – economic unicorns. For example, the latest unicorn of the NDP is that we're going to build 800 schools and 13,000 classrooms in the next month. That's the strange fantasyland which the NDP inhabits.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this is not about ideology. It's not about politics. It's not about partisanship. It's not about opinion. It's about cold, hard reality. It is about math, and the math, the undeniable tyranny of the numbers, is this: Alberta's economy today is 20 per cent smaller approximately than it was five years ago. Our economic output, our gross domestic product as a province has declined. I know to the NDP this sounds like an abstraction. To me, it makes me emotional to think about this, to think of a one-fifth decline. Our economy has shrunk. One out of every five dollars that we used to produce has evaporated from a number of causes; one of which was a disastrous set of public policies, and one of which

has been the collapse of the global economy in the worst contraction since the 1930s because of the coronavirus world-wide recession, the largest collapse of energy prices in history, on top of five years of economic fragility.

A 20 per cent decline. Mr. Speaker, any political party that wanted to participate in a serious and credible way in the public discourse of this province would begin with that as its starting point, would begin with that as its founding premise, would begin with that as the central challenge which we face. Instead, the socialist opposite have decided to retreat into their socialist fantasyland, imagining that it never happened, even though much of it happened under their watch, accelerated by their antigrowth policies. Twenty per cent. I repeat it and – you know what? – I’m going to repeat it every day.

Member Ceci: Under your watch.

Mr. Kenney: Oh, I’m hearing the worst Finance minister in Alberta’s history starting to heckle me, Mr. Speaker. He inherited an economy at \$363 billion GDP, and he drove that down to a \$330 billion economy.

11:40

He drove it down by 10 per cent under his watch. [interjection] He says that it’s not true. I invite him for the first time, Mr. Speaker, to open his phone, go to Google and search: StatsCan provincial GDP. He will see that when he came to office, the provincial GDP in 2014 was \$362 billion, \$363 billion a year, and when he left office, \$328 billion, \$329 billion in GDP. Again, they seek to wish away the hard numbers, the math, the reality.

But here’s the tragic piece, Mr. Speaker. It’s not actually about math; it’s about people’s lives. Under those numbers, under that one-fifth evaporation of the wealth of Alberta, are real people’s lives. We estimate that the average private-sector family’s after-tax income has declined in the past five years by at least 10 per cent. Last night I spoke of a constituent. It’s odd that we never hear these stories from the socialist members opposite. Last night I spoke of a constituent who said that her husband felt lucky to have his job even though he had seen three reductions in his compensation from a major energy company. He has seen his income go down by a third. I think members all around the room have heard endless stories that are the reality of that 20 per cent decline in Alberta’s economy.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

In that same five-year period, nurses, teachers, government custodians, janitors, public servants generally, have seen zero increases in their negotiated compensation through collective bargaining agreements. Admittedly, some have seen increases due to seniority, but in terms of their actual annual increases, held at zero.

While, Madam Speaker, physicians – physicians – according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information have seen \$443,100 in gross billings as of 2018. They have seen their compensation grow by 23 per cent, 6 per cent per year, faster. Like, we’re talking about five times faster than the consumer price index, inflation. We’re talking, yeah, as well, five times faster than the average annual growth in Alberta population, which is about 1.5 per cent. The CPI over the past five years – again, I know these are concepts that the economic illiterates in the NDP cannot comprehend, but in the past five years the average CPI has been 1.5 per cent. The average population growth has been 1.5 per cent. The average physician compensation has been 6 per cent.

Madam Speaker, behold the class warriors opposite, the great fighters against income inequality, the champions of the working

people, who held nurses and janitors to zeroes while they gave doctors, most of whom are in the top 1 per cent of income earners, 6 per cent annual increases, and they have the temerity to congratulate themselves for it.

You know, those doctors, Madam Speaker, they didn’t actually compensate the doctors. They compensated private-sector corporations who exist for one legal purpose, to maximize profit, who are taxed not at the personal income tax rate like the nurses, the janitors, or the teachers, but who are taxed – brace yourself – at the corporate tax rate. At the corporate tax rate.

Every day they rise in this place and they seek to scare Albertans in the defence of endless increases in compensation to the best compensated people in the state sector, overwhelmingly, who occupy the top 1 per cent of income earners in Alberta. Yet I just heard the Health critic for the Official Opposition, the very intelligent Member for Edmonton-City Centre, stand in this place and accuse this government of supposedly, in this bill, seeking to maximize profit in health care while attacking this government for seeking to limit profit in health care.

What is the government seeking to do? We are seeking, very simply, with respect to the physicians, Madam Speaker, to say: “We respect you. We honour you. You are an essential part of the health care system. We think you should be not only fairly but, indeed, generously compensated. In fact, because we’re Albertans, we think you should be amongst the best compensated in the country, but we think that in the face of a total collapse of our economy and our fiscal capacity as a government, maybe we should put on hold any future increases in your compensation. While private-sector families have seen 10, 20, and 30 per cent reductions in their incomes, in some cases a lot worse than that, we think that maybe – maybe – after 23 per cent increases in your compensation over the past four years we should say: could we please just hold it at zero for a while? Could we please apply the same sacrifice that nurses and teachers have experienced, much less sacrifice than many private-sector families have experienced?”

And what does the NDP characterize that request as? Instead of standing with this government to say to professional corporations, professional for-profit corporations – I said it, Madam Speaker; I hope I didn’t frighten you. To the for-profit corporations that the NDP is defending, who bill on average \$443,100 as of 2018, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, we’re simply saying: yeah; maybe \$443,000 average gross billings, 20 per cent more than the average across Canada, being in the top per cent or two of income earners in Canada is good enough for a couple of years. Maybe that’s good enough while hundreds of thousands of Albertans are out of work, while this government is facing a deficit of over \$20 billion.

When we propose an agreement with the medical association to stop the 6 per cent annual increases, to live within the means of taxpayers while still compensating our physicians generously, what is the NDP’s response? This is a, quote, war on doctors. This is creating, quote, chaos in the medical system. And then they stand up at the same time to say that the government is seeking to introduce profit into the health care system.

Let me be absolutely clear, Madam Speaker. It is the NDP, perversely and ironically, that imagines themselves as the party of the work – you know, here’s the strange thing. The other day the Leader of the Opposition stood in her place and said that the governments of British Columbia and Saskatchewan successfully concluded agreements with their medical associations; why doesn’t this government in Alberta do the same thing? You know, a reasonable question reasonable people could ask.

I would remind the NDP leader that in British Columbia, yes, they settled an agreement with B.C. physicians receiving 18 per

cent less compensation than in Alberta, and Saskatchewan physicians received 12 per cent less compensation than gross billings in Alberta: again, not opinions, not talking points; hard, verifiable data points provided not by the government of Alberta, not by me but by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, validated by former NDP Finance minister Dr. Janice MacKinnon's expert panel, further validated by one of the leading global accounting firms, Ernst & Young. So these are incontrovertible facts. Admittedly, they are inconvenient facts for the NDP. When the NDP says, "Why don't you just settle like they did in B.C. and Saskatchewan?": interesting idea. Okay. Madam Speaker, the AMA will not settle on zero, but the NDP apparently wants us to settle with them on minus 18 or minus 12.

11:50

Now, at the same time they say that, they attack us, Madam Speaker, simply for seeking to limit the profits going to professional corporations in the medical services industry. At the same time, they attack this government on seeking to maximize profits in the health care system. I say to the NDP: pick a lane. Either you are on the side – you can't play it both ways. I mean, you can try to, and you can raise some money out of it and get some headlines out of it. But if you have any integrity, any shred, a modicum of intellectual honesty, if you have any belief in your founding principles as the voice of income equality, then choose a side. Either you're on the side of the endless maximization of professional corporations operating in the health care system at 20 per cent premium costs across the country, or you're on the side of minimizing those profits by at least accepting a freeze on overall gross physician compensation at \$5.4 billion per year, which is the mandate we are seeking. Pick a lane. Pick a lane.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, again, I have considerable respect for the NDP Health critic, who spoke before me, yet I must confess that I'm disappointed that here he is after – how many hours of debate on Bill 30?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Twenty-four.

Mr. Kenney: ... twenty-four hours of debate on Bill 30, an important piece of health legislation for which he is responsible, and it's evident from his last speech that he's never bothered to read the legislation. It's inexplicable, because he went on and on about subsidized private profit while seeking to maximize private profit, by the way, in his argument on the physician compensation issue.

Let us then, actually – you know, I'm going to do something shocking but hopefully not unprecedented in the Assembly. Madam Deputy Speaker, I hope you won't bring me to order for this. I'm actually going to quote from the legislation. Instead of florid mischaracterizations and vicious ad hominem accusations I'm actually going to quote word for word from the legislation. I know that the NDP will dismiss this as ideological talking points. It's actually the legislation which we are debating before us.

I quote from section 20.1(1) at page 6 of Bill 30, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, on which we are currently engaged in third reading debate:

Remuneration to other person

20.1(1) A person may submit a claim to the Minister ...

That's the Minister of Health.

... in accordance with this section for a benefit ...

That's a payment.

... for an insured service provided by a physician if

- (a) the Minister has, in accordance with section 20, entered into an agreement or established an arrangement with the person for the payment of

benefits for the insured service on a basis other than a fee for service [payment],

- (b) the person employs or has entered into a service agreement with the physician to provide the insured service, and
- (c) the physician was opted into the Plan ...

That's the Alberta health care insurance plan.

... when the insured service was provided.

- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1) a "person" ...

Oh, here's the money quote. Brace yourself, Madam Deputy Speaker. Are you ready?

... does not include ... a professional corporation.

Does not include a professional corporation.

Let me provide some legal context for those who may be viewing the proceedings, Madam Deputy Speaker. Under a law "person" can be a natural person, could be a woman or man, what we would normally regard as a person in normal English. A person can also be a corporation. I know that sounds strange, but that's how the law works.

Let me paraphrase what I just read in section 20.1(1). By the way, Madam Deputy Speaker, what I just read, I guarantee you, you will not read in the daily fundraising e-mails from the NDP or the Alberta Federation of Labour, led by that bigot Gil McGowan, that antireligious bigot Gil McGowan. You won't read it in the e-mails sent out by the NDP Astroturf group Friends of Medicare, which basically exists to defend the NDP, but you will read it in the actual bill before the Assembly.

Government House Leader, how much time do I have?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Oh, at least another hour.

Mr. Kenney: Well, let me reread this into the record in case there was any lack of clarity.

20.1(1) A person may submit a claim to the Minister in accordance with this section for a benefit for an insured service provided by a physician if

- (a) the Minister has, in accordance with section 20, entered into an agreement or established an arrangement with the person for the payment of benefits for the insured service on a basis other than a fee for service basis,
- (b) the person employs or has entered into a service agreement with the physician to provide the insured service, and
- (c) the physician was opted into the Plan when the insured service was provided.

And finally:

- (2) for the purposes of subsection (1) a "person" does not include ... a professional corporation.

It goes on. Actually, I should go on further, to clause 3(c).

- (c) no physician shall claim or receive the payment of a benefit from the Minister with respect to the insured service.

You know what this section actually does, Madam Speaker? It does literally – literally – legally the opposite of what the NDP claims. What the section does, what the bill does is to say that – normally the form of compensation for, for example, general practitioners is that they will bill the government, Alberta Health Services, through a fee-for-service arrangement for every service that they perform. Again, brace yourself, Madam Deputy Speaker. Their profit-making corporation typically will receive a payment from AHS, from the government of Alberta, from taxpayers.

Let's put this in real plain terms, Madam Deputy Speaker. Let's say I walk out of the Assembly, I trip and I fall down the stairs, I sprain my ankle, I get an Uber up to the medical clinic, a walk-in clinic on Jasper, and I walk in there, and I wait in a waiting room.

Then I go in and I see a physician, and they look at my sprained ankle, and they give me a diagnosis. Maybe they give me a prescription for something. They maybe give me a referral for treatment. Maybe they put – I don't know – a cold press on it.

They're going to have a fee code that's designed in the relationship between their professional corporation, Madam Speaker, their profit-making corporation. I dare say it: their profit-making corporation. They're going to bill Alberta Health Services. I know. It makes me feel ill just to think about it. They're going to get for all their time and trouble, for the fee for the visit and then the consultation, et cetera, et cetera – I don't know – 50, 100, 150 bucks. I don't know exactly what they would get for that, but, you know, they would get fair compensation. Excuse me. Not them, but their professional corporation would. That's how the system basically currently works in the vast majority of cases.

What I just read, section 20.1 of Bill 30, means that as a radical alternative we would allow that physician to exit the profit-making, corporate, contractual relationship with Alberta Health Services. They could exit that, and they could instead sign an agreement with the minister to provide an insured service other than on a fee-for-service basis and that they would do so – “No physician shall claim or receive the payment of a benefit from the Minister with respect to the insured service.” In other words, Madam Speaker, what essentially this means is that this is the statutory, the legal facilitation of a contractual or salary or regular compensatory relationship between that physician and Alberta Health Services, cutting out their profit-making professional corporation.

12:00

Madam Deputy Speaker, this bill is actually the decorporatization of the health care system. This bill is actually facilitating the limitation, the reduction of the number of physicians who will have a profit-making professional corporate relationship with the government. Instead, we'll allow them effectively to operate as individual contractors or even effectively salaried employees of Alberta Health Services. This actually literally and legally allows physicians to choose to leave the evil, profit-making, professional corporate, fee-for-service relationship that the NDP apparently is so profoundly opposed to. I hope I've made that clear.

Here's the problem for the government in this perspective, Madam Deputy Speaker. As Mark Twain once wrote, it's easier for a lie to make its way halfway around the world before the truth can get his boots on. It's easier to tell a simple lie than a complicated truth. It took me a few minutes to walk through those provisions, and it's so much easier for the bigot Gil McGowan to send out an e-mail or the NDP trying to squeeze its gullible supporters for money to send out an e-mail saying that the government is going to privatize, U.S. style health care. This is the antiprivatization bill. It is the NDP, for reasons that are inexplicable to me, which seeks to maximize the corporate profit of professional corporations in the health care system, which we are seeking to limit. It is the NDP, which refused to bring forward a bill such as this to facilitate alternative reimbursement plans for physicians like per capitation, like salaries, like contract arrangements, like arrangements with the minister that are contemplated in section 20.1(1) of Bill 30.

It's interesting. I've sat in the Assembly a fair bit hearing this debate. I have not heard the NDP Health critic, come to think of it, Madam Deputy Speaker. I do not believe – and perhaps I was just here at the wrong moments – I've heard a single member of the Official Opposition actually quote from a single provision of the actual bill. Just like they have invented – you know, remember that show when I was a kid in the '70s and '80s? They had *Fantasy Island*. Well, the Official Opposition, they are well ensconced in *Fantasy Island*. In their fantasy island we're going to build 800

schools, 13,000 classrooms, and hire 13,000 teachers in the next month, because that's great for a fundraising e-mail. In their fantasy island a bill which actually facilitates physicians leaving a professional corporate profit-making relationship to a more conventional salary or contract personal basis of compensation constitutes Americanization and, to quote the Member for Edmonton-City Centre, subsidized private profit.

What is subsidized private profit? Madam Deputy Speaker, if the subsidy is Alberta Health Services compensating a physician for performing a service, then I guess every single medical procedure performed in Alberta and performed in Canada is subsidized. What the NDP is saying in their opposition to Bill 30 is that they are effectively opposed to facilitating alternative reimbursement programs like contract, salaries, per capitation, like the medical home model, for example, that this government ran on. Indeed, the inspiration for much of Bill 30 comes from the platform of the United Conservative Party, which this government is seeking to implement. If you can look up the health care section, I'll quote it. The platform actually refers to a very successful model that has existed in our health care system for, I think, about a decade or longer. It's called the medical home model, and it's been really developed very strongly by the Crowfoot medical home system.

I want to commend my colleague the hon. the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions in part for having introduced me to the Crowfoot medical home model. It operates in his constituency partly, and it is a consortium of physicians who serve the local community in a holistic approach to health care. Instead of being just a series of separate professional corporations, which I guess the NDP is against unless they're in favour of it, it's actually a consortium of holistic care. It includes GPs, it includes nutritionists, it includes physiotherapists, it includes mental health practitioners, it includes a variety of different kinds of practitioners, and here's the really cool thing about the model. They're able to demonstrate – they come together as a consortium, as a group – that they're able to reduce the number of visits to emergency wards, which are very expensive, and reduce the overall cost that their patient members represent to the Alberta public health care system. They are incentivized by having strong relationships with those patients. They're incentivized to focus on preventative care, on wellness, on mental health, on essentially all of those things that would keep their patient members from going to an emergency ward at massive cost.

It's a great model. Not to say that it's a cookie-cutter model that will work everywhere all the time. But inspired partly by that at page 51 of the UCP platform, Alberta Strong & Free, we committed to amplify this model, Madam Deputy Speaker. Indeed, it is based, however, on something that most people would regard as a salary. So these are individual physicians who are compensated effectively. It's complicated, but to boil it right down, they're compensated on the basis of a salary for dealing with a certain panel of patients as opposed to just churning fee for service to maximize their profit through a professional corporation. As I say, it works. It works very well, and we therefore are seeking to replicate that. That is exactly the inspiration behind Bill 30.

Let me also say – I mean, let me segue, then, to the second critical part of this bill, which relates to facilitating contracting of surgical procedures to chartered surgical facilities. Let's put that in plain English. Basically, that means that rather than saying that all of the surgeries have to happen in government hospitals, some of the surgeries can and should happen in day-surgery clinics, which are run by physicians, physicians through their professional corporations. Think of this. It's sort of the surgery equivalent of a family medical clinic, in a sense, like a walk-in clinic, insofar – in the legal sense, not in the medical sense. Those are businesses run

by physicians. Yes, again, I'll shock the NDP to say that those physicians are motivated by profit. They are taxed at the corporate tax rate and all of that.

12:10

But here's the point, Madam Deputy Speaker. Under the NDP open-heart surgery wait times increased by 50 per cent, from 15 weeks to 22.2 weeks; cataract surgery wait times increased by 30 per cent, from 30 weeks to 38.4 weeks; hip replacement wait times increased by 30 per cent, from 28.7 weeks to 36.7 weeks; knee replacement wait times increased by 23 per cent, from 33 weeks to 40.7 weeks; and the percentage of patients from the emergency department treated and admitted to hospital within eight hours declined from 46 per cent from 43.9 per cent.

The Auditor General said in 2017 that "Albertans already pay for the most expensive health system of any province in Canada," yet they receive results that lag the results being achieved "by the best-performing health systems in other jurisdictions Albertans are paying for the best. Why [should we] not demand the best?" That's not me. It's not my party. It's not this government. That's the independent Auditor General. "Albertans already pay for the most expensive health system of any province," but they receive results that lag the results being achieved "by the best-performing health systems in other jurisdictions Albertans are paying for the best. Why would they not demand the best?" Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that Albertans are demanding the best. I disagree with the Auditor General in that one respect. I think that they are demanding the best, and that's why they elected this government, on the basis that these NDP wait times are not only unacceptable; they are inhumane. They are unethical. They are immoral.

To quote the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, a decision detested by the NDP, which is basically – I think what the modern, contemporary NDP has become is essentially nothing but a paid Astroturf organization for big government union bosses. Madam Speaker, they hate this, the decision by the Supreme Court of Canada which upheld the decision of the supreme court of Quebec which upheld the decision of the trial court in Quebec in the Chaoulli decision. Let me explain the context.

Oh, I can hear them murmuring. They don't like it. I knew it. They hate it. They hate the Charter of Rights, Madam Speaker. They don't want Charter rights. They don't like the security of the person, section 2 being applied to health care, because what they want at all costs – it doesn't matter how long the wait times are. It doesn't matter how many people are in pain. It doesn't matter how many people get addicted to opioids. As long as their special-interest friends keep a total stranglehold monopoly on the system at all times, they're happy.

Let me quote the Supreme Court of Canada majority on the Chaoulli decision: access to a health care wait-list is not access to health care. I repeat it because I know that it's, like, you know, political kryptonite for them, Madam Deputy Speaker. I quote the Supreme Court of Canada on the Chaoulli decision: "Access to a waiting list is not access to health care." The NDP gave Albertans unlimited access to wait-lists. They said to people waiting for knee replacements that they had to wait for a year. We all know – I think that everybody in this place knows people who have waited two or three years. They're lucky.

I'll share with the House, Madam Deputy Speaker, a true story of a very prominent Edmontonian who is an acquaintance of mine. He was waiting for knee surgery – he was a gentleman in his 50s – for over two years in excruciating pain. He didn't want to get onto the painkillers because he saw how that turned other people into developing addictions and degenerated their health condition. He went to a specialist in Edmonton here, and he said, "When am I

finally going to get my surgery?" The surgeon said, "I'm sorry, but it's going to be probably at least another year." So my friend, a very prominent public person in this city – for privacy reasons I won't reveal his name, but I think he may have spoken about this publicly. His specialist said: however, I'm probably not supposed to tell you this, but if you call this number, there is a physician from Edmonton who goes down to Denver to do these surgeries once a month; he could probably book you in on his next trip down south.

My Edmonton tax-paying friend, a good law-abiding Canadian who supports our universal medicare system, booked that appointment. Three weeks later he flew down to Denver. He finally had the surgery done. Get this, Madam Deputy Speaker. He had the surgery done by an Edmonton orthopaedic surgeon in a Denver hospital. He awoke from the anaesthetic in a surgical recovery room at a Denver hospital, and who was the other patient in recovery in the same room as him? A medical doctor from Edmonton who had also had orthopaedic surgery performed on him.

You know, if you were to make – I think of Denys Arcand. He's a former Marxist. He was mugged by reality. He saw the disaster of socialism around the world, and he particularly saw the disaster of a rigid monopoly, which put special interests and unions ahead of patients and care. Monsieur Arcand made the brilliant film *les Invasions barbares*, one of the greatest Canadian films ever produced, *The Barbarian Invasions*, which depicts dramatically exactly the kind of scenario I just described. The scenario described could fit perfectly in that film.

Let me get this straight. You've got two Albertans, one of them a medical doctor, recovering from orthopaedic surgery in a surgical facility in Denver, Colorado, where their surgeries had been performed by an orthopaedic surgeon from Edmonton. Madam Deputy Speaker, do you see anything wrong with this picture? How much money did those Albertans bring down with them and all of the others who've preceded them and followed them to profit that orthopaedic surgeon from Alberta? That profit was outside the state health care system in Canada.

Well, here's the point, Madam Deputy Speaker. Those are Canadians who were desperate. You know what the NDP, special-interest, Friends of Medicare, AFL, ideological, special-interest, left-wing ideological answer is? "Tough. Stay in Canada in pain. You get unlimited access to a wait-list." That's the heartless, cruel attitude of the NDP, which subordinates the security of the person, the interests of the patient to the interests of the government union bosses maintaining a monopoly here in Canada. How perverse is this?

What Bill 30 says to that orthopaedic surgeon, who is flying down to Denver from Edmonton to make a profit typically doing surgeries on Albertans outside of our system, is: "Come back home. Do the surgeries here. We will contract with you to reduce the wait-lists, to reduce the pain, to care for the patients." Unlike the NDP we do not believe that access to a wait-list is access to health care, Madam Deputy Speaker. That's exactly what this bill does.

12:20

Let me set the context. Again, we ran on this. This is actually a platform commitment. Page 51 of our platform. Well, I'll just read the whole section. Why don't I? I've got the luxury of time.

Ms Notley: Which version?

Mr. Kenney: Well, the leader of the NDP asked which version. I'll tell her which version. It's the version which puts patients ahead of special interests, Madam Deputy Speaker.

"Under the NDP, patients face longer emergency room wait times," and you know what? She should stand up sometime and

apologize to the people suffering in pain on the wait-lists that increased under her watch, but she won't do it. You know what? Instead, she'll call them names. She'll ridicule them. She'll ridicule them because those patients are more concerned about getting out of pain and getting the treatment that they deserve than standing in an endless queue to profit the NDP's special-interest friends.

Page 50:

Under the NDP, patients face longer emergency room wait times, worse emergency room outcomes, declining outcomes for youth mental health care, longer wait times for hospital beds, and longer wait times for surgical procedures.

Under a United Conservative government, patients will be put at the centre of the health care system. It's time to do things differently and put patients first.

Novel concept.

We will cut surgical wait times, make major investments to reverse Alberta's opioid crisis, support mental health, and improve both primary and palliative care for Albertans ... A [UCP] government will maintain or increase health spending, and maintain a universally accessible, publicly funded health care system.

And indeed we've increased the total health budget by several hundred million dollars.

A United Conservative government will [further] reduce surgical wait times to no more than four months in four years by replicating elements of the highly successful Saskatchewan model for health care reform, the Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative (SSI).

At the start of the [initiative] in 2010, 27,500 residents were waiting for surgery and over 15,000 waited [for] three months or more. Four years later, only 3,800 patients ...

Wow.

... were waiting more than three months for surgery, a 75% reduction.

Former Saskatchewan NDP Finance Minister Dr. Janice MacKinnon ...

I know they've excommunicated Dr. MacKinnon, a member of the Order of Canada, one of the most highly decorated academics in the world. They've ridiculed and attacked her with their classic ad hominem attacks because she's departed from this NDP's dogma. But Dr. MacKinnon

studied the success of the SSI [the Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative], concluding that it succeeded because it put patients, rather than providers, at the heart of the system, and because strong leadership held the system accountable to achieving a three month wait time for most surgeries.

[Dr. MacKinnon's] findings have been echoed by research conducted by the Canadian Institute of Health Research and a 2015 Wait Times Alliance report, which found that "in five years the number of (Saskatchewan) patients waiting more than six months for surgery had dropped by 96%."

I continue quoting from the UCP platform:

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in its 2005 Chaoulli decision that,

as I just quoted,

"access to a waiting list is not access to health care," and that unreasonable surgical wait times imposed by governments may constitute a violation of the "security of the person."

In fact, I'll come back to that. I'll continue.

Thousands of Albertans are forced to wait for a year or longer for various surgical procedures, often in pain as their physical condition deteriorates. Alberta's system is the most expensive health care system in Canada, and one of the most expensive publicly insured systems in the world. And this is despite the NDP increasing health spending by \$3 billion, while wait times have continued to climb under their watch.

A United Conservative government would respect the spirit of the Chaoulli decision [of the Supreme Court of Canada] (which legally only applies to Quebec [currently]) by establishing an ambitious goal of reducing those waiting for more than three months for surgery by 75% by the end of our first term.

According to former NDP Minister [Dr.] MacKinnon, one of the key reasons for the success of the SSI was that it invited specialized private day surgical clinics to bid ...

This is, I think, the key substantive point.

... on providing government insured surgeries. The data demonstrates that these clinics completed surgeries for 26% less [cost] than government hospitals on average, meaning more patients got treated at lower cost, reducing the number of people waiting in pain for surgery.

All of that is scrupulously footnoted.

I would point out – I heard the NDP leader mumbling about that. She doesn't like Dr. MacKinnon. If she disregards one of the most highly respected academics in the country, a member of the Order of Canada, who served in the NDP government for eight years, a lot longer than the Leader of the Opposition did, Madam Deputy Speaker – I don't know. In terms of longevity, Janice MacKinnon is a much better New Democrat, I would say, in terms of being in office. It's not just Dr. MacKinnon. It's also the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the 2015 Wait Time Alliance report and, most importantly, the Supreme Court of Canada.

When they said that access to wait time is not actually health care, that was taken from a decision where they said that the security of Mr. Chaoulli under section 2 of the Charter – pardon me. I retract. In fact, the decision was made under the Quebec Charter. The Quebec Charter has many provisions, which are analogous to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Supreme Court of Canada upheld a Quebec appeals court decision, which said that the constitutional principle of the security of the person had been infringed by the Quebec government's refusal to reimburse Mr. Chaoulli for surgery that he had to take outside of the state's system because he was living in debilitating pain.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is the inspiration behind Bill 30. This is what we ran on. We have a mandate from over a million Alberta voters explicitly. This is not, as they claim, a hidden agenda to Americanize the health care system. We could not have been more explicit with Albertans – I just quoted it at length – in our platform for which we have a mandate, the first party in the history of Alberta to win over a million votes, an endorsement of this platform.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me quote from the pertinent section. This is with respect to surgical facilities. It essentially empowers the minister to enter into arrangements for minor surgical procedures under the Health Professions Act. I'll quote further page 14 of the health facilities amendment act under section 3:

(3) The Minister shall not approve a proposed agreement unless ...

That would be a contract with a charter surgical facility.

(a) the Minister is satisfied

- (i) that the provision of insured surgical services as contemplated under the proposed agreement would be consistent with the principles of the Canada Health Act (Canada),
- (ii) that the proposed agreement indicates performance expectations and related performance measures for the insured surgical services and facility services to be provided, and
- (iii) that the proposed agreement contains provisions showing how physicians' compliance with the following, as they relate to conflict of interest and other ethical issues in respect of the operation of the facility, will be monitored [including]:

- (A) the Health Professions Act . . . ;
- (B) the bylaws of the College of Physicians and Surgeons . . . ;
- (C) the code of ethics and standards of practice adopted by the council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta under the Health Professions Act.

I have just quoted in the last 30 seconds more of this bill than the NDP has in the last 25 hours of debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let's just – I know a lot of this may, to folks who are not familiar with health law, sound to be, I don't know, abstract or a bit of a legal gobbledygook, so let me just break it right down. Since day one of universal medicare in Canada, physicians and surgeons have signed contracts with the government to provide services. When you go in to your family doc – unless it's in a situation like Crowfoot, where they're kind of paid on something more like a salary. My family doc in south Calgary is paid on a fee-for-service basis as a professional corporation. His corporation has signed an agreement with Alberta Health Services. That's how it works.

12:30

Since day one of universal medicare in Canada, in Alberta, back in the '60s, surgeries, not all of them but many of them, have been performed in chartered surgical facilities run and operated by surgeons. Isn't that a shocking concept, Madam Deputy Speaker, that surgeons would run a surgical clinic for day surgeries?

Essentially, what we are doing here is to facilitate, to make more, I guess, administratively straightforward, reducing some of the red tape, to expand somewhat the number of day surgeries performed in those chartered surgical facilities operated by Alberta surgeons. What does the NDP characterize this as? Quote, subsidized private profit, Americanization, the end of medicare.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you know, the only profit that's going on here is the profit the NDP makes on its fundraising appeals to some of its gullible members with that campaign of lies. Under the NDP here's the reality. I'd love to see a little asterisk, a little footnote in one of those NDP, Friends of Medicare, or maybe in an e-mail from that bigot Gil McGowan – he's the president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, who said that parents of faith communities are . . .

Mr. Jason Nixon: “Nutbars.”

Mr. Kenney: . . . “nutbars” for wanting to send their children to faith-based schools. Mr. McGowan, the NDP special interests: I invite them in an exception, maybe in a little four-point font, in a little footnote, maybe just once to tell the truth, and the truth is this. The NDP was in office in this province on this side of the House for four years, and they maintained relationships. They funded and paid for surgeries performed – I hope I don't offend them – by privately owned, privately operated day surgical facilities in Alberta, and, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, the professional corporations of the surgeons who performed those surgeries made a profit. They made a profit. They made a profit under the NDP. They declared those profits, I hope, I expect, under not the personal but the corporate income tax system. You can't make this stuff up.

Fifteen per cent of the surgeries performed in Alberta, that, I should say, were reimbursed by Alberta Health Services under the NDP from – what was it? – May, June 2015 until Albertans kicked them to the curb in May of last year . . .

An Hon. Member: They tossed them.

Mr. Kenney: Tossed them out. Over those four years 15 per cent of the surgeries performed were performed in privately owned, privately run day surgical facilities operated by professional corporations.

Now, I love those surgeons: great Albertans, brilliant people. They deserve to be compensated fairly. I hate to break it to the NDP, Madam Deputy Speaker, but you know what motivated them, ultimately, to go to the bank and take out a loan to make a capital investment? For the NDP's assistance, a capital investment is where you take money and you invest it into stock, either infrastructure capital or human capital; you make an investment in something. They made an investment to create a surgical facility on the expectation that they would get compensated for that investment plus profit.

So those professional corporations, operated by Alberta surgeons, established those clinics that were, under the NDP, just fine and dandy. They were a natural, normal, ordinary, commendable part of the Alberta health care system. But when there is a Conservative government doing the same thing, it is the end of medicare; it is the Americanization of the health care system. It is, quote, subsidized private profit, and it must end, at least for purposes of trying to squeeze money out of people on the donor list or who do data farming for the NDP: “Sign the petition. Stop the subsidized private profit. Stop the dastardly Conservative end of health care, the Americanization of health care, because, heaven forbid, the Conservatives might increase from – I don't know – 15 to 20 per cent the number of day surgeries performed in day surgery clinics.” What a pathetic joke, Madam Deputy Speaker, the party of fear, the party of the special interests.

You know, why is it they take this position? Well, it's very simple. It's because if there's a marginal cost advantage to the chartered surgical facility versus, let's say, the government-run hospital, guess what? Maybe AHS will send more Albertans to the chartered surgical facilities so that we can perform those surgeries at less cost, which means we can perform with the same amount of dollars more surgeries, which means we can reduce the wait times, and in reducing the wait times, we can reduce the number of people waiting in pain, and in reducing the number of people waiting in pain, we can reduce the number of people becoming addicted to opioids and painkillers in this province, and we can improve health outcomes.

But who are the losers? The NDP government union bosses because they do not have a stranglehold. Let's get right down to the nub. Not only do they make some sweet money off these fear campaigns, with their e-mails misleading their supporters, Madam Deputy Speaker, the sweet, sweet money from scaring the heck out of people, but the premise of the NDP medi-scare campaign, the oldest scare campaign in Canadian politics, is that if someday you have a Conservative, free-enterprise government and you show up at the hospital, you're going to be asked to bring out your credit card. It's the terrible, dystopian caricature of the American system, that it's all going to happen here, and it's always their hidden agenda. It's just that they've never done it in 60 years. But watch; they will: that's the NDP medi-scare campaign.

But do you know what it's really about? It's about two things: (a) squeezing that sweet money out of their donors and (b) maintaining a monopoly for their government union boss friends; you know, Gil McGowan. I'm just going to go out on a limb here and say that CUPE, AUPE, AFL-affiliated unions may not have an in at those chartered surgical facilities. That's all it's about. It's not about the patients. It's not about their pain. It's not about the wait-list. It's not about the broader health care system. It's not about public insurance because all of this, 100 per cent of this, 100 per cent of the procedures that would be regulated by Bill 30 are publicly insured

by the government of Alberta. It's not about insurance. It's about one thing only, NDP fundraising and government union bosses wanting a monopoly.

Well, fortunately, we live in Alberta and not on the NDP's fantasy island, Madam Deputy Speaker. In Alberta mainstream Albertans believe that competition is a good thing, that choice is a positive thing, that "business" is not a dirty word. I know the NDP, in their cognitive dissonance, want us to allow the physicians to increase their compensation at their own control without any government management. They want to continue the NDP upward slope in physician compensation by 6 points a year.

12:40

Madam Deputy Speaker, we disagree. We think that as long as those folks are vendors to the government of Alberta and as long as we are in a fiscal and economic crisis, we need some management control over that. Where we fundamentally disagree is in our belief that, yes – dare I say it? – profit is a useful incentive. If the profit incentive encourages a brilliant Alberta surgeon to go to the bank, take out a million-dollar loan, build a day surgical facility in Edmonton, hire a bunch of nurses, hire a bunch of health care aides and support staff, bring onto his team a couple of other surgeons, hang up his shingle, approach AHS and say: "You know, all of those folks that are on your wait-list, that NDP wait-list, who are waiting for two or three years in pain on pain killers for their orthopaedic surgery, I'll take them; by the way, I just won't take them at the regular rate; I'll offer you a lower rate than what you pay at the government hospitals, and I will, like Saskatchewan, do this at 25 per cent less cost than the government hospitals," the NDP's response to that proposition is: "Hell no, you dirty profiteer. You want to Americanize the health care system. We're not going to send you any patients, who would be fully insured by the public system. No so-called queue jumping. We're going to let them suffer in pain because Gil McGowan told us to, because that bigot Gil McGowan doesn't like privately operated surgery. Except, when we were in power, we would let 15 per cent of that happen just because – I don't know – it's a hangover of the status quo or some blather, whatever."

I don't know. How many hours of debate on this?

Mr. Jason Nixon: About 24, 25.

Mr. Kenney: I'd like to ask government members: in 24 and a half hours – I've just added that – of debate on this bill, has any government MLA heard a member of the Official Opposition explain why it was good that 15 per cent of surgeries performed by AHS under the NDP were in private chartered surgical facilities? Have they explained that? [interjections] That's interesting. It's odd, isn't it? Maybe, if they have any self-respect, they'll stand up and defend why it was good under their government but so terribly evil, Americanization, under this government. No, they won't do it – I can predict it right now – because it would undermine the medicare campaign, which is the single most effective fundraising technique of the NDP, and because their government union bosses, CUPE, AUPE, and their friends at the AFL would be outraged if they defended choice, if they put patients ahead of unions.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, here's a curious thing. I quoted at length the success of the Saskatchewan surgical initiative, which dramatically reduced wait times. Let me pause to say that part of the problem with this debate is that we get into abstractions. When I say that the Saskatchewan surgical initiative reduced wait times, it just sounds like political talking points, abstractions. Let me just break it right down. There were people in Saskatchewan, thanks to that program – thanks to that program – whose lives were extended.

Their quality of life was immeasurably expanded. They were taken out of pain. They did not become addicted to opioids. Some of these people might have ended up in the trap of addiction, that far too many Albertans have found themselves in.

I know that former NDP Finance minister Dr. Janice MacKinnon said that it was a tremendous success. [interjections] Again, we're getting more noises of ridicule from the opposition because, apparently, she's been sent down the Orwellian memory hole by the opposition. I remind the NDP: Dr. Janice MacKinnon served longer in an NDP government than any member of the NDP opposite in this House. I think that makes her a better New Democrat. I don't know about you guys.

Not only did Dr. Janice MacKinnon, in an extensive study, validate the Saskatchewan premise of Bill 30, but so, too, did the Canadian institute for health research – I don't hear any guffaws from the NDP about that; it's an objective, evidence-based research organization – and the Wait Time Alliance, so at least three sources. I'm sure they could dig up – oh, yeah; they're going to have their Friends of Medicare, Madam Deputy Speaker, which is the most absurd Astroturf organization for NDP union bosses wanting to maintain a monopoly. But these organizations validated that it was a great success. It massively reduced the wait times. That means that grandmas and grandpas were able to play with their grandchildren. That means that women and men who would otherwise be living in pain and on painkillers, risking addiction, were liberated from all of that.

Why would the simple expansion of contracting out services under public insurance in the birthplace of medicare – Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to inform the House that the Saskatchewan NDP, a party founded by Tommy Douglas, the party that introduced universal medical insurance in Canada, now effectively supports the Saskatchewan surgical initiative. They have committed not to reverse these reforms if they are elected to government in the province to the east of us. But the Alberta NDP? Forget about it. All ideology and all special interests all the time. All division all the time.

They didn't care about the – now, I want to close up about that Chaoulli decision. Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I said that it came out under the Quebec Charter. Most of its provisions are analogous to the Canadian Charter, but Quebec Charter law obviously does not apply outside of Quebec, so the Supreme Court of Canada decision – here's what it did – said that the Quebec government has an obligation – an obligation – under their Charter to protect the security of the person by ensuring them access to timely health care for medically necessary services even if that means receiving those services outside of a state hospital or clinic. That was the victory that Mr. Chaoulli won on behalf of patients all across the country.

The NDP here, their response is: "We don't care about your security of the person. We don't care about your Charter rights, Mr. Chaoulli. Get in line. Suffer in pain." How dare these people stand up and pretend to be progressive voices, concerned about patients, concerned about health care? By the way, Madam Deputy Speaker, health outcomes decline as people wait longer for these critical surgeries, for these critical procedures to be performed. How dare they pontificate and get up on their moral high horse? On health care that high horse is built on thousands of people waiting in pain on wait-lists. It is immoral. It is unethical. It must end.

This Bill 30 is a reasonable effort, following the spirit of the Charter as defined by the Supreme Court of Canada, respecting a democratic mandate on which this government was elected to reduce those wait times, to reduce that pain, to provide better health care for all Albertans. That is why I encourage the Assembly to vote for Bill 30 on third reading. [some applause]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak? Seeing the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

12:50

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. That was certainly an interesting experience, I must say. I guess I'll start just by pointing out that, wow, I mean, that was a very passionate demonstration of pontification. I will say that the number of logical fallacies and multiple inaccuracies and failed attempts at pretending to be a lawyer was an uncommon concentration in one actual presentation. It really was quite something. I think we heard the arguments of the same issue on several sides over and over. Yeah. It was interesting.

I'll say that the Premier's comments took a circuitous route because I actually thought at the beginning that what we were going to hear was, you know, the standard talking points that we'd heard about how this isn't about the private funding of health care; it's just about the private delivery of health care, and we all know that that can be done more efficiently if we don't look at the evidence and the experience of cases where that's been done, which is more or less what we've been hearing from the members opposite and indeed the Premier. However, I will say that I was surprised, and I kind of got more and more interested about two-thirds of the way into this long, circuitous, sort of ranty thing because we did, in fact, move into what is, in effect, the justification of private funding of health care.

Just to be clear for people who haven't actually read the legal decisions that the Premier was talking about and are not aware of how they relate to other matters that are going through court and what the rationale is, in fact what they are about is opening the door to private funding of health care and the creation of two-tiered health care with two different wait-lists and the ability to queue-jump if you have enough money. Okay. I guess if you wait long enough and, you know, imbibe enough and stay late enough, we have the potential of pulling back the curtain and getting more information. But I'll get to that in a moment, and hopefully I won't take the full 90 minutes that I'm allowed, Madam Speaker. It is late.

Bill 30 is a bill that our caucus does not agree with because we think that there are many ways in which it undermines the quality of public health care here in Alberta. Now, it's hard, of course, to respond to the last 90 minutes from the Premier without responding specifically to them, so I'm going to sort of jump around a bit, and I apologize in advance for what's probably going to be a bit of disorganization.

It did seem to start with kind of a relitigation of this government's utterly disastrous handling of the negotiations with doctors and a relitigation and an attempt to justify the decision to rip up the agreement with the doctors. I'm not quite sure why we were talking about that, Madam Speaker, because, you know, the actual failed work of this government with respect to negotiating a new doctors' agreement is not really touched on specifically, I guess a little bit tangentially near the end of Bill 30, but it's not really part of it. Nonetheless, we did decide to spend quite a bit of time on that topic, and of course it was all sort of framed in this notion that, well, doctors have to take a big pay cut. The economy is in great distress; therefore, doctors need to also take a big pay cut.

Now, if I could digress just for a moment again, when we talk about all of these different sorts of fallacies, there are a number of debate and logical fallacies and inconsistencies within the Premier's comments. You know, we did hear, of course, about something that all Albertans are concerned about and which all members of this House have spoken about, which is the state of the

economy as it relates to the drop in the price of oil as a result of both production – well, originally, the gaming of the system by other producers in the world and then subsequently the economic slowdown driven by COVID-19. That is a real thing, which I think we all need to grasp and work diligently to find some answers to, and if we can't come up with the immediate answers right away, we need to think about: well, how do we manage the challenges that Albertans are facing, what are our priorities when dealing with a crisis, and who do we support when dealing with a crisis?

What I found interesting, though, on the part of the Premier was that he literally came in and tried to, on a number of different fronts, blame our government for the \$70 drop in the price of oil and the ensuing economic challenges that Albertans faced from 2015 and 2016 and the slow effort to recover from that. That was all our fault, but the fact that, you know, the GDP is down by potentially 20 per cent this year and all the other very horrible things that we know are challenging and threatening Albertans: those are certainly not the fault of the UCP.

Now, I agree. They are not the fault of the UCP. The UCP had embarked upon an economic strategy which was failing, which had resulted in the contraction of our economy, which had lost 50,000 jobs, which had not succeeded in doing the things that they claimed it would do when they gave away \$4.7 billion to their friends and insiders, but certainly although it was failing, it was not failing at the gargantuan level that, of course, all Albertans are seeing and experiencing now.

I think that there is intellectual honesty in saying that, and I certainly wish that the folks on the other side would engage in the same intellectual honesty when talking about the out-of-province and international challenges that impacted the province of Alberta in 2015 and 2016, over which of course we had no control either. I did not have any control over the price of oil when it got to around \$25 a barrel, nor did the Premier, yet apparently we have two different ways of analyzing those circumstances. I would just say, you know, that it doesn't help make the Premier's case when there's such an obvious conflict in how he and others examine history and draw conclusions from what happened. Nonetheless, that is one of a number of inconsistencies and contradictions inherent in the many statements that the Premier so passionately made in his comments this evening.

That aside, let's move on, though, to just the issue of Bill 30 because that is, of course, what we are talking about now. As I said, the Premier began by talking about the doctors and trying to essentially demonize them and then at the same time celebrate them: they get paid too much, but, boy, we sure are glad that they make a profit, and we sure are glad that there's profit in the health care system because profiteering in the health care system is always good although we hate it. Anyway, it was all over the place.

What I will say, though, one thing that did jump out at me was that the Premier said: "We respect them. We respect doctors." That's not true, folks. You know, certainly doctors will say that they do not believe that they are respected by this government. Regardless of the different opinions that anybody who is sitting on the government side will ultimately have with folks they are negotiating with in the AMA or any other organization around salaries, the reality is that you show respect by playing by the rules.

You do not show respect by passing a piece of legislation that breaches the Charter, that attracts a \$250 million lawsuit, that requires statutory intervention because you are so unwilling to play by the rules. You do not follow up that statutory intervention, which amounts to a breach of their constitutional rights, by having the minister go to people's driveways and engage in personal fights with them and engage in fights with doctors using the influence of his office. That is not a demonstration of respect, so I must really,

truly beg to differ with the Premier on the notion that his government has demonstrated respect for physicians.

What I will say is that I remember that back when we first got elected, one of the things that everybody said to us very quickly was: "Oh my lord. You people, you just got elected. You're very left wing. What's going to happen to the economy? You must remember the very extreme importance of maintaining investor certainty. Make sure that investors understand that you're not going to do anything that puts their investment at risk because otherwise we could lose jobs. So you must engage in a respectful conversation with these folks." You know, that actually made good sense because the province of Alberta absolutely does depend to a large degree on foreign investment for the economic prosperity that we enjoy here or did previously enjoy. That made good sense.

1:00

For the same reason, then, as that, what you need to do is respect contracts that you make with people. What happened with the doctors is that the government had a contract, and they ripped it up, and then they called them names, and then they did a whole bunch of other things. They ripped up their contract, so doctors are leaving because they don't have that investor certainty, the same thing that I was told about.

It's like if, for instance, say, a new government were to come along and say: "Gee, trans-Canada, that \$7.5 billion contract we signed with you – that probably wasn't the wisest thing on the planet. I guess we'll pass legislation to allow us to rip that up." That doesn't create investor certainty. It wouldn't make sense to do that. Even though it's an outrageous risk with taxpayers' dollars, and we have no idea what the contract involves, ripping up those kinds of deals creates investor uncertainty, and ripping up the deals with the doctors creates uncertainty amongst that particular group, as the Premier identified it and characterized it, of businesspeople.

So it shouldn't be a surprise that so many rural communities across this province now are at risk of losing those physicians because those particular investors are going: I'm going somewhere else where I can count on the rules actually being adhered to. And that's not what's happening in this province under the leadership of this UCP government.

Anyway, let's go, though, to the issue that I thought the Premier was going to talk about around this bill and the issue that we are most concerned about as it relates specifically to the bill right now, which is the acceleration and the significant increase in opportunities for private delivery of publicly funded health care. Let us be clear there. I'm not suggesting that we are about to privatize funding of health quite yet. Definitely not. What I've been very clear to say is that what this is doing is enhancing private delivery. I will talk about why that is wrong and why so many things that the Premier said were incorrect in a moment, but we're fully aware that that's what this does. It is not yet introducing private funding of public health care, but certainly to hear the rant in the last third of the Premier's comments, it does sound like that's something he'd like to see sooner than later. Either that or he really doesn't understand this issue at all.

Nonetheless, though, on the matter of whether enhancing private delivery of publicly funded services is a good idea, I'd like to just review again points that I'd made in the past that maybe some folks haven't seen or heard. We have examples of where private delivery of publicly funded services ultimately end up costing taxpayers more. They are not effective.

We had private delivery of cataract surgery in Calgary – publicly funded, yes, but privately delivered – and we had publicly delivered and publicly funded cataract surgery in Edmonton. Guess what? Wait times: way longer in Calgary, much shorter in Edmonton.

Didn't seem like that private delivery ultimately served to be as effective as promised.

We have, of course, the experience of HRC and that repeated failure of private delivery of publicly funded hip and knee surgery, and we have the comparison of what happened in Edmonton when we had a specific, strategically developed clinic within the public system, publicly delivered, no profit margin required in there. The numbers were significantly more successful here in Edmonton.

Then we have the example that the Premier referred to about what happened in Saskatchewan when they set up the surgical suites. The Premier sort of rambled on repeatedly about: "What's subsidized corporate profit making? What's subsidized corporate profit making?" Well, I'll tell you what it is. It's when you make a deal with a private company to provide you something that is the same that was being provided out of the public system, and you say to that private company, "We will pay you exactly what it's costing us in the public system right now," and then they come back and they say, "Oh, we can't possibly do that for you and do the same amount; you're going to need to subsidize us and give us more than what you were paying for in the public system," which is exactly what happened in Saskatchewan.

Sure, when more money was put into the privately delivered agency to deliver the same services, absolutely the results went up, but once the extra money was pulled out and they were asked to operate on the same cost structure with the same ultimate investment by taxpayers as the publicly delivered surgical suites, guess what? The outcomes deteriorated, and there was no benefit at all. In fact, it's less beneficial now. Those are three examples with real outcomes, real evidence, that the Premier repeatedly fails to acknowledge.

I want to talk about this sort of, you know, lovely little sarcastic rant that the Premier went on about the type of privately delivered, publicly funded health care that was provided under our watch and how this is exactly the same thing, but it's not. I'd like just as well to clarify – and I know there were lots of giggles about: oh, you know, we got Ja-splained. We got Ja-splained by the Premier where he walked through the bill and said: "Oh, look. I can read the bill, and now I'm going to Ja-splain to the whole Assembly and tell everyone how I'm the smartest person reading the bill." Hate to break it to you, actually I did also walk through the bill when I did my initial commentary in second reading, and I've walked through it since, and clearly I need to do it again because, in fact, what the Premier was saying is actually inaccurate. It's probably helpful to get a bit of legal advice before you start trying to give legal advice.

Anyhoo, so looking at the proposed addition to Bill 30 with respect to 20.1, there is this whole thing where it talks about how the minister may receive a claim from a person for a benefit for an insured service. The difference is this. The Premier is correct. A professional association is exempted from this section. He's absolutely correct that what that means is that doctors who operate as professional private-sector businessmen, each doctor, whether he's an independent contractor or whether he's incorporated under a professional corporation, does, in fact – that's how they do their business.

They're not salaried employees, or the vast majority aren't, and they bill a fee for service primarily, but not always, to AHS, and that's how they get their money. They are exempted from this arrangement, and the person described in this section is actually a publicly traded corporation. That's what's being changed here. In the past AHS could receive billings and could receive claims, to put it this way in the language of the section, from dentists, in some cases, from physicians directly, or from professional corporations. They could not receive claims from publicly traded or traditional corporations.

What this language does is it opens the door for that, so this is not just about doctors becoming paid salary employees to AHS. This is about doctors becoming paid salary employees to, say, oh, Telus and opening the door for Telus to be the organization that is running interference and organizing the relationship between physicians and their patients. That's what's in here that's different. It's fundamentally different than what was in place before. That's what the legislation says. That's what the Premier failed to understand during his 45-minute amateur law professor lecture to members of the Assembly, and unfortunately he just kind of got it wrong.

1:10

I just need to say that this is one of the things in the bill that we are very troubled by because we don't think that we should have — like, if doctors want to be on salary and have a direct relationship with AHS, absolutely. Those alternative relationship plans, I think they're called, we are fully in support of. We would have liked to have negotiated more. I commented on that with respect to the amendment that we tried to put in place to allow for those to be voluntary arrangements. Those kinds of arrangements are absolutely fine. We're onside. That's a great deal.

What we are not onside with is having Telus be the organization that is billing Alberta Health Services, that we no longer have an obligation because it's also removed by Bill 30 to have those deals be publicly available for taxpayers and/or patients to review or to see, nor are we prepared to accept the degree to which that corporation can also provide uninsured services beside the insured services and then play a whole bunch of games to market to patients.

In the Premier's impassioned defence of the Chaoulli case, he, of course, failed to acknowledge that he was essentially replicating all of the information he got from his good friend Dr. Day, who, as I've mentioned before in this House, was the subject of multiple investigations by the B.C. government for constantly trying to find ways to use access to the publicly funded services that he billed for to find other ways to charge patients. I won't go through the long list of things that he was found to have done, but it was very inappropriate.

Now, as a result of that, he's leading the outside of Quebec attack on the Canada Health Act that would legalize and make available to all Canadians the ability to buy private insurance. Of course, if you can buy private insurance, you then open up two-tiered health care, and then you have queue jumping, and you have health care being made available to the people on the basis of their wealth, not on the basis of their need.

I will agree very much with the Premier that when you hear about people waiting too long on wait-lists, that is something that we should internalize, and we should be concerned about, and we should act to fix it. Absolutely. But the way to fix it is not to say: okay; well, if you're rich, we'll help you. That's essentially what allowing for private insurance within the publicly funded system would do. The answer is to provide appropriate funding so that all people, regardless of income, can get access to health care on the basis of their medical need. It's that simple. It's really nowhere nearly as complicated as the Premier would like to make it, with or without his amateur attempt to lecture us on what the bill doesn't actually say.

That is the concern that we have. That's the primary concern we have with that part of the bill and why we are very concerned that we are setting up the infrastructure for corporatized health care delivery throughout the province so that it's ready should the B.C. challenge to the ban on private insurance be successful.

Now, I did find another one of sort of the fallacies or the logical inconsistencies in the Premier's comments, of course, was the claim that, you know, they had to go after the doctors, they had to rip up the agreements, they had to take a run at them because they're profiteering. And even though he loves profiteering, and profiteering should definitely happen in the health care system, the doctors were profiteering too much, and we couldn't control it. They were charging this and they were charging that and their costs were going up, and there was nothing to be done except bringing in this legislation that allowed them to tear up the deal. Although, to be clear, I suspect that that particular piece of legislation will also fail once challenged in the courts.

The key to this, though, Madam Speaker, is if the Premier is so concerned about the degree to which the privately delivered, publicly funded health care services of doctors and that private-sector relationship that has existed since the inception of medicare, if he's so worried about that being a cost he can't control, why in heaven's name would you choose to invite more of that into the publicly funded system? So we got this impassioned plea that, you know: we just had to do this because the doctors' costs were too extensive, and they were charging the system too much, and they were asking to gouge too much profit out of our public health care system. And then he went on to defend a bill that actually allows us to significantly multiply the platforms and the environments within which that relationship would be replicated. I don't know. It doesn't really make a lot of sense to me.

You know, he is correct. Those people who work on salary directly within the public health care system, without a profit margin but just for a salary, they got zero per cent increases while we were in government.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

So it would seem to me that that's actually a good thing from the taxpayers' perspective. At the same time, they provided very good care that was focused solely on providing good care, and they didn't have to spend the last 45 minutes of every day doing their books in order to make sure that they'd gotten enough profit out of the system that day. It really is a remarkably inconsistent and illogical argument, Mr. Speaker.

Yeah. That is a thing that doesn't make a lot of sense, but, you know, that's not uncommon from this Premier. He does certainly have a tendency to speak with great authority and then have to sort of run around later, once somebody checks the facts, and then be reminded, of course, about the revelation or the introduction of the so-called back-to-school plan, where the Premier confidently lectured reporters and Albertans on how this could be done and how it had been done this way in Norway and Finland. We had these great examples of countries where it had been done successfully. Lo and behold, it turned out that, no, actually, they did it using a cap on class sizes. Apparently, you know, we are delusional for suggesting that Alberta embark upon the same path as the very countries that the Premier chose to lecture everybody on. Anyway, that is not an uncommon experience with respect to the Premier's regular lectures of the people.

The other elements that I want to talk about in Bill 30 are as important, of course. One does include the issue that relates to the Health Quality Council. I did spend a fair amount of time talking about that in Committee of the Whole this evening, the degree to which this bill very actively attacks the independence of the Health Quality Council of Alberta and undermines the integrity. Of course, we've already seen one of the members publicly resign because his integrity was challenged as a result of the changes being made and the degree to which the minister is being put in charge of the council

and has been given the ability to pretty much, you know, interfere wherever he feels it's helpful or to his benefit.

1:20

Obviously, it will undermine the evidence-based measurement mandate of that council, and it will undermine the independence that, as I had mentioned to other members of this Assembly earlier tonight, was put in by a Conservative government in 2011 as an answer to the many concerns that Albertans had around the apparent proximity of the council to the minister and the deputy minister and the need for there to be legitimate independence and the fact that, of course, that was the single biggest reason for the very changes that are now being undone by this bill, because the Health Quality Council was being used by the previous Conservative government as cover to convince Albertans that they really did take the issue of measuring wait times seriously and that the Health Quality Council of Alberta could be counted on to report accurately to Albertans about what was happening with respect to wait times with various and sundry procedures.

As a result, because there was that debate and the belief that Conservatives were not being upfront, the decision was made to make the Health Quality Council of Alberta more independent in order to earn the trust of Albertans. Slowly, over time, since 2011, it did, and now Bill 30 is stepping in to undo that and take us back to 2011, when the council, unfortunately, did not enjoy the same level of trust and independence from Albertans. That, of course, is a very unfortunate development for Albertans who, quite frankly, want any agency they can get that is given the authority to maintain and improve the quality of health care that they receive and that they do so in a way that they can count on and trust.

Now, the other thing that I wanted to talk about just a little bit more in terms of the opportunities to establish payment arrangements between AHS and publicly traded corporations, which are a different thing than the professional corporations that were previously discussed by the Premier, is, of course, the fact that those arrangements – previously, when we've been talking about professional corporations as well as the surgical ones that have been referenced in debate – were subject to an assessment of whether or not this would or would not impact the overall quality of the public health care system in Alberta. That was one of the criteria that the minister had to consider. Then, of course, what happens here is that Bill 30 removes that criteria.

I believe it was around about this time last night where our caucus attempted valiantly to get the UCP to amend the bill to maintain that criteria in terms of the consideration that the minister had to undergo before engaging in arrangements with corporations that would be doing additional private delivery of public health care. It was interesting because, apparently, the primary argument was: "Oh, we're just taking it out because it's, you know, extra. It's redundant. We don't need it there. It's just redundant." Of course, the answer, then, is: "Well, if it's redundant, why bother? Why not put it in there?" Of course, no one believes that it's redundant. Everyone believes that it established a criteria, and it's a criteria that the minister found inconvenient for the acceleration of corporatization of the delivery of our health care system. By corporatization, just to be clear, I'm referring now to private corporatization, not professional corporations owned by doctors. I'm talking about publicly traded companies. Again, that is an unfortunate element of this bill, which we are disappointed to see was not corrected through our attempts to have the bill amended.

The final thing that I just am going to speak on, though, is that we know, from the last third or so of the Premier's long lecture to the Assembly, that he appears to be very supportive of the case that was made in Quebec of the need for people to be able to buy private

insurance. You know, that of course is a breach of the Canada Health Act. If the challenge that's coming out of B.C. is successful, and it's – essentially, his friend Brian Day is in fact allies with – I can't remember what the agency is called in Calgary that is helping to fund that particular legal case. They are pursuing another challenge under the noncivil legal framework that governs in Quebec to attempt to challenge the Canada Health Act on the basis of whether or not it's a breach of the Charter to insist that people stay within the publicly funded insurance system.

It does sound as though he's kind of rooting for the challenge there, which, to be clear, will represent the single biggest attack on publicly funded health care in this country ever. I'm really quite surprised to see that sort of revealing conversation from the Premier. So I just, of course, then need to put it on the record that it is our view that allowing private insurance in to compete with our public health care system will fundamentally fracture and undermine the strength of our public health care system.

The Premier engaged in a conversation, which he often does, which is called the false-dilemma fallacy, where he says that if it's not this, it must be that – it's not this, it must be that – and then he argues against the evil "that" in order to defend the "this," except the problem is that that's not really the dilemma. He's been doing it the last two or three days, trying to argue that our attempts to get this government to take the need for school reopenings seriously and to provide for safe reopenings is somehow us trying to suggest that we want to close schools. It's intellectually dishonest, and it's a common fallacy. Yeah. I think, frankly, most people can see through it.

The same thing is happening in this conversation about public health care. The choice is not: people will suffer on waiting lists if we don't give them the chance to buy their own private insurance to then get their own privately funded health care. The choice is: people will not get the health care they need if we don't provide adequate resources within the public health care system. That is the choice. You either properly fund resources in the public health care system or you do not. I'm more than happy to accept that there is probably a need for more resources in certain sectors of the public health care system and that there can be better management and there needs to be improvement.

Chaos, of course, costs. You know, the Premier wasn't really living in Alberta and probably was not as intimate with the four years of utter health care chaos that existed in this province – probably, actually, more than four years; more like eight – up to 2015. It literally got to a point where stability was a cost-saving measure because there had been so much chaos injected into health care, as it was constantly politicized and repoliticized, as the Conservatives tried not once, not twice but three times to inject private funding into the delivery of Alberta's health care. That's not chasing ghosts. That's not making things up. That's speaking to the leaked documents from cabinet and caucus and all those kinds of things. It was black and white that that's what – and sometimes the press releases, quite honestly, from the government itself quite openly advocated for that.

1:30

We knew and do know that it's been a long-standing thing, and every time that happened, along with a number of other things that happened in the health care system – you know, significant cuts, reorganization, and further reorganizations, yada, yada, yada – there was a whole heck of a lot of chaos. I agree, then, that if we can avoid that chaos and be more strategic within the publicly delivered, publicly funded health care system, we can get better results, and that's what we need to do.

But let us be clear. Giving people the opportunity to pay for private insurance to buy private health care somewhere else is not going to make things better, and globally it's going to make things more expensive because now we have to factor in the necessary profit margin of the insurance companies. As we've learned from this government's engagement with even car insurance, they've got to get theirs. The last thing we want to do is invite private insurance companies into the delivery of health care in this province. It will do nothing but drive up prices in the same way that the Premier, perhaps too passionately and with some exaggeration, tried to attribute to doctors. In any event, it is absolutely the wrong thing for the people of Alberta.

I believe that the people of Alberta were promised by this Premier – again, he claims: “Oh, this whole thing with Chaoulli and expanding the opportunity for more private delivery is right there on page 97 of version 33 of our platform and yada, yada, yada.” Again, seriously, I've never in my political life seen a platform morph as often as the UCP's platform morphed during the last provincial election. It was a very ingenious strategy, let me say. In any event, the other thing that maybe wasn't in the platform but maybe everybody does remember, because somebody who kind of had it together was running tour that day, was the big signing of the public health care guarantee. That's what people remember, and that's what people thought they were voting for. Yet to listen to the Premier talk tonight – what we are hearing actually is that, no, that's not actually what he believes, that he does actually want to pursue the injection of private insurance into our publicly funded health care system. So troubling, let me say.

What I think, though, notwithstanding that little bait-and-switch demonstration that we saw by the UCP in the last provincial election, is that Albertans do care about – well, fundamentally, they care about the health of their loved ones. Let's be clear. That's what they care about. They care about the health of their loved ones, and they care about being able to provide for the health of their loved ones when their loved ones need that care. Obviously, then, they care about being able to afford it, so they are very aware of what a gift we have in having a public health care system where people don't have to worry about whether they can afford critical care. I think that is a value of all Canadians, and it's a value of Albertans.

I think that any moves to undermine it, whether stage 1 of a two- or three-stage plan or all in one fell swoop, are bad moves. Now, I'm not suggesting that that is what we are seeing in – I mean, I think we are seeing stage 1 of a multistage plan. But then, obviously, inherent in that description is some speculation on my part but certainly given some definite fuel given the late-night comments from the Premier this evening. Nonetheless, what I do know is that any attempts to undermine our public health care system are going to hurt Albertans.

Again, it's a fallacy – it's, you know, just a tactic – to try and argue that people who care about publicly funded health care and medicare are simply captured by union bosses. It's the most ridiculous, paranoid theory I've ever heard before. Yeah. It's actually kind of below what I think are, in better hours of the day, the more capable debating skills of the Premier. I think we know that many, many, many Albertans care deeply about medicare, and they've never met a union boss in their life. They simply know that if their child gets sick, they don't want to have to worry about if they've spent thousands and thousands of dollars on health insurance or whether they have enough on their line of credit to be able to see a doctor. It's that simple. We need to remember that.

We need to have enough respect for Albertans to debate the real issues here and not get lost in these, you know, spinning of spinning on spinning talking points that wander solar systems away from the important issue that is here. This is not about union bosses; this is

about protecting our public health care, because all Albertans care about being able to get health care when they need it. They care about wait times. They care about long-term care. They care about their grandparents, their aunts, and their uncles in both public and private long-term care centres right this moment. They care about whether they're safe there.

They care about the mental health of their loved ones, much of which, as you know – unfortunately, the biggest problem with mental health is that the vast majority of mental health therapy is still privately funded. Unfortunately, it's not primarily covered under the Canada Health Act, and as a result, the consistency and effectiveness of treatment are terribly unequal, income based, privilege based. You see the results of it amongst some of the most vulnerable citizens we have in our province.

Anyway, we know that that's what matters to Albertans, and that's what they care about. That's what is our job to debate here, and that's what we've been doing. We've been debating the loss of the independence and the mandate of the Health Quality Council. We've been debating the loss of the protection of our public health care system when the minister goes about the task of finding people to make quiet backroom deals with. We've been debating the fact that those deals now will be in the backroom because we're no longer talking about ministerial orders. We're talking about contracts now, which will undoubtedly be rendered opaque to members of the public through the rules of FOIP. And, of course, we are talking about the corporatization of the doctor-patient relationship and the opportunity for these corporations to leverage the doctor-patient relationship to engage in a number of other marketing and fee-based activities which ultimately will bleed into, I suspect, insured services as well if the experience of Brian Day in B.C. is any indication.

For all those reasons, our caucus will not be voting to support Bill 30. I wish that we could have had more opportunity to speak about it. I wish we weren't talking about it at 20 to 2 in the morning. I wish we had more opportunity to talk about it in the mornings or at 3 o'clock, right after question period. I wish it wasn't a bill that kept getting pushed to this late. Frankly, I wish we weren't talking about it after the July long weekend in the middle of the summer in the middle of a pandemic. These are all things that don't necessarily demonstrate the best of governance. Nonetheless, we are here, and we are doing our best to raise the concerns that we have as Her Majesty's Loyal Official Opposition.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I will be taking my seat.

1:40

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall has risen.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the leader for your remarks, for your thoughtful remarks, for your remarks based on facts and what this bill actually does. Thanks for clarifying many of the things that were contained in the Premier's remarks earlier.

I think I will briefly comment on one of the things the Premier mentioned. The Premier mentioned – and I quote somewhat – that it's cold, hard, reality math that the Alberta economy will shrink by 20 per cent, and the Premier pegged the GDP numbers at \$360 billion. Then the Premier went on, and he said – and I am quoting – that economic illiterates can't comprehend on that side. I thought I should fact-check whether the things the Premier mentioned are anywhere close to reality or not. I do have a little bit of background in economics as well.

One thing: the Alberta economy never got to \$360 billion. I looked at the GDP for the last 20 years. The highest number I could

find was \$338 billion for the 2014 year, and that was the time when the average price of WTI was \$93 for the whole year, \$107 at the highest. It averaged \$93 for that year, and GDP was \$338 billion. For the four years or even five years when we were in government – in 2015 the GDP shrank, but it was still \$326 billion. In 2016, when the price of oil was down to \$27 or even less with the differential, GDP was \$314 billion. In 2017 GDP was back up, \$329 billion. In 2018 GDP was even better, \$336 billion; in 2019, \$334 billion.

For four years under the NDP, except for the 2014 year, the economy was performing better than any Conservative government in the history of this province. I will say it again: under the NDP government the economy was performing better than any Conservative government in the history of this province, with the exception of 2014, when GDP was \$338 billion because oil was averaging at \$93. When we were in government, in 2015 the average price of oil was \$48. In 2016 the average price was \$43. In 2017 the average price of oil was \$50. In 2018 the average price was \$65. These are the hard facts, and whatever the Premier said about the economy and how the GDP is shrinking – if the GDP was to shrink 20 per cent, we are looking at a GDP number around \$288 billion. That will be, I guess, somewhere lower than what we had in 2010-11.

The shrinkage we are seeing in the economy is because of this government's policies and this government's policy of cutting the taxes. That's also economics 101. When an economy is growing and you cut taxes, there is some money that's saved, and investors will invest that money into the economy. The idea is that that will create economic activity, that will generate revenue, that will generate jobs, and the economy will grow. But when the economy is already in a decline, cutting taxes is the worst policy you can . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other hon. members looking to join debate on third reading of Bill 30? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity in the hours of the morning here to add some more comments to Bill 30. First, I would like to start by thanking the Leader of the Official Opposition for her remarks earlier. Despite the fact that we are debating this at almost 2 in the morning, I want to assure her that what we've seen over the last little while: Albertans are watching. They really are. We've seen the comments that have come in, even quoting what's going on, you know, so if anyone is thinking that that is not the case, I would say that they are completely wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that with Bill 30 there seems to be a lot to say and, unfortunately, not as much time to be able to possibly address this. I guess one of the first things I would like to talk about is just Bill 30 as a whole. We know the Premier has, you know, been very vocal about the fact that it seems like the Official Opposition hasn't spoken about the bill itself. Clearly, the Premier hadn't been paying attention to when I would rise because that's one of my favourite things to do because I'm always chastised by the members opposite about how I get hung up on the language of the bill and everything like that.

Here I am yet again talking about an omnibus piece of legislation, something that members of the government bench, something that members of the government caucus, when they served in the 29th Legislature, which I was a part of, too, said was bad. It was a disservice to Albertans and it shouldn't be done, yet here we are with yet another piece of omnibus legislation, one of many that we've seen in the short time that the UCP have been in government.

Mr. Speaker, I have decided to draw a conclusion from that, that the position that those members took back then around omnibus legislation: clearly they never actually believed that. If they did, they would have come into this Legislature, the 30th Legislature, and they would have taken the position that we are not going to bring in omnibus legislation because we do not believe in it. Yet, as I said, one piece of many that we've seen so far, so I'm now drawing the conclusion that that was indeed not the case; they did not actually believe that. Now I start to hesitate as to: what else don't they believe that they've said in the past? But we'll leave that open for another discussion at another time.

What Bill 30 is starting to do is to open up the door for public dollars to be funnelled to for-profit, private corporations that would be providing a public service that's available right now. You know, Mr. Speaker, I got the opportunity to serve on the private members' committee, and at that time we were reviewing a bill that, of course, does have some implications within the health system. What was very, very interesting to me during the course of that review and the debate was that one of the stakeholders which was invited by the members opposite who also serve on that committee, without any prompting – this was the part that was really quite staggering and surprising to me – said that while he works down in the United States in his profession, well, the United States kind of needs a little bit of Canadian health care down there.

1:50

I find that, again, conflicting. Why is it, then, that somebody that they felt was an expert at that time to be able to talk to the subject matter during that committee – but they would ignore the fact that the thinks what is provided down in the U.S. would be a good idea up here? So here we are again, completely conflicting positions around what we should be bringing as legislation into this Assembly.

At the end of the day, as I said, we are looking to take public dollars and provide those to for-profit private corporations. I've heard some interesting terms to be used about why this is a good idea: we're cutting red tape, we're speeding up, you know, reducing wait times. If that is indeed the position that the government is going to take, then I can't help but wonder why you would have removed diagnostic imaging for chiropractors, physiotherapists, and audiologists and increased the red tape for those professions. As we know, they are regulated by – guess who? – the Alberta government. These are health professionals who apparently know what they're doing. We're taking away a tool for them to treat their patients in a timely manner, yet we're saying: oh, but over here it's going to speed things up. Conflicting points of view. It's amazing to me, Mr. Speaker, how often this comes up with this government.

If indeed you do believe that this is the direction to go in Bill 30, taking public dollars, providing them to private for-profit corporations to provide health services, you should immediately change your decision around diagnostic imaging because now you will no longer have their patients having to wait to get treatment to get in to see their general practitioner, have that order made, find out what's going on, then return to get the consult on the results, and then time it takes for those results to be passed on to those health care professionals.

Mr. Speaker, the government knows this. It was provided in a report from the college of chiropractors and physiotherapists in a joint submission. The government says that it's going to save \$8 million. These health care professionals, unless you're telling me that they don't actually know what they're doing in their professions, say that the costs associated with that change will be twice as high as what you're saving. So is it that they believe that going in this direction as proposed in Bill 30 reduces red tape, saves

money, or is it really about providing an avenue to place their friends, their donors in a position to make a profit off of Albertans? This is the question, and I guess we'll soon find out.

The Leader of the Opposition had talked about how in the future we may find ourselves in a position of not being able to afford our health care. I can't help but think of my own personal situation in the past, Mr. Speaker. My daughter was born with congenital heart disease, and throughout her life she required multiple surgeries. I'm going to deal with just three of them. She had one closed-heart and two open-heart surgeries to help correct what was going on, and it absolutely floored me when I found out that the first surgery – now, we have to think. This is back 25 years ago. The surgery that she first had with the closed-heart would have run roughly in the neighbourhood of a quarter of a million dollars, not including post-op care. Thank the heavens that I lived in Canada, and I had a health care system to back me up. I know that on average a person will in their working career make anywhere in the neighbourhood of \$3 million to about \$4 and a half million, in their entire career span. Now, my daughter had three surgeries. The two open, as you can imagine, were much more expensive, probably in the neighbourhood of \$350,000 for each one, not including post-op care.

It frightens me to think that we might be opening up the door. See, I'm on the back end of this now, Mr. Speaker. Thankfully, my daughter is healthy and probably will not need any other further corrections going forward. In my time that I served with the Children's Heart Society, I met many, many families. For some the complications weren't as bad, but for a lot of families complications were. I remember speaking with Dr. Rebeyka. He was my daughter's surgeon on the last two open-hearts, and I remember asking him: "So, if this doesn't happen to work, what's the next step from here? What else can we correct?" You know, he just said, "Oh, well, that's a heart transplant." "What do you mean that's a heart transplant? I mean, you're rerouting the plumbing," as I used to like to call it back then. He said, "Well, there's nothing else we can do." I found out later that a heart transplant starts – and, again, 25 years ago – at a half a million dollars, not including post-op care. Yet we want to open up the door to invite this kind of situation, which we know for a fact down in the United States takes place all the time. People make decisions about their health because they can't afford the bill.

Now, unfortunately, I just caught a little bit of a news piece just the other day and haven't had the opportunity to investigate it, but if indeed that is the fact, Mr. Speaker, a gentleman that just managed to recover from COVID down in the United States was handed a bill for over a million dollars. I can't even begin to fathom that. This was an older gentleman. This was not somebody that's going to be able to return to work, you know, and, hopefully, maybe in a couple of years pay that off. We are potentially opening the door with Bill 30 to that type of health system.

I'm in the position, as I said earlier, about the concept of omnibus legislation: did you actually believe that omnibus legislation was good? I still remember the big pictures of the big white corrugated cardboard and the health guarantee and the Premier signing it, talking about how great that was going to be. That didn't seem to last very long, so you'll have to excuse me, Mr. Speaker, if I don't have a whole lot of, shall we say, faith in where Bill 30 could be leading us. The Official Opposition knew this despite the fact that the Premier seemed to think we didn't read the bill.

That brings me to some of the language that was just recently incorporated into Bill 30 around the disclosure of salaries. Now, Mr. Speaker, it disappoints me, because I remember when the Premier came into this Assembly and said that he was going to raise the discourse in this Chamber, and he . . .

2:00

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to thank the Member for Edmonton-Decore. I particularly enjoyed hearing his own personal story of his daughter. That was a story that I didn't actually know a lot about, so thank you for that.

I also know that, you know, this member is one who has a number of seniors' and retirement homes in his riding. He's also got a few health care facilities. One of the things that I didn't hear him talk about too much today but wanted to just check with him on – you know, I'm hearing from a lot of folks in my riding, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, who are very much concerned about Bill 30 and very much concerned about this attack on public health care. I would love it if the member could maybe just tell the Chamber a little bit about what he's hearing from his constituents, particularly about, like you said, the Premier's so-called public health care guarantee, which is clearly not worth the paper that it was written on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore, with about three minutes, 45 seconds left.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the question by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. Yeah, I have some very fantastic facilities within Edmonton-Decore. You know, the very first one that comes to mind is St. Michael's Health Group and Millennium Pavilion, which is there, along with many others that call Edmonton-Decore home. One of the very clear things that I've heard from constituents that have family members living in those facilities in Edmonton-Decore as well as family members that don't even live in Edmonton-Decore but do have their family members that reside in those facilities and what we've seen over the course of the pandemic – let's be honest. This has really amplified what's been going on.

We found that the facilities that are based on a for-profit, private system struggled greatly during this pandemic because of the decisions that I'm assuming have been made around: well, how do we keep our profits versus the care? It's funny how – and I've always mentioned this – it always comes down to what I refer to as bottom-line decision-making. It's always about: "Well, how can we maybe trim a little bit over here? How can we maybe cut a little bit over there? How can we maybe take one person out of the mix and maybe spread out the work amongst the others?" We saw that with disastrous consequences. I think some of the situations that we saw, for instance, out in Ontario are learning examples for us to avoid.

I'm very happy to say that, luckily, none of my facilities in Edmonton-Decore had any outbreaks whatsoever. That was due to the decisions that those facilities made around ensuring that they had employees that weren't working in multiple facilities, ensuring that they had the crews to be able to clean the facilities, and, on top of that, ensuring that their residents were cared for at the highest levels.

I cannot express enough praise for all of those facilities: Balwin Villa; St. Michael's, of course; GEF. All of them performed absolutely outstandingly during some of the most difficult times that I think probably any of us will ever see, but they were in the position of not having to make a decision regarding the profit margin. At the end of the day, the profit margin, unfortunately, brings you to a position of making decisions that aren't necessarily

in the best interest of people and how they may be cared for. I think that Bill 30 opens up that door.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other hon. members looking to join debate on third reading of Bill 30? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has risen.

Mr. Dach: To speak to the main bill, I take it, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Dach: Thank you very much. At this time of the morning I wanted to clarify exactly that I had heard correctly.

I'm pleased to speak to Bill 30 and express some of my views and comments on behalf of my constituents of Edmonton-McClung about this piece of legislation, which the government has seen fit to bring forward in the midst of a health care crisis in the province, during a pandemic, and, of course, a period of time where health care is certainly on Albertans' minds. It's top of mind, I would say, for people in my constituency as well as people throughout the province.

A global pandemic is something we have not experienced in our lifetime. Since 1918, when the world experienced the Spanish flu pandemic, we've not gone through globally a period of health care crisis such as this. In the midst of this, the government has seen fit to bring forward Bill 30, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, which makes huge reforms to our health care system in a time frame when people are looking for certainty and stability in their health care system in the province and looking to have faith and confidence in it and not be looking at shaking it to its foundations when we need to have certainty and certitude in its ability to serve Albertans the most at this critical time.

The individual participants who are right now battling this pandemic on our behalf and serving us as health care professionals in the province – our doctors, our nurses, our LPNs, our health care aides, and the ancillary staff who are keeping these hospitals functioning – have nothing but the highest praise and support from this Official Opposition caucus and, I'm sure, all Albertans. Even the government members join in that praise because we certainly are relying upon them now.

You would think that the government would see fit not to bring forward legislation at this time which would undermine the ability of those health care professionals to have a singular focus on delivering health care to Albertans during this very, very critical time of health care crisis in the province, yet that certainly was the farthest thing from this government's intent. Their intent in bringing forward this legislation was to make fundamental changes to our health care system which suited their ideological perspectives and to do so under the cloud, under the curtain of a pandemic, when they figured that the opposition from the public would be less strong and less powerful. Here we are at 10 after 2 in the morning, Mr. Speaker, talking about the Health Statutes Amendment Act, pushed to the latter part of the government's agenda, in the middle of the summer session, that's been of course made necessary by the pandemic.

2:10

We understand that, but the legislation that we're dealing with right now is a major diversion from what Albertans understand is their right under the Canada Health Act to ensure that their health care is protected and that a universal, publicly delivered, and publicly funded health care system is something we'll continue to see in the province.

Given Bill 30 and some of the measures in Bill 30, dozens of them, Mr. Speaker, we make very strong arguments that we need to be certain that all these measures are brought to light and properly debated in this Legislature and also outside this Legislature by those who are stakeholders to the health care system. We started off this process earlier on this year with devastating news that the government had decided that they didn't like the way negotiations were going with the Alberta Medical Association and the doctors. They brought in legislation to terminate the negotiations and impose a system of paying on those doctors, a system which, of course, they have been railing against, claiming, I think with good, strong evidence, that they are not able to maintain their clinical practices as well as their hospital practices, particularly in many rural areas of the province.

This is putting a large strain on the health care system in rural Alberta, in many of those ridings where these doctors are announcing their intention to leave because they simply haven't felt respected by this whole process and can't financially keep their clinics open while maintaining the hospital duties that they've had and are withdrawing their services from the hospitals. They're closing their clinics or leaving their practices or leaving the province or leaving the country altogether as a response to this government's attitude and measures imposed by Bill 30 and by, in the first instance, ripping up their contract by legislation. That in and of itself was a pretty dire move on the part of the government, to decide that it was within its bag of tricks to just simply legislate a contract away and not to engage in a respectful dialogue that would end up with a properly negotiated, fairly negotiated contract and agreement that would stand the test of time as well as legal challenge with our medical professionals in this province.

That is not what took place. It was a devastating blow, I would say, not only to democracy but to jurisprudence in this province, as far as labour negotiations go, to see a government willing to simply end the negotiation process, not in a way that led to binding arbitration and would have led to an agreed-upon method of reaching an agreement should the two sides not be able to participate in negotiations successfully, as is typical in a labour negotiation. There are alternate methods to reach a mediated agreement should the two sides not be able to reach agreement on their own.

No, that wasn't the direction this government wanted to go in. It was, I think, a very calculated move on the part of the government to say: no; we're going to get these guys; we're out to show these doctors a lesson because we think that they're involved in extracting too much money from the pockets of Albertans. Well, I'll tell you what. You do that by way of fair negotiation. If indeed you think the party that you're negotiating with is exceeding the bounds of the day with respect to contractual obligations and payments and funding, then you express that through your heartfelt negotiations, and you don't resort to such measures as legislated termination of a fairly bargained agreement.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of reasons to continue the discussion with respect to Bill 30. In order to do so I'd like to introduce an amendment to enable that to happen. If I may, I'll provide the original to your desk. Should I wait to continue further?

The Acting Speaker: Yeah. Let's just take a look at it quickly first. I just want to see the form of it.

Thank you, hon. member. If you could please read it into the record.

All members, of course, can receive a copy just by putting up your hand. There will also be copies in the tablings just to the sides of each door. This, for the benefit of all those present, will be referred to as REC1.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the benefit of all I will read the amendment that I propose into the record, the notice of amendment made on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford by myself that Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, amended. Mr. Feehan to move that the motion for third reading of Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, be amended by deleting all of the words after “that” and substituting the following:

Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, be not now read a third time but that it be recommitted to the Committee of the Whole for the purpose of reconsidering section 1.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Just for clarity for the House this amendment is moved by the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung on behalf of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford. Whether it's stated in the amendment or not, please do not use individual names.

Mr. Dach: Thank you. I appreciate that clarification, Mr. Speaker.

I will take a few moments to speak to the amendment and give a number of reasons for recommitting this piece of legislation to Committee of the Whole. I think the Premier earlier this evening in his comments provided one very strong justification for this amendment when he spoke about the provisions in the bill, Bill 30, in section 1 relating to, as he referred many times, a person who may or may not be providing services to the public, and there was a question around the definition of “person” in this section.

The hon. Premier in his remarks was seeking to clarify for the benefit of the world that he was not having in this particular piece of legislation corporations bill the health care system; it was simply a person. So it wasn't professional corporations that, in the Premier's view, we were granting the ability to privately set up to hire doctors and receive payment. It was specifically mentioned by the Premier that in the first section of the legislation – and it's there in writing. I agree. It's under section 20.1(2), “For the purposes of subsection (1) a ‘person’ does not include an individual or a professional corporation.” That brings to light a question in mind that we certainly need to have clarified by bringing back this bill to Committee of the Whole because, in fact, as the Premier himself eluded to, the term “person” is one that has some legal ramifications. Technically, in law, my understanding is that, a corporation is actually considered to be a person under the law and may be treated as such.

2:20

So for the Premier to indicate to us in the House that section 11 doesn't entitle a corporation to be paid for an insured service, but it would be a person who would be entering, perhaps, into an agreement, as it suggests in section 20.1(1)(a), that

the Minister has, in accordance with section 20, entered into an agreement or established an arrangement with the person for the payment of benefits . . .

– it goes on later to say in subsection (3) that

(a) the payment of a benefit by the Minister to the person who submitted the claim discharges the Minister's duty with respect to the payment of that benefit to the physician who delivered the insured service.

Those are two distinct entities. We have a person entering into an arrangement with the doctor, and then a physician . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should anybody be wishing to join for questions or comments. Is the hon. member . . .

Mr. McIver: I'm just sitting down.

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood has risen. When the Speaker is speaking, though, members will come to order.

The hon. member.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate; I was looking forward to hearing from the Member for Calgary-Hays. But, as always, I was quite appreciative of the Member for Edmonton-McClung's comments. He has clearly done a lot of homework on this bill, so I would like for him to continue his thoughts.

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has risen to respond.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me, and thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood for allowing me the privilege of adding to my comments on the need for the amendment that I'm proposing to the legislation before the House.

I was commenting on some of the remarks made by the hon. Premier earlier this evening, where he spoke at great length about the distinction between a person and corporation in the legislation and took pains to indicate to the Legislature that, for the purposes of the bill,

for the purposes of subsection (1) a “person” does not include an individual or a professional corporation

as noted in the bill.

Yet, of course, the bill does enable a “person” to contract and receive payment for services performed by a physician, that were made by a physician who had entered into an arrangement with a “person.” So it really would not surprise me if many of my constituents and many Albertans throughout the province are wondering exactly what, in fact, the entity named as a person in this legislation in this section will actually be. If indeed it's not a corporation or an incorporated individual, exactly what type of legal definition does this “person” have for a doctor to engage into some type of an arrangement with to receive payment?

Typically, Mr. Speaker, if there is an individual or professional who may be professionally incorporated who wishes to operate under the roof of, let's say, a broker of some kind, maybe, say in a real estate organization, that's something that an individual can do. But that broker has a legal definition and legal responsibilities. They in all likelihood are a professional corporation or are incorporated and therefore have legal liabilities and responsibilities that are well defined. Yet in this legislation we have a person, who the government has taken pains to describe as not a corporation but a person, who may actually enter into an arrangement with the physician and receive payment for services performed by that physician on the physician's behalf, and who knows how much the physician might actually get out of that lump of money that they're performing the service for.

Indeed, I think what we need is a lot more clarity around the entity described in the legislation as a person. Indeed, if the person is not a company – like, how can this person enter into a contractual arrangement or an arrangement with the doctor and receive payment on the doctor's behalf for services performed by the physician if that person doesn't have some legally recognized status that would really delineate the liabilities that person has under the act? And if there were difficulties, who does a member of the public go after if they wish to sue this person? What liabilities does this person have?

I mean, there are a lot of questions that I've got about it, and it's not something I've received a clear answer on. I think it would be well served, the Legislature would be well served, Mr. Speaker, to

have us revisit in Committee of the Whole issues such as these, which are a pretty glaring example of a lack of definition, a major part of the legislation, that the hon. Premier is relying upon to make a distinction that he thinks is something of great benefit.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

We are on REC1. Are there any hon. members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand up in support of this amendment put forward by my colleague from Edmonton-McClung. I appreciate the work that he's done to put this before us, to recommit the bill that's before us to Committee of the Whole for the purpose of reconsidering section 1, which, as he identified, has implications of a person being able to contract insured health services. Also appreciate the discussion that's gone on from members of my caucus, notably the Leader of the Opposition, the MLA for Edmonton-Strathcona, and my colleague from Edmonton-Decore, who, as was mentioned, shared a great deal of his personal circumstances to help us better understand the implications of this Health Statutes Amendment Act that's before us.

I just want to underscore how important this work we're doing at 2:30 in the morning is and, I guess, the awkwardness of looking at a major piece of legislation, omnibus legislation that repeals two acts and amends eight acts and also renames one act to take the reference to public health care out of the title, how significant it is that we're dealing with this at 2:30 in the morning and, as the Leader of the Opposition said, you know, towards the end of July, when most Albertans are tuned in to time with their family and holiday time and not focused on the work that we're doing. I think it's quite revealing in a way that we're doing this work and we're doing this debate here in this House at this time.

The reason, of course, I support the recommitting is that I think we need to spend some time together to look at the implications, again, of publicly traded corporations, as the Leader of the Opposition called them, getting involved in the health of Albertans and providing health services to those Albertans via investment from the taxpayer of Alberta through the government of Alberta. I think the changes that are implied in this part 1 will make it possible for private, for-profit companies to bill the public health care insurance plan directly.

2:30

It's not like we haven't been there before, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the reference to the Klein era and the third way that was talked about and endeavoured to try and get cemented into this province. I can remember those days because they were quite controversial. They had many, many Albertans quite concerned with the road we were going down. I can remember protests with regard to those taking place. It was deeply unpopular. I'm talking now about Bill 11, which opened the door up for public funding to be used to pay for private surgical suites and facilities and permitted patients to stay in – I remember; I think it was called human resources – a private hospital in Calgary, at the old Grace hospital, to keep patients overnight there. I can remember that that created a great deal of debate for a long period of time in the city of Calgary and the province of Alberta. That was deeply unpopular legislation, and there were protests here in the Legislature. On the steps of the Legislature crowds were gathered to let the government of the day, the Klein government, know that they were not in support.

The not in support, of course, was also embedded in media stories of the day, so I think it is wise to, in a sense, reconsider and recommit this to further debate and amendments from the

opposition at Committee of the Whole, to not re-create a situation that Albertans in the past have rejected wholeheartedly. That would be what I think we need to do with this amendment that's before us. I appreciate, as I said, the bit of history lesson that the Leader of the Opposition was able to provide all members of this House. It is something that, you know, we need to think about more deeply because doing that will hopefully not allow us to re-create the problems of the past.

I know that Committee of the Whole is not a point of engaging the public for deeper consultation, but I think that's necessary, too, Mr. Speaker. The deeper consultation with Albertans is something that I don't think has happened on this issue. We certainly have been given some indication that – in fact, in the opposite direction the then Leader of the Opposition, now the Premier, gave an indication that he was supportive of public health care and gave a guarantee to that effect. The fact that that was, I believe, what Albertans considered when they gave him support in the 2019 election is what – you know, we're here today looking at not seeing our public health care guaranteed.

In fact, with the publicly traded corporations and the persons that were discussed by my colleague from Edmonton-McClung, we can see corporations enter this area, and as I've indicated, that's not something in the past that Albertans have been very supportive of. In fact, they've demonstrated against that. So I think it's important to take this opportunity to recommit this to Committee of the Whole.

Another problem with the bill as it's laid out and the amendment as it's laid out, the health statutes amendment, is that much of the finalizing of the information, the go-forward direction will be left to regulations. In essence, this is explicitly introducing a private, profit-making motive into the health care system, and it raises troubling questions about how these providers will be accountable to all Albertans for their quality of care.

You know, previously and currently, the way it still stands, because this bill hasn't been passed, the only entities that could bill the government for insured services were doctors and dentists, as we know. They operate under a governance system where their professional practice has standards, and they take oaths for their standards as health care professionals. In other words, they're accountable to all of us, the public and their patients, for the processes and the protections that are put in place to handle complaints. There are registrars in place, and that's where we can take those issues.

With the change that's proposed under the Health Statutes Amendment Act, in section 1 in particular, we know that a person doesn't operate under the same conditions as professionals who are regulated. The concern I would have is that if a patient wants to have recourse for a botched surgery, perhaps, or other problems that they may experience as a result of their involvement with that publicly traded corporation that's providing services through a regulated professional, where do they go? What do they do? Is it clear to a patient the next steps they can take?

Currently people can take their concerns to the advocate. They can take their concerns to, as I said, the health care professionals, the regulated professional body, the college, and they can lay their complaints there. But if they have a publicly traded corporation that they're going to via a doctor and via a dentist, do they then have to go to court to get their issues resolved? That's something, I think, that would be onerous for Albertans who are in a situation where their health has been compromised and, you know, by definition, they're not as well as they are usually.

Again, I just wanted to focus on the respective college bylaws about how doctors and dentists are expected to conduct their practice in terms of their records and liability and malpractice insurance. These are requirements that we all understand once you dig into them.

There are, of course, many other elements of running a business that those professionals have to undertake. Will those same rules apply to private agreements with persons or publicly traded corporations? It's a judgment call, I think, right now. Certainly, the minister will be in a position to amend standards in the health facilities act, formerly the Health Care Protection Act. As I said before, many of these agreements that the minister will amend will take place in regulation, and it'll be left outside the public purview.

2:40

It comes down to many things, Mr. Speaker, and many things need to be cleared up before we can go forward with this Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020. My colleague from Edmonton-McClung has reasonably put this before us, and I think we should look at it in more detail before we move forward. That would be the next steps that I want to take.

I think I'll sit down with this frog in my throat. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker: Sure. Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday has risen.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise this morning at almost 2:45, and I appreciate the comments from the Member for Calgary-Buffalo. I also agree with that member in our appreciation for the amendment that has been, well, put forward to the House on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford. I soon will have some time to speak to this amendment and why I plan on supporting it, but I do appreciate the comments from the previous member, recognizing that there are a lot of questions left when we look at Bill 30, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020.

Unfortunately, through the debate that we've had, the short debate, of course, with this government's decision to invoke closure through Committee of the Whole, limiting our ability to do our job in this House, which is quite unfortunate considering the impact that this legislation is going to have on our province in the middle of a pandemic, it is very concerning.

The fact, first of all, that they would bring this forward instead of going back to the table to actually negotiate with physicians in good faith – we know from previous decisions that this government has made that they don't really believe in the idea of negotiating in good faith, so here we are. We saw them rip up the agreement, you know, to further negotiations with the AMA and with physicians in our province, and it's very concerning that instead of going back to the table, they've decided to use a heavy hand to bring this forward.

When we look at what this amendment is proposing, that Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, be not now read a third time, I can appreciate that the Member for Calgary-Buffalo is planning to support it. I also recognize the important work that that member did in his role as the Finance minister in ensuring that we were doing our best to contain costs, which, you know, this government is talking about trying to do. But the fact is that if they were actually trying to contain those costs, they would have gone back to negotiating with physicians. Instead, what we've seen is that when they didn't get a deal that they could support, even though it was very early in those negotiating stages, they changed the rules. We've seen this with the government before on a number of issues, whether it's labour laws or workers' safety legislation. The problem is that it's hard for physicians and for other health care professionals to take this government at their word when they are so willing to change the rules midway through negotiations.

When we look at the idea of this amendment and that it not now be read a third time and that it actually gets recommitted to

Committee of the Whole, once again I can appreciate that here we are at 2:45 in the morning debating this piece of legislation that deserves to see the light of day. It deserves to have more opportunities for all members to speak to it. It's become quite clear that this government has asked that their private members in the backbenches not speak to this legislation, specifically those in rural communities, who are being inundated with concerns from constituents, whether they're regular Albertans or whether they're specifically physicians in their communities. Unfortunately, this government and this Premier have made it quite clear through the inaction of private members that they do not want them to share their opinions on this piece because they know that if those private members speak up, their physicians will quickly respond with the fact that they are being forced out of their own communities. Where these physicians are actually saying that, because of the relationship that this government has created in our province and the atmosphere that they've created, they're actually in many instances considering moving out of the province.

Instead of actually going back to the table once again and having these discussions with physicians, the government has gone forward to actually tell these physicians: one, if you plan on leaving, you need to find yourself a replacement because of how many of these physicians are considering leaving, and further, if physicians are coming up and just finishing their education, this government is actually going to force them into communities whether they wanted to live there or not. The fact is that when we look at this legislation and the strong arm that this government is trying to use in the middle of the night, it's very unfortunate that this government is trying to push through.

Once again, I appreciate the comments from the Member for Calgary-Buffalo in respect of the amendment that is before the House right now. The fact is that this legislation – we have not had enough time to debate it.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

We are on REC1, and the hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat has caught my eye.

Ms Glasgo: Sorry. Never mind. I thought we were under Standing Order 29(2)(a).

The Acting Speaker: Okay. I see the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to have a moment to rise on this. I found some of the comments from the last speaker quite interesting in regard to the light of day and not having enough time to be able to debate the legislation, that things are happening secretly. This bill has been debated inside the Legislature since – hold on; I want to get it right because you know Team Angry over there is going to be heckling me right away if I'm off – July 7. Three weeks – three weeks – it's been in the Legislature. Day and night it's been debated. The minister has participated. Members on all sides of the aisle have participated. The hon. the Premier gave an excellent speech just recently for 90 minutes. It was good. I know the opposition didn't like it, but it was good. It was well delivered. They might not have agreed with some of what he said. I personally did. I'm not just saying it because he's the Premier. I actually agreed with it, but I can see how you guys were uncomfortable during that 90 minutes because he kind of schooled you a little bit there.

Then, of course, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition got up and tried to respond, unsuccessfully from my perspective. Maybe from the NDP's perspective it worked.

Mr. Kenney: How many hours?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Exactly. The secret bill that the member talks about, that is being debated on the Internet live right now for anybody who may be interested in watching, certainly has been talked about in question period, debated at all hours of the day, now for almost 26 hours, over three sitting weeks inside the Legislature . . .

Mr. Kenney: How many hours?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Twenty-six hours.

Most bills in this Legislature, in the 30th Legislature: the pace that is set by the opposition at the end is usually less than 10 hours, so we're heading towards triple the time on this legislation, but that's somehow secretive. Secretive.

Then you see right now what's happening here is that we're bringing in a recommitment, trying to take the bill all the way back to Committee of the Whole. I can only think that that's because they made a mistake, which we do know. They admitted earlier that they forgot to get their amendments ready before work and showed up and tried to get them ready at work. As I said earlier, that's kind of like filling up the airplane once it took off. Their constituents should be very disappointed about that behaviour.

At the end of the day, they're trying to take this bill all the way back, continue to block it, something that was a platform commitment that was voted on by over a million Albertans, the same million Albertans that fired the members across the way. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview is up and awake and joining the angry heckling across the way about the million people that voted for the platform that is being implemented inside this Chamber. I'm sure he wants to resend it to committee, too. But at the end of the day, as per the Premier's point, all that is is the NDP continuing their practice of making sure people suffer on waiting lists, Mr. Speaker, something that we promised would not take place anymore.

It is disappointing to me to continue to see the repetitiveness that is taking place with the opposition. I really had hoped that they would take some time to actually read the bill. If you listened to that entire speech, it's pretty clear that that hon. member, I don't think, has read the bill. I don't know for sure, but he certainly didn't talk about anything that was inside the legislation the entire time that he spoke about it. This is exactly a concern that has taken place.

As such, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

2:50 Government Motions (continued)

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Government House Leader.

Time Allocation on Bill 30

34. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in third reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the government we have been perfectly content with participating in lengthy debates. In fact, I have enjoyed participating in those lengthy debates. I kind of think that it really illustrates how unprepared the Official Opposition has been to debate legislation in

this Chamber. It's one of the reasons why I like long debates, because we can show how the government is prepared to be able to have reasonable discussions about the bill, and then we see the Official Opposition coming in and asking in a panic: "Hey, can we delay this a little bit? We're still writing our amendments. Maybe we can get a little bit more time from you, hon. Government House Leader, because we forgot to write the amendments today."

I think, though, at the end of the day, we have a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, I have a responsibility as the Government House Leader to make sure that the legislation that Albertans voted for makes it through this Chamber. We are now at 26, going on 27 hours of debate on Bill 30 in total. It's going to be some more time, assuming that the House passes this time allocation motion, but that takes us to almost three times the average that has been debated on legislation inside the 30th Legislature.

If you've listened to the comments coming from the Official Opposition, I certainly think that me saying that they've become very repetitive is probably being very nice. It is fairly clear that the NDP has no intention of truly debating this bill or providing anything new to it. If there is something else that the NDP would like to bring, I would like to caution them that they're now running out of time. This is their opportunity to do it.

I see the hon. deputy House leader, the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, who often moved time allocation motions on behalf of the Government House Leader when he was on this side of the aisle. In fact, Mr. Speaker, just an interesting fact on Bill 6, the famous Bill 6, that the NDP got so wrong – and we got that fixed over here; Alberta's government got Bill 6 fixed – they brought in time allocation, at nine hours and 45 minutes, for the first time. At the end of the bill . . .

Mr. Kenney: How long?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Nine hours and 45 minutes.

We'll give them 10. We'll give them 10. I think, Mr. Speaker, that it's hard to count it perfectly, with division bells, so let's give them 10 hours.

We're now at 27 hours. Assuming that this motion passes by the Chamber, we'll be at a little over 28 hours of debate, three weeks inside the Legislature. It's very reasonable. I'm happy to have heard from the Official Opposition, but we made a promise to Albertans, and we're going to get that through the Legislature tonight.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Under Standing Order 21(3), having offered the hon. Government House Leader five minutes on this matter, I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning is rising with five minutes.

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always enjoyable to stand up after the Government House Leader has decided to stand up and make some comments. You know, it is disappointing that we've now seen, on a piece of legislation that is going to substantially change the structure of our health care system, time allocated not only in Committee of the Whole but now in third reading, especially at a time where, as the hon. member did indicate, the hon. Premier did stand up and speak for 90 minutes already this evening, which did take up some of the time that the hon. opposition would probably have liked to have used to debate at this time. Of course, that's his prerogative, and that's fair.

Again, there are things that the government and the opposition tend to work on together, and that comes down to allowing the opposition to do the work to debate. Now, when the Government House Leader likes to talk about time allocation and how often it's

been implemented, he's right. You know, there have been hours allocated on this bill.

The Government House Leader will repeatedly talk about, well, the one time that we did it in the opposition. The reality is that since we've been in this Legislature, under the UCP time allocation has already been implemented on four separate bills. It's becoming an interesting trend, actually. Whenever the government starts to feel uncomfortable about pieces of legislation and they start hearing from their constituents, time allocation kicks in, and they don't want to talk about them anymore. Bill 8 would be a prime example of that, where all of a sudden time allocation was put in place, and we were getting through that bill pretty quickly. It seems like every time the government starts to feel uncomfortable and they start to realize that, you know, Albertans are not onside with their pieces of legislation, the Government House Leader stands up and implements time allocation.

We know what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker. We won't minimize that. The government will use their majority to vote down the opposition's voices and therefore the voices of Albertans. That is their prerogative, but we will spend the next hour fighting for them as that is our responsibility.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I would hesitate to have a preconceived notion as to what the decision of this honourable House may be.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 34 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 2:56 a.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

For the motion:

Allard	Lovely	Reid
Amery	Luan	Rosin
Dreeshen	Madu	Rowswell
Ellis	McIver	Rutherford
Fir	Nally	Sigurdson, R.J.
Getson	Neudorf	Smith
Glasgo	Nixon, Jason	Turton
Horner	Nixon, Jeremy	Walker
Jones	Orr	Wilson
Kenney	Rehn	

Against the motion:

Bilous	Dach	Irwin
Carson	Dang	Sabir
Ceci		

Totals: For – 29 Against – 7

[Government Motion 34 carried]

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

Bill 30

Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020

(continued)

The Acting Speaker: Are there any hon. members looking to join debate on third reading? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise to speak to this amendment. You know, it's quite unfortunate. As I was just wrapping up my comments under 29(2)(a) about the fact that this government is unwilling to recognize the great concerns and reasonable concerns of physicians and Albertans across this province, while I was raising those concerns that this government would in fact invoke closure in Committee of the Whole, now we see that they go one further and actually limit our debate in third reading as well. I'm very frustrated, to say the least. The fact is that this legislation has not passed the smell test, I suppose, at the end of the day.

This government is trying to push forward on an agenda because they were unwilling to bargain in good faith with the AMA and physicians across this province. Instead of working with those parties affected, they have gone to changing the rules. It's very frustrating that even with my comments with respect to this amendment, that it not now be read a third time and actually go back to Committee of the Whole for the purpose of reconsidering section 1, which is, in large part, though there are many concerns with this legislation, one of our biggest concerns – the idea is that this government is actually putting in the legislation numbered corporations or large corporations with shareholder stakes in the matter of health care. They're actually allowing that to be implemented through legislation.

You know, I want to give other members the opportunity to speak, considering the undemocratic move of this government to actually limit debate in third reading for a second time on Bill 30. I just want to look back. You know, the Premier went on at length this evening about his platform and the fact that Dr. Brian Day was somebody that supported their platform on the health care file specifically. I want to reflect on a *National Post* article that was presented in 2016 where Dr. Brian Day, in being interviewed by the *National Post*, actually made the statement that, quote, we in Canada will give the same level of services to a wealthy person as to a person who isn't wealthy, and that doesn't make sense.

We have a Premier and a government that stand here and say that they are not in fact trying to move to the Americanization of our health care system, but at the same time they actually used in their platform the recognition from this doctor, that he is giving them his support. When we reflect on the idea that the government is happy to use the support of somebody who's actually willing to advocate for a two-tiered system, who actually goes as far as to say that wealthy people should have better access to health care compared to lower income families, it is completely clear . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. I hesitate to interrupt, and I apologize for that.

There are lounges on both sides of the House, so, hon. members, if you're going to have conversations, I would ask that you take those conversations outside. The individual with the call . . . [interjections] Order. Order. The individual with the call is the hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

Once again, this government used validation for their own platform from a person who was willing to go on record in 2016 with the *National Post* – and I imagine that person would be happy to make the same statement these days – that they do not believe that there should be universal health care in our province. They actually advocated that people that are wealthy should have better access to health care in our province and across Canada. So it's quite unfortunate that while this government is ramming through this piece of legislation to further Americanize our system or take steps to Americanize our system with the integration of numbered

companies, of shareholder-owned companies into our health care system, they wouldn't at least, you know – I want to keep this parliamentary – show their true intentions of actually passing this.

The fact is that in response to my 29(2)(a), the Government House Leader took the opportunity to attack us for not being prepared, but the fact is that yesterday at 1 a.m. this government brought forward amendments to their own legislation, so this government was not ready. As the conversation on this legislation went through the House with the limited amount of time that they've given us, physicians, especially in rural communities, who are being disproportionately affected by the changes that this government is making have been reaching out to them. You know, it's a very sad state of affairs that we have here, that this government is moving forward with this.

Every time that that member or any member of the government attacks me for my knowledge on this bill or for being a socialist or whatever this government concocts at that moment of the day, you know, it really doesn't bother me, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that they are saying those words to the physicians across this province who are asking for a fair deal, asking to be respected in negotiations, so every time that the Premier or the government attacks me for their perceived belief or my beliefs, they are attacking those physicians.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, a point of order has been called.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Jason Nixon: I rise on 23(h), (i), and (j). I want to be able to give the opposition as much time as they can with this legislation. The hon. member clearly said that the Premier was attacking him, Mr. Speaker. That is putting unavowed motives on the Premier. It is certainly something that is not parliamentary. We've had lots of rulings on it. Referring to his concerns about what the government is doing is totally fine, but to say that about an hon. member of this Assembly is completely inappropriate, and he should withdraw and apologize for that remark.

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

3:20

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is clearly not a point of order, as we've discussed previously in the House. The member was talking about the attacks on physicians, which have been discussed thoroughly in this House, and I would like the member to be able to continue his comments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: I don't have the benefit of the Blues in front of me, but I believe that the hon. member did say that the Premier specifically was attacking.

If the hon. member could please withdraw and apologize and continue with his comments.

Mr. Carson: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for the way that I framed that, and I appreciate that we have to be careful here.

Debate Continued

Mr. Carson: The fact is that this government has taken many opportunities to rise but not answer our questions on this legislation,

which we would have appreciated if that was the case. Taking opportunities to speak against my ability to recognize what's in the legislation: once again, when they make that a point of contention or question that, the fact is that they are questioning the ability of physicians across this province, who are well educated to understand exactly what is happening here and taking that into question. It's very concerning.

Once again, when we look at the amendment that's before us, moving this back to the Committee of the Whole, recognizing specifically that we need to reconsider section 1 and the idea that shareholder corporations can come into Alberta and set up shop potentially and quite possibly without any physicians as a shareholder or on the board, whatever it may be – this government is introducing and taking further steps to Americanize our health care system. Even the Premier's remarks earlier today made many examples. Taking into question his own debate with the fact of the idea, the discussion of changes that the government made in Saskatchewan and the public further subsidized private corporations to do these surgeries, the fact is and the statistics show, coming back from that, that when the government stopped subsidizing those beds or those rooms, those operations, it was entirely uneconomical.

This government from the very beginning, ripping up the contracts with these physicians and further undermining them through media and not willing to negotiate in good faith with those physicians and now ultimately with the forcing through of Bill 30, has completely undermined the integrity of their ability, I suppose, to negotiate, whether it be with physicians or any other health care practitioners or front-line workers across this province.

Now, at a time, once again, in the middle of a pandemic when we should be focused on supporting these physicians through this pandemic, this government has taken every opportunity to undermine them, to attack them, to say that they are overpaid, to use their gross billing practices to say that they're overpaid, not recognizing the fact that the cost of living, the cost of setting up shop in many of these rural communities can be quite onerous or expensive for these physicians.

This government has taken every opportunity to – instead of reflecting on the concerns from the opposition, from physicians, and from everyday Albertans across this province, instead of taking time to reflect on the very real concerns that Albertans have on this legislation, they've taken that time to, you know, completely avoid the issue entirely and instead call our members angry.

But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that I'm so proud of the members in the opposition and the integrity that they've shown and the passion that they've shown at the same time as rural private members in this government have been completely silent on the issue of further steps to Americanize our health care system. While these rural MLAs are inundated once again from their physicians in the rural communities with concerns that they're going to leave, with concerns that they're being forced to stay or move, the fact is that those members have been completely silent, and it's shameful.

With that being said, with the very short amount of time we have left, I would like to hear from other opposition members. At the end of the day the government has failed Albertans in Bill 30.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

That said, there is an opportunity for 29(2)(a) should anybody be wishing to ask questions or make a comment.

Seeing none, are there any hon. members looking to join debate on REC1? The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm thankful for the opportunity to speak one last time on Bill 30. With every

government initiative and bill it's important to begin with the end in mind. So what is the end in mind here with Bill 30? It's to maximize positive health outcomes for Alberta families and businesses. How is this accomplished? This is accomplished by putting patients at the heart of our health care system. Bill 30 states that it will, among other things, streamline the review and approval process for chartered surgical facilities, reducing red tape and administrative burdens so current and new chartered surgical facilities can provide more publicly funded surgeries and help reduce surgical wait times as part of the Alberta wait times initiative. The Alberta surgical wait times initiative is modelled after the Saskatchewan wait times initiative.

I just want to read from our platform. This is not new.

Former Saskatchewan NDP Finance Minister Dr. Janice Mackinnon studied the success of the [Saskatchewan initiative], concluding that it succeeded because it put patients, rather than providers, at the heart of the system, and because strong leadership held the system accountable to achieving a three month wait time for most surgeries.

The MacKinnon report speaks for itself. Alberta's health care union monopoly . . .

Member Irwin: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, a point of order has been called. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Point of Order Relevance

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on 23(b), speaking to matters other than what's under discussion. Of course, we are on a recommittal amendment. Thinking back to just recently being called a point of order on not being on topic, I would suggest that the member thinks that he's speaking on the main, which of course we are not.

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry. The reason I find this humorous is that listening to the Official Opposition's comments for the last 48 hours, I can't recall any that were on the bill itself. With that said, I also could recall very few remarks in this Chamber like those that were coming from the Member for Red Deer-South – sorry, I was trying to remember which side of Red Deer – that are that close to actually about the legislation.

The NDP have been speaking about Bill 30 now for 27 hours with us. I don't even know if they've actually looked at Bill 30 yet. They continue to talk about the AMA and doctor negotiations and different things like that. The hon. member is referring directly to the content of Bill 30, and he's also making it clear why the NDP is wrong to recommit that bill and why our government still is going to proceed with our platform promise.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, at this stage I do not find a point of order. We have had a wide swath with regard to topics that have been discussed with regard to this exact debate.

If the hon. Member for Red Deer-South could please continue, bearing in mind the fact that we are on REC1.

Debate Continued

Mr. Stephan: Sure. I don't mind migrating my discussion now towards the amendment as well.

The pith and substance of the amendment that the members of the opposition were speaking about is an objection to the private

sector having a role in the delivery of health care services, and I want to just hearken back to personal experience and providing professional services in my own business as a professional corporation as well as serving other doctors and medical professionals providing business in their corporations as well. In my own practice I strive to have a culture of excellence. I did that providing high-quality advice and services. Likewise, the provision of medical services in a private model is successful by striving to provide excellent medical services at high service levels. That type of delivery is complementary to the public interest.

The NDP, I think, fail to understand the relationship between service and profit in the real world. They think that profit sacrifices service. In the non-union monopoly real world high quality and high service is how a business succeeds.

Bill 30 is innovative. It is not a two-tier health care system. That terminology is normally understood to focus on the payer, and in all cases it is the public system.

3:30

In the case of Bill 30, there is no two-tier. There is a single payer, the public health care system. Bill 30 is about health care delivery and striving to innovate to improve health care delivery for Albertans. The presence of private delivery will increase accountability in our health care system, but most importantly it will produce opportunities for Albertans to improve health care outcomes by modelling upon the successes realized by the Saskatchewan system.

Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should there be any takers for questions or comments.

Seeing none, are there any hon. members looking to join debate on REC1?

[Motion on amendment REC1 lost]

The Acting Speaker: Moving back to Bill 30 proper, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: Thank you. I'd like to put in an amendment, and I'll give it now.

The Acting Speaker: Okay. Once it comes up here, then I'll take a look at it, and we'll decide how best to move forward after that.

Thank you, hon. member. If you could please read it in for the benefit of *Hansard* and then continue with your comments. You still, basically, have 15 minutes.

Member Ceci: Thank you very much. I move that the motion for third reading of Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, be amended by deleting all of the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, be not now read a third time because the Assembly is of the view that the government has not sufficiently consulted with members of the public on the provisions of the bill as amended.

Just to briefly address a bit of debate, Mr. Speaker, and, I guess, to cut to the chase in terms of what members of the government might say, they might say that they've consulted widely because they have a platform and that that platform was supported by a record number of Albertans in the 2019 election. I would submit that they also have obfuscated what their real intentions are with regard to this bill and the changes that are embedded in it. We know that the Premier, the now Premier, the then Leader of the

Opposition, signed a public health guarantee saying that he would guarantee the public health care of this province. I didn't read the fine print on that, but I think most people would think it to mean that he's not going to change things with regard to the way our health care is delivered.

Obviously, with Bill 30 that is changed, and I believe members of the public would want an opportunity to weigh in on that, to discuss it. I talked earlier about Bill 11, the third way of the Ralph Klein era, and the protests and how the public were deeply dissatisfied with Ralph Klein's attempt to change public health care and have it delivered privately.

I'm going to reference the AMA. I hope my colleague from Red Deer-South does not object. The AMA board has said that a lack of any meaningful consultation with the public and physicians on this legislation will have a significant impact on health care in Alberta. There was a lack of any meaningful consultation from the very people who work in the system, who know the system best, I would argue, and certainly there wasn't any consultation with the public with regard to this broadly.

We know other initiatives by this government have not been consulted on. For instance, the parks plan to close or privatize or sell parks across this province is deeply, deeply unpopular. Still, the government went ahead, and they did not consult anyone on that.

So they're ramming through the legislation, as my colleague here has said. The public have not been consulted. When they are consulted on their health care, they support and stand up for health care. There was an agreement by the Leader of the Opposition and now Premier to support public health care with a guarantee. You know, the election is not a consultation on the state of our health care, frankly. It is a consultation on electing people across this province in different ridings. When I talk to my constituents about their public health care, they don't wish the kinds of changes that are embedded in the bill before us, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020.

Mr. Speaker, without further ado, I'm going to take my seat and hope that members of the Legislature also support the view that we need to consult more broadly on public health care in this province, that Albertans appreciate their physicians, their services, their clinics, and that any change to that needs to first go before them to be reviewed.

The omnibus legislation that is Bill 30, as I indicated earlier, changes many different statutes, many different acts. You know, if you were just to ask a person on the street, "Do you understand what Bill 30 is going to mean to you and your family with regard to your health care?" they would say, "I don't know what you're talking about." Part of the reason they wouldn't know what we're talking about in that regard is because it's 3:42 in the evening – sorry – in the morning. It's in the morning, 3:42 in the morning.

Member Irwin: It's 3:37.

Member Ceci: Sorry. It's 3:37 in the morning, and we're here talking about something that's going to have profound changes to the way the health care in this province is delivered, and the average citizen in this province has no idea that it'll change this drastically.

If this was brought before them, if they were interested stakeholders like the AMA, like the Friends of Medicare, like various corporations around the province that currently deliver publicly funded health care, we would find a very different reaction than members on the other side, in the government, are telling us exists in Alberta today. I don't believe that's the case, and I think we need an opportunity to have a fulsome debate.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

For the benefit of all those present, this will be referred to as RA1. However, don't let that impede your choice under 29(2)(a), which is available now for any hon. member.

Seeing none, are there any hon. members looking to join debate on RA1? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise at this late hour and speak to third reading of Bill 30, which just recently the government brought in a closure motion on. Of course, for those who don't know what that means who are watching, Albertans around the province, it is a tool that the government has implemented to essentially muzzle debate. It's a way to shut down debate in this House.

I appreciate that the government will stand up and talk about the number of hours that we debated a certain bill. I didn't realize that there's a limitation on democracy, that when the clock runs out, you just throw democracy out the window and charge ahead, which is what this government is doing. In fact, I would love to hear from a government member who has spoken to a physician or a member of the AMA who is happy about Bill 30 and says: "This is going to improve our health care system. This is going to make it even stronger. This is great for everyone."

I'll tell you this much, Mr. Speaker. I've heard from a number of physicians and constituents who have visited their physicians who have signs in their offices that say that due to this government's policies, the quality of care that they give to people will now go down, that the amount of time they'll spend with patients is now limited, and they apologize. But I respected the fact that the physicians are putting the blame squarely on the shoulders of this UCP government, which is where it should be.

3:40

In the midst of a global pandemic the government picks a fight with physicians, picks a fight with our public health care system, which is, you know, renowned, is the envy of jurisdictions all over the world. In fact, when I held the position of minister of economic development and trade and was on numerous trade missions talking with investors and companies looking at anywhere that they wanted to go in the world, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that one of the reasons that Alberta was not just on their radar but was a jurisdiction that interested them – I mean, the real Alberta advantage was things like our health care system, the fact that we have a single delivery mechanism. In fact, we're the only one in the country that has a single delivery unit for health care.

Now, as I've said before in this Chamber, I won't argue that there aren't improvements that can be made. Absolutely. A hundred per cent. You know, I believe that, but what this bill is doing is undermining our public system. It's in fact putting an American-style health care system on the fast track for this province, Mr. Speaker. You look at jurisdictions like the U.S., for example, with their health care system. It is far, far more costly to American taxpayers than our Canadian system.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I don't know if this government has spoken with any physicians. In fact, I would love for them to list who they've actually spoken with, who asked for this. But I can tell you that physicians, despite the Premier saying, "No, nobody is going to leave the province," already are, Premier. They're leaving the province because they clearly see that this government, through this bill, does not value the work that they do, that they're trying to discredit – in fact, the Health minister on numerous occasions has attacked the AMA and physicians, trying to discredit them for the work that they do.

It's absolutely mind-boggling, in fact, Mr. Speaker. I know the country is talking about it. I've received communication from folks in other parts of the country saying: you know, this is unbelievable. It's unprecedented what this government is doing.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I'm rising in support of this amendment, which will make the government go out and actually consult with physicians, consult with the people of this province. I mean, you know, we've heard the government get up on numerous occasions talking about how much they love referendums. Why don't you put it to the test with Albertans on: who wants private health care? Let's have a referendum on privatizing our health care system and see how many Albertans vote for that. I can tell you that I think there would be very few, especially those who have experience with other health care systems that have private health care delivery models.

You know, if the government is so certain that this is what Albertans want, well, then hold a referendum on this topic. They seem to be very interested in referendums on other topics, Mr. Speaker. But I'll tell you this much. This bill is causing Albertans to question the future of our health care system in this province. I can tell you that this bill will and is impacting companies that are looking at jurisdictions within Canada on where to set up offices or potentially relocate and that this is a disincentive for them to come to our province. This is actually counter to what the government claims they are doing through attempts to attract companies to this province, and this bill, coupled with the ongoing attacks on our public education system, is having a significant impact and effect on Alberta's reputation, quite frankly. Again, we've spoken in this place numerous times about companies and what their criteria or their top criteria are for relocating, and I can tell you that health care, quality of life are in the top-five list for companies.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, for these reasons and many others, again recognizing that I have a limited amount of time that I can speak to this because of the government bringing in a closure motion, limiting debate, which kind of contradicts the whole democratic institution that we are all part of – I know that there are other members of the Assembly wishing to speak – I urge all members in this Chamber to vote in favour of this amendment.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should there be any takers. I don't see any at this time.

Going back to amendment RA1, are there any hon. members looking to join debate on RA1?

[Motion on amendment RA1 lost]

The Acting Speaker: Moving back to the bill proper, Bill 30, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, I see the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's 10 to 4, and we are debating a bill this late at night that will deeply, deeply impact Albertans in each and every one of our ridings. The changes that are contained in this piece of legislation are such that those impacts will be adverse, and I think it's incumbent on every member of this House that they discuss this honestly with their constituents, explain these changes, and tell them how Bill 30 will impact their health care, the future of public health care in this province. That is precisely the reason that we are here, trying to do everything we can to make sure that health care remains public, that it remains available to everyone regardless of the size of their pockets, regardless of whether they have a credit card or not, and that it's publicly delivered.

Earlier the Premier spoke about this bill and also indicated that somehow we don't like the word "profit." I think we don't see Albertans' health as a business, as an entrepreneur, where companies can make profits off Albertans' health. I thought it's important that I should mention that. We don't want anybody profiting from Albertans who are sick, who are waiting in line just because the government wants to open up Albertans' health for businesses. They just can't defend it, that somehow we are against profit. If somebody will benefit from Albertans' health and profit from that, I don't think that we can agree on that.

3:50

As I said, it's a bill that will impact Albertans in every one of our ridings. There's still time for all of us to think about it. All of us have received correspondence from our constituents. We go through that folder and look at that correspondence. Those are the people who elected us. They are the ones reaching out to us, and our primary role here is to represent them and not just toe the party lines.

With that in mind, I'm wanting to move an amendment, and I can distribute the requisite number of copies of that, and once it's distributed, I can read it into the record.

The Acting Chair: If we could just grab the amendment. Once I see it, we'll know how to move forward.

Hon. member, do you have the original copy there at your desk?

Mr. Sabir: Yes.

The Acting Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

If you would please read it into the record and continue with your remarks. You have about 10 and a half minutes.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm moving this on behalf of my colleague the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie. The amendment reads that the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie moves that the motion for third reading of Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, be not now read a third time but that it be read a third time this day six months hence.

As I said, this legislation makes very significant changes to the delivery of health care in the province of Alberta. Those changes will have significant consequences for Albertans, and there are a number of reasons that it's important that we take time to get this one right.

The first reason is that in this last one year the relationship between the minister, this government, and health professionals has been completely broken, so much so that the AMA, an organization representing health professionals, doctors, are holding a no-confidence vote on this government's Minister of Health, and the only thing that needs to be seen is how high the no-confidence level will be coming out of that vote. There is no question that they will show no confidence in this minister. It just needs to be seen how high, whether it's 99 per cent, whether it's 100 per cent, something like that.

The second thing is that as it stands now, only doctors who are regulated by the professional bodies are the ones able to bill Alberta Health Services, the government. The changes that are contained in this piece of legislation will make it so that private, for-profit corporations will now be delivering those services. This argument that somehow those private corporations will deliver more efficient service than the public system, all the while making profit out of

that, is fundamentally flawed. There is no research, evidence to support such a possibility.

Another thing is that this piece of legislation is also changing the composition of professional colleges. At a time when the relationship between the government, the minister, and those colleges is completely broken, the government is trying to add more people, more representation of their nominees on these colleges so that they can stack those colleges with their own supporters and insiders. Looking at the record of such appointments under this government's watch, I think it's clear that that is likely to happen if this piece of legislation is passed.

For instance, on the Health Advocate position, not only did they not proceed with open hiring; they just picked a former executive director of the UCP Party for that position. When it comes to the Provincial Court Nominating Committee for judges, they appointed Leighton Grey to that position. So their appointment record is really troubling. When we see them opening more representation, I think what's going on behind the scenes is that they are just creating opportunities so they can stack these colleges and destroy public health and what these colleges do.

Another change that is contained in this piece of legislation is that the government is changing the reporting relationship between the Health Quality Council of Alberta and the government. The Health Quality Council was established to oversee the delivery of public health care independent of the government so that the public can have confidence in the delivery of public health care in their health care system. At a time when the government has been attacking doctors and professionals for a year, they are now changing the reporting relationship of the Health Quality Council, the last remaining hope for Albertans to have some oversight on this government and this minister, on how they have bungled this file.

They're changing that relationship so that the council will not be reporting to the Legislature. Instead, they will be reporting to the minister. It will be at the discretion of the minister if he or she chooses to share that report. This bill is designed to take transparency away, to take that oversight away, and further their agenda of Americanizing our public health care system.

4:00

When government refers to their platform and the version of the platform and some page, I think that during that entire campaign, if that platform and whatever was there about health was enough, the leader of the UCP, now Premier, wouldn't have to do a whole public health guarantee thing to assure people, to assure Albertans that they will not be privatizing health care, that they will not be laying off health care workers, that they will not be attacking doctors like that. Based on that public health guarantee, I would say that that guarantee was also part of the UCP's platform and a fundamental public commitment, overriding commitment, on all the fine print in their platform.

Another reason why this bill shouldn't be read at this time is that all these changes and all these attacks on public health care, doctors, health care professionals are happening at a time when we are going through a global pandemic that is threatening people's health, that is impacting their mental health, their livelihoods, and they are expecting a stronger health care system to be there for them. At this critical time the government is experimenting with something not based on any evidence, not based on any research, based on their ideological beliefs.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, we are on HA1. Are there any hon. members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is likely my last time speaking to Bill 30, and specifically, of course, we are speaking to the amendment to read this bill later.

You know, I want to echo the comments of some of my colleagues in that it's quite shameful that this government has invoked closure on this bill, a bill that impacts every single Albertan. The last time I spoke to this bill, which was at about this time yesterday, just recognizing that there were, in fact, a lot of folks watching at home, they were telling us over social media that they absolutely were paying attention even though it was 2 in the morning. I know there are a number of health care workers who also tune in, so I want to just remind those folks that we absolutely stand with them and that we support them as well.

Now, like I said yesterday and like I've talked about a few times in this House, it's so disheartening that at a time in the midst of a global pandemic, at a time when we should be strengthening our public health care system, at a time when we should be uplifting and supporting our health care workers, including our physicians, this government has chosen a different path. I've spoken about at length the fact that physicians in particular have felt the most, just huge, levels of disrespect from this government, and they've spoken out. Many of them have spoken out about their concerns around Bill 30 – the creeping privatization, corporatization of health care, the concerns that folks who have more complex needs will suffer under this system – spoken about things like the privatization of labs, again, in the middle of a global pandemic.

Many of us have heard from health care workers and from physicians. In fact, just earlier in the evening I received the following note from a doctor. She says the following:

Thank you so much for all that you do. As a family doctor that practises inner-city medicine I can't tell you how much this government has negatively contributed to my mental health during a global pandemic, no less. Last week I broke down crying in a meeting discussing what we will do to help our patients. As funding for some of the work I do is provided by this government, we have been advised that we cannot speak publicly as our administration is worried our funds will be reduced or removed. Feel free to use my words anonymously, though. This gag order is suffocating, but your advocacy, strong voice, and tireless efforts mean the world to me.

I know she's talking about all of us on our side of the House when she says that. She is a doctor who works in the inner city, as she said. This is a physician who helps many of my constituents, as I represent a lot of Edmonton's inner city. I worry deeply when someone like her, who is on the front lines, who is doing absolutely everything she can to help our most vulnerable Albertans – she's struggling with her own mental health right now.

Although this government will of course minimize the concerns of this physician, as they have with the concerns of countless other physicians across this province, I want her and I want all physicians to know and all health care workers to know that we will continue to fight for them and we will continue to support them even in the face of a government that has shown so much disrespect not only to them but to democracy in invoking closure on this very important debate. While she's just one person reaching out, countless nurses, health care workers have reached out, and so too have so many constituents because every single one of us has been touched by the health care system. Even though we're not directly working in the health care system, we've all been impacted by it.

Again, I urge this government to rethink the path that they're taking our province on because I would hope that this pandemic,

that COVID-19 would compel us to reassess our priorities and would compel us to recognize that we need a strong, robust health care system. We need it more than ever, and we need to support the folks who make that system function. I worry very much that the path that this government has chosen instead is one that is leading to the dismantling of our public health care system.

As I'm saying this, again I've got a couple of folks who are saying: we're watching. Stephen says: "A hundred per cent watching. My brother has stage 4 cancer. Our family is truly fearful of privatization." There we go. Stephen, watching right now at 4 o'clock. Stephen is a teacher. He also was watching yesterday, someone who is directly impacted by the decisions that this government makes. Meghan: she says that she's watching as well. A lot of folks are watching, and a lot of folks are paying attention to this debate.

4:10

I want to close my comments by giving this government – and I know my chances are slim. I get that, but they've got one final chance to delay on moving this bill forward, Bill 30. I'm trying to truly throw them a bone and warn them about this Premier's breaking of his health care promise, his public health care guarantee. It will come back to hurt him. I talked about how I'm hearing from my constituents in the core of Edmonton, in Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, but as I've said many times in this House, I've got a lot of connections in rural Alberta. I hear from folks in my hometown of Barrhead who voted for this government and are regretting it.

An Hon. Member: Buyer's remorse.

Member Irwin: Buyer's remorse.

Folks from out in Camrose and Forestburg and Bawlf areas, where I spent many years of my life teaching: they're regretting their decision to vote UCP as well. As a colleague stated so aptly earlier, they are not hearing from their MLAs. In fact, we're not hearing from a lot of those rural MLAs either, are we? Perhaps we will. I heard a chuckle from the other side. Perhaps we still will.

Truly, to be serious, this is about the fundamental vision for the province of Alberta, and through legislation like Bill 30 you're showing the path that you want to take our province down, one that benefits the wealthiest Albertans, one that moves towards further privatization and corporatization for our public systems, and one that – and this is the one that's the hardest for me – potentially will leave a whole lot of our neighbours behind in the middle of a global pandemic. Again, at a time like no other, we should be reassessing our values, and we should be strengthening our public health care system.

I want to end by urging this government to consider this final amendment on Bill 30, the Health Statutes Amendment Act. It's an opportunity to reassess, to go back to the drawing board. Again, we've been told by this government that there was some consultation done, but we don't know with whom. Clearly, a whole heck of a lot of physicians feel like they weren't consulted with, and to say that the consultation was done during the election, that you were elected, again, you weren't elected on attacking public health care. You weren't elected on driving doctors away from rural and remote parts of Alberta and, in fact, other parts of Alberta as well. So do not claim that simply being elected in April 2019 gives you the authority to attack something that so many Albertans hold dearly, and that's our public health care system.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will end my remarks. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Go ahead, please. The hon. Member for Edmonton-South.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to comment briefly before time elapses here how shameful it is that the government would bring in closure.

The Acting Speaker: I apologize, and I do hesitate to interrupt the hon. Member for Edmonton-South, but pursuant to Government Motion 34, agreed to earlier this evening, I must now put every question necessary for the disposal of Bill 30 at third reading.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment HA1 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:14 a.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

For the motion:

Bilous	Dang	Nielsen
Carson	Irwin	Sabir
Ceci		

4:30

Against the motion:

Allard	Loewen	Shandro
Copping	Long	Singh
Ellis	McIver	Stephan
Glubish	Nally	Toews
Goodridge	Nicolaides	Toor
Gotfried	Nixon, Jason	Turton
Guthrie	Nixon, Jeremy	van Dijken
Issik	Panda	Williams
Kenney	Pon	Yao
LaGrange	Rutherford	Yaseen

Totals:	For – 7	Against – 30
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[Motion on amendment HA1 lost]

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. members.

Continuing with every question necessary pursuant to Government Motion 34, the hon. Minister of Environment and Parks on behalf of the hon. Minister of Health has moved third reading of Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:32 a.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

For the motion:

Allard	Loewen	Shandro
Copping	Long	Singh
Ellis	McIver	Stephan
Glubish	Nally	Toews
Goodridge	Nicolaides	Toor
Gotfried	Nixon, Jason	Turton
Guthrie	Nixon, Jeremy	van Dijken
Issik	Panda	Williams
Kenney	Pon	Yao
LaGrange	Rutherford	Yaseen

Against the motion:

Bilous	Dang	Nielsen
Carson	Irwin	Sabir
Ceci		

Totals:	For – 30	Against – 7
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[Motion carried; Bill 30 read a third time]

Bill 32

Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. I am honoured to rise to move third reading of Bill 32, the Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020.

Mr. Speaker, our government was elected on the promise of supporting employee choice and to bring balance back to Alberta's labour laws. This bill will help do just that and also help businesses save time and money, letting them focus on getting Albertans back to work while protecting workers. Our government is committed to supporting economic recovery and getting Albertans back to work. The NDP swung the pendulum to the benefit of their union allies, without thinking about union members who work hard and provide for their families. The previous government also added costs and red tape to businesses, in turn driving away billions of dollars of investment and tens of thousands of jobs from our province. Bill 32 will restore balance in our labour laws, reduce red tape, and help get Albertans back to work.

4:50

Mr. Speaker, a key platform commitment was to protect workers from being forced to fund political campaigns and causes without explicit opt-in approval. Bill 32 delivers on that promise.

[Mrs. Allard in the chair]

Some national unions have used their workers' dues to actively campaign against Albertans, their jobs, and our foundational industries. Albertans deserve the right to make their own decisions. Now, Bill 32 does not change the ability for unions to campaign for causes; it simply confirms workers' explicit approval, that is required, if they choose to support political activities with their union dues. This bill also does not change the status quo for how unions collect their core union dues in order to represent their members. It gives working union members choice.

Madam Speaker, we are also amending the Labour Relations Code to require unions to provide their members with financial statements so members know how their money is being spent. This brings Alberta legislation into line with other jurisdictions in Canada with the sole exception of P.E.I. According to research results from SecondStreet.org polling 70 per cent of Canadians do not think union dues should be used for political activities and nonwork initiatives. This number even increases higher to 72 per cent when we asked union and former unionized members. The NDP is on the wrong side of this fight. We are giving workers the right to choose what causes their money will fund. This is a promise we made, this is a promise we were elected on, and through Bill 32 this is a promise upon which we will deliver.

Madam Speaker, last fall we consulted with thousands of Albertans. This included employees, employers, labour groups, and unions. We heard in general that employers need more flexibility in the Employment Standards Code to help them save time and money, which, in turn, protects jobs of hard-working Albertans.

Our government is listening to Albertans by making changes to sections of the Employment Standards Code, including simplifying general holiday pay, group terminations, payment of final earnings upon termination, payroll processes, and paying administrative penalties. We are supporting job creators in the province's economic recovery by restoring balance to Alberta's labour laws and saving job creators time and money so we can keep businesses open and Albertans employed.

Now, Madam Speaker, during debate there have been a number of issues raised by the opposition, both within and outside the Legislature. I'd like to set the record straight on a number of these items, particularly regarding termination pay, averaging arrangements, youth employment, strikes and picketing, general holiday pay variances, and rest periods.

First, I'd like to speak a little bit more about our changes to payment of final earnings upon termination and further clarify the intent behind this change. Now, to be clear, employees will still receive the same amount of termination pay. We are simply adding flexibility to the timelines employers have to provide this pay to save them administrative costs. We are better aligning the requirements with payroll practices to ensure that employees receive their final payments in a timely manner.

Now, Madam Speaker, most employees are paid biweekly, and the changes we are proposing allow employers to pay Albertans on their next regular pay cycle or the one immediately following. Employers will have 10 consecutive days after the end of their pay period in which termination occurred or 31 consecutive days after the last day of employment. That is the outside period in which this payment can be made. Now, these changes can save job creators up to \$100 million per year in administration costs, according to estimates from the Canadian payroll systems. To be clear, this is not, as the NDP would suggest, taking money out of workers' pockets. This is saving administrative costs for employers so they can help keep Albertans employed. Now, again, employees are getting the same amount of termination pay as they would have before these proposed changes but with flexible timing that allows employers to save money on payroll processes, which will help them save money, keep their doors open, and keep Albertans employed.

Madam Speaker, there's also been misinformation from the members opposite regarding overtime. I'd like to put an end to that and reiterate that the general rules for regular overtime are not changing. In addition, rules for overtime arrangements concerning the maximum 12-hour days and payment if hours worked exceed 44 hours a week on average still remain. The only thing we are changing is how we address averaging arrangements. These are arrangements that apply to a nonstandard schedule like 14 days on, 14 days off. These types of schedules have been in place in Alberta for decades.

Now, the previous government made changes to averaging arrangements that made them more complex, difficult to administer, and difficult for employers to use. They replaced compressed work weeks, which was working quite well prior to Bill 17 coming along, with hours of work averaging agreements. This increased employers' costs, adding administrative burdens and less flexibility. We are changing the rules back to what they were before by giving job creators more flexibility to get Albertans back to work. Changes to hours of work averaging will make it easier for employers to set up arrangements, create schedules, and calculate overtime. We are undoing years of NDP red tape to make it easier for Alberta's job creators to employ hard-working Albertans.

Now, I'd also like to set the record straight on youth employment. Madam Speaker, very little will change under Bill 32 from a policy perspective. Currently employers have to apply for a permit for

certain jobs in order to hire 13- and 14-year-olds. The proposed changes will remove this requirement for employers to obtain a permit. Youth will be allowed to work specific jobs from a preapproved list. Now, this list is comprised of jobs that permits were frequently granted to by the previous government and ours and includes such jobs as tutoring, working at a dance studio, coaching, and certain jobs in the hospitality sector. We are simply adding to the list that the former NDP government had in place and already had jobs on the list. For job creators, this would reduce red tape and regulatory burden, and for youth this change will make it easier for them to find employment and allow them to gain practical job skills and experience so they can build their resumés and their futures.

I'd like to turn now to strikes, picketing, and lockouts. Now, our government supports workers' right to strike. We are balancing employee's rights to fair collective bargaining, striking, and picketing with a need to protect businesses and our economy from harm and making sure Albertans continue to receive their services they rely upon. Now, these changes ensure employees will still be able to strike and picket but with additional rules that make sure these activities do not overly impact the rights of individuals and businesses.

Now, before 2017 secondary picketing, or picketing somewhere other than the employee's primary business, was not in the code, and all we are doing is ensuring that there must be advance approval for secondary picketing, and this is similar to the legislation in British Columbia. Similarly, changes would allow the Labour Relations Board to prohibit picketing when it obstructs or impedes a person from crossing the line who wishes to cross, and again this is consistent with the approach in B.C. These changes are intended to balance labour laws and help get Albertans back to work.

Now, Madam Speaker, one of the changes Bill 32 is making is how general holiday pay is being calculated. Now, this change calculates a payment based on the average of days worked in the four weeks immediately preceding the general holiday or the four weeks ending on the last day of the pay period preceding that general holiday. Now, the members opposite proposed amendments suggesting that our proposal, the proposal in Bill 32, would in effect reduce general holiday pay if an employee took vacation in the four weeks prior to the general holiday. That is simply not the case. The members opposite were wrong in their reading. We are simply reinstating the same approach that we used prior to Bill 17. This change provides flexibility for calculation for employers, and it better reflects the pay that employees earn for the days they work.

Now, Madam Speaker, I'd also like to clarify some points on requesting variances. Now, this is not new. We are going back to a similar system to what it was prior to the previous government's changes. Now, the previous government put in a whole new system for variances, expanding it to industry, requiring a maximum of two years, and then letting them expire, posting them to regulations. The NDP added a significant amount of red tape, making it complicated and difficult to use. For any variance that's done in the future, all impacted employees must be notified, and it will be publicly posted. The previous government had a whole list of details on how an employee would need to get notified. We are changing it. We are making it simpler. But the two key elements, that they must be posted and employees must be notified, remain.

Madam Speaker, variances were working just fine before the NDP came in with all their changes. We are making sure that they work for Albertans. We listened to Albertans on this issue. We are making the changes. So a variance that had been in place, again, for decades can continue to be used by employers, reducing red tape and helping get Albertans back to work.

Now, Madam Speaker, I'd like to talk about rest periods. Now, regarding rest periods, the opposition has suggested that we are reducing the amount of rest employees receive. That is simply incorrect. Thirty minutes for every five hours worked remains, but what we are doing is providing employees and employers greater flexibility concerning when those rest periods can be taken. We heard from Albertans that the rules, many of which the New Democrats put in place with Bill 17, simply weren't working, and we listened. We are rebalancing the labour laws and reducing costs for job creators to get Albertans back to work.

5:00

Madam Speaker, having set the record straight on a number of items raised by the opposition, I would like also to highlight other proposed changes that also restore balance to the labour laws, reduce red tape and costs, and help get Albertans back to work. This includes things like updating rules for union certification and revocation timelines as well as remedial certification provisions. With these changes specific timelines for certification and revocation processes will be removed to reduce red tape. The board will also only certify unions to represent employees when no other remedy is sufficient to counteract the impact of an employer's misconduct and the true wishes of employees cannot be determined.

Bill 32 also updates the rules for collective agreements such as allowing for collective agreements to be renewed early so long as there is employee consent. A higher threshold for first contract arbitration will also be implemented so that the board can only order first contract arbitration once that threshold is met, effectively rendering first contract arbitration as an option of last resort. Changes such as this will make it easier for employers and employees and their unions to focus on reaching an agreement and maintaining labour peace.

In addition, Bill 32 makes changes to rules in the construction sector, which will encourage competitiveness and reduce administrative burden by introducing flexible rules for industrial construction and maintenance unions to organize their members. It will also make changes to rules about major projects that add clarity and certainty, encourage further investment and increase the number of major construction projects in the province, and allow a collective agreement to stay in place for the remainder of the contract's term, even after employees have chosen a new union. Madam Speaker, in making these changes, our focus is on attracting business here and letting the world know that Alberta is open for business.

Other changes in Bill 32 will encourage the province's economic recovery by keeping businesses open and Albertans employed. This includes updating rules for temporary layoff notices so employees can be laid off for a longer period of time, in this case 90 days total in a 120-day period, and stay attached longer to their jobs. Now, this change is for non COVID-19 layoffs. COVID-19 related layoffs can continue to be for a period of 180 days. Employers still have to provide employees with written notice of temporary layoffs, but specific timing requirements have been removed. Madam Speaker, we are standing up for Albertans and protecting their jobs so they remain attached to a job longer during these uncertain times.

Now, Madam Speaker, in conclusion, our government promised a bold and comprehensive plan to chart a path forward for the Alberta economy, and Bill 32 is an important part of our economic recovery plan. It brings balance back to Alberta's labour laws, gives unions' workers choice, reduces red tape, and helps get Albertans back to work. I encourage everyone in this Chamber to support Bill 32. By doing so, you will be supporting hard-working Albertans and business owners and helping them create jobs and keep our

province on a path to economic recovery, all the while restoring balance to our labour laws.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: On third reading of Bill 32 I'd like to recognize the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to third reading of this bill. The title is quite a misnomer, actually. Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces: I think it's doing quite the opposite, and I'll lay out some of my arguments for that.

Madam Speaker, Alberta for many, many years was a laggard in Canada when it came to protection for workers, when it came to employment standards codes. You know, it wasn't until the NDP government of 2015 that we brought Alberta's labour codes into the 21st century, on par with many other provinces. In fact, I think we moved to the middle of the pack. We didn't even jump to the front of the pack when it comes to, again, amending various pieces of legislation, all in the name of protecting workers. Now, of course, this UCP government will tell the tale quite differently, saying that the pendulum was swung to the other side. Actually, the pendulum was on the one side, and through changes that we brought in, we moved the pendulum more to the centre. So this bill, as the minister so aptly described, eliminates many of the changes that were made that actually did bring balance to Alberta's workplaces for both employers and employees.

You know, I'll talk about my main concerns with this bill and then, should time still remain, talk a little bit about this government's unrelenting attacks and hatred for unions, which I really don't understand. This bill not only undermines the rights of working people but undermines their rights to organize, which, essentially, is a union, a collective voice versus an individual voice.

I know my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie – I believe it was in second reading – talked at length about all of the benefits that every Albertan, every Canadian has enjoyed because of the advocacy and the work that labour unions have done: being paid for overtime work, again, advocating on behalf of better labour standards, the fact that there are eight-hour workdays, that there are weekends. We don't have to go too far back in history, Madam Speaker, to a time when there were no rules, whether a minimum age to work in different workplaces, how many hours they could work, what they were paid. If they asked for either an improvement or a break, they could lose their job. There was fear of retribution. There was zero job security. What I'm talking about is not going back that far in our history.

In this bill, Madam Speaker: a number of changes, so I will clarify for the record. I appreciate that those were the minister's words, except his clarifications, I think, whether intentional or unintentional, were not exactly as how they were laid out. Now, I will speak to a couple of words that the minister used over and over again. It's great when the government speaks in code. I think the word "flexibility" was used probably a dozen times in describing this bill. You know, flexibility to pay workers, to not pay workers, to pay them overtime, maybe not pay them overtime, pay them on time, maybe pay them later, a number of real concerns that our caucus has outlined through the course of this bill.

Now, I'm looking to my colleagues to help me recall how many amendments the NDP opposition brought forward on this bill. I believe it was, well, several. I'm not sure I have the number in front of me. Out of all of the amendments I'm not sure how many were accepted. My suspicion is probably zero although I'm trying to make eye contact with the minister to see if he's nodding or shaking his head. That's unfortunate.

You know, I think one of the things that we tried to do while in government, Madam Speaker, was that we were open to amendments from the opposition, and that's simply because no one party or no government has a monopoly on good ideas. There are good ideas that come from the opposition. In fact, I was just talking to my colleagues about when we were in government, how often we accepted amendments from the Wildrose opposition, the then UCP opposition, the other parties that were represented in this Chamber in those years. It's unfortunate when amendments, reasonable amendments – practical, pragmatic, trying to improve a bill – are simply shot down.

I'll never forget this story. Now, it wasn't this current government, but back when I was first elected, my first term. I know that there are members on both sides of the Chamber that were first elected in 2012. When we proposed some amendments, I remember during a division speaking to a former PC cabinet minister, and I said, "This amendment is really, really reasonable." He acknowledged it and said: "Yeah. Actually, this really does make sense. This is reasonable." "Okay. Will you accept it?" "No, I won't accept it." "Well, why won't you accept it?" "Well, because it came from you." "Well, that's interesting." That's putting partisan politics and ideology ahead of good ideas. I don't think that any person in this room was elected to put partisan ideas ahead of good ideas. In fact, you know, every company that I have spoken with and every individual I have spoken with since 2012 expects that whomever is governing will take into consideration good ideas. They want the best possible legislation. Anyway, it's unfortunate that on this bill some of the ideas put forward by the NDP opposition were not accepted.

5:10

Now I'll dive into the bill specifically. The changes to final pay: employees could wait much longer to receive their final pay, up to 31 days. You know, I would love to know from the minister and the government how many workers said: "Please take your time in paying me. Take longer. I don't need to be paid promptly. I don't have bills. I don't have a mortgage to pay. I don't have family to support." To layer on top of that, in the midst of a pandemic, when Albertans and Canadians are hurting so badly, again, this legislation dovetailing with a bill that was just passed by the Assembly which was an outright attack on doctors and on our health care system, it floors me, Madam Speaker, that the government has the audacity to attack the very people who are keeping us safe, who are putting food on our table, who ensure that our economy is moving. Again, I would love to know how many workers have asked for that delay in pay.

I appreciate that the minister says: well, it's going to save a hundred million in admin costs. A hundred million in admin costs. Again, what is the economic impact on the workers and on that delay, where they have payments that must come out and come out of their bank accounts at certain times? That's like saying to a family: "Okay. You've got to choose between paying your mortgage or your rent and picking up groceries. You can wait two more weeks. You don't have to eat. I mean, you know, I'll just pay you in a couple of weeks, and then you'll be made whole." I don't know how many people asked for that. I imagine there are few. I'll give the minister the benefit of the doubt that there aren't zero, but I'd love to know who they are. Yeah. Logic dictates that no one is asking to be paid later.

I appreciate that for some employers that does mean a savings, and they say: "Yeah. Great. I get to keep that money that's owed to the worker for a longer period of time and either earn interest on it or use it some other way. But, no, the worker doesn't need that."

The employer will save. Well, what does the worker, what does the employee lose with this section of the bill?

The averaging arrangements are no longer agreements. Now, again, you know, this is where clearly lawyers wrote the language on these. What it means is that an employer can impose with two weeks' notice and can change with two weeks' notice how the employee is compensated. Providing flexibility, as the minister, of course, loves to frame this as, means that the average hours of an employee or a worker that used to be 12 weeks is now extended to 52 weeks. I mean, what that means is that, yeah, sure, it's a cost savings for employers but off the backs of workers. Let's keep in mind, folks, that the most successful companies around the globe are successful because of their employees. This provision basically means that workers are going to receive less money. They're going to be paid less. They're not going to be adequately compensated for their overtime work. You know, where I come from, you should be paid for the work that you do, and if you're working overtime, then you should be paid for that work.

The next provision, Madam Speaker, is the removal of a two-week notice for temporary layoffs. Now, that is going to wreak havoc on workers. You know, this will create gaps between the last paycheque and the eligibility for employment insurance. Again, the government is creating uncertainty, stress for workers, who will now have a gap. Well, how are they supposed to bridge that gap? It's asking workers to take on an unfair burden. I don't see how this makes Alberta more competitive. In fact, I see how it makes us less competitive because, again, in order to attract some of those top companies, they want top talent, and provisions like this are going to disincentivize people from coming to this province or from working in certain jobs in this province.

There are a number of exemptions and variances that could be allowed for employer groups or associations. Interestingly, there are no longer criteria for these exemptions in the regulations. Of course, you know, parties in the opposition, including when the UCP were in the opposition, talk about how the devil is in the details. The details are in the regulations, which, of course, are not publicly debated and disclosed. They're done behind closed doors with Executive Council.

Now, what these other exemptions and variances will allow is that essentially it's going to open the door, Madam Speaker, for employers to be granted exemptions to pay below minimum wages for specific groups or individuals. It's sad, you know. We can imagine the groups that will be targeted, often those that may not be able to advocate for themselves or who struggle to be able to have their voice heard. This opens the door for provisions that are not necessary but could have significant impacts.

The changes to the rest period: again, as the minister calls it, it provides flexibility for the employers. Well, again, flexibility to delay payments, to defer payments, to refuse payments. You know, in this section it talks about how employees could work a 10-hour day with one 30-minute break, which, again, provides flexibility, sure, to the employer on the backs of the employees.

Now, what I do want to say, Madam Speaker, is that we know that the majority of employers in this province are incredible employers, great people who take care of their workers, who treat them well, who value them, who understand that their company is successful largely in part because of the fruits of the labour of their workers. We applaud those companies, and there are countless examples. But the purpose of having legislation that is a minimum standard or a minimum bar is to ensure that for those employers who don't treat their employees well – and, unfortunately, there are examples in every jurisdiction of companies that do take advantage of workers – that's what this legislation and employment standards are meant to protect against. They're meant to protect workers.

5:20

Again, we know that there are countless companies that go far above and beyond the minimum, and that's a testament, I think, to the spirit of what it means, quite frankly, to be Canadian, but there are those that need those minimum standards. A number of provisions in this bill drop the bar significantly lower, in fact, lower than the majority of other Canadian provinces, and put Alberta workers at a disadvantage.

Changes to statutory holiday pay, Madam Speaker, remove vacation pay, general holiday pay from the calculation and provide flexibility, as the minister pointed out, for an employer to choose a cheaper calculation should they so choose between the different options. Employers can deduct overpayments from an employee without written approval. It also makes changes to the labour code. Interestingly, it adds "expedient" to the preamble. Again, I would love to know the backstory of that change. Maybe I'm reading more into it than I should.

Again, Madam Speaker, there are a number of changes that are made to unions, to organized labour, including that it requires the union to file financial statements according to the regulations. Now, there's no clarity whatsoever on what those regs will be, but what's interesting – and I know that the Member for Edmonton-Decore is a proud union member and has been for decades, who has clearly articulated in this Chamber that there are regular monthly meetings where financial statements are made available to every member who attends and that those meetings are open to every member, not just their reps. I know that many of them have moved online to make it even more readily available to their members. You know, again, this change just makes me question where this is coming from. To what end is the minister trying to – what problem is the minister trying to solve?

You know, Madam Speaker, changes to some of the union dues deductions and the opt-in requirements will have significant impacts on a lot of the work that unions do. I can tell you that for many years I have had the privilege of participating in the Labour Day barbecue.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, we are on third reading of Bill 32. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday has risen to join debate.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and good morning, everyone. It's an honour to rise to speak to Bill 32 while the process that we're going through here and the government's decision to invoke closure in Committee of the Whole once again leaves us being rushed through a piece of legislation that deserves the opportunity to be seen by the general public.

I spoke to some extent on Bill 32 and the idea of flexibility, as this minister calls it, but specifically around the issue of changes to overtime payments and averaging agreements as proposed in this legislation. When I was knocking on doors during the election, I was quite clear that this was a decision or a path that the government was going to go down, and it was very concerning for the Albertans that I spoke to. I don't think, necessarily, that the majority of Albertans understood the full extent of how cold-hearted a decision, especially around averaging agreements and paying people fairly for the overtime that they've worked – I don't think they truly understood the decision that this government was going to make.

When I raised the idea of that, the prospect of that at the doors, people were truly mystified that a government at that time, with the price of oil, you know, in a crashed state – and we continue to see that – would actually propose the idea to roll back these hours. As the previous member spoke about, especially when we look at being in the midst of a pandemic and the idea that many families are lucky

to be working right now and that they're doing everything they can to hold on to those jobs, at the same time this government is making it easier for employers to lay off workers without any prior knowledge to those employees. They're making it easier for employers to, once again, change averaging agreements – so even when something was decided on, unilateral cancellation of agreements with a 30-day notice can be done – and also extending the opportunity for averaging agreements. It's very concerning, Madam Speaker.

Once again, when we look at the fact that this government has already moved time allocation in Committee of the Whole and are signalling that they're willing to do that again on this part of the debate, it's very concerning. We saw that with Bill 30, that just passed through the House forcibly by this government. When things aren't going the way this government wants and people are concerned about the legislation that this government is trying to pass, they will do anything in their power to make sure Albertans don't see it. That's what we're seeing once again here.

You know, just looking back on some of the amendments that we've brought forward and some of the concerns that we've had around this legislation, looking at the extension of final pay, that the previous member spoke about, this government is willing to extend from three days to 31 days the ability of employers to pay out workers. Once again, we look at the situation that we're in right now, in the midst of a pandemic, and this government saying: well, three days wasn't working for employers, but instead of finding a balance somewhere in the middle, as was proposed by the NDP opposition more recently, we're just going to fully put it in the hands of employers.

While this government titled their legislation Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces and the minister goes on at length about flexibility, the fact is that this is not flexible for workers. As the previous member spoke about and as many members of the opposition here have spoken about, there's no flexibility in having the ability to pay me later. If I'm a worker that was just laid off and, you know, trying to get on whether it's EI – I spoke to some extent on the idea of somebody who potentially was accessing AISH and who found employment and then was laid off after that fact for whatever reason and who now is trying to access this program. In many instances that can take months to get back on, and this government is saying that it's okay for employers to not pay those workers for 31 days.

Even looking at the employment standards engagement document that this government released, you know, there is very little detail about who they actually consulted. In the document it goes on to talk about: there were a lot of employees who shared their concerns, so we had to make sure that we found balance in this, and the ideas or thoughts of employees were scaled back to find an average between employers and employees. It's quite clear that they received a large amount of concern from employees, but instead of finding a balance, as this government has titled this legislation, or restoring a balance, they have done quite the opposite. They have tilted the scales towards employers.

As the previous member spoke about and as many members of the opposition have raised in this debate, when we made changes through some of the legislation when we were in government, it wasn't about moving us to the front of the pack. In most instances it was about putting us in the middle. For far too long Alberta had some of the worst or, might I say, most outdated legislation when it came to the Employment Standards Code and the Labour Relations Code. Unfortunately, instead of continuing on that work or potentially tweaking, to some extent, some of the changes that we had made, this government has completely just ripped up

everything that we've done and moved the pendulum back into, you know, the employer's corner.

Of course, I can respect that employers will work within the legislation that they're given. So when a government says, "Well, you can do this; you can hire 13-year-olds, and we'll make it easier for you to get exemptions to pay them less than minimum wage; and we'll potentially look at, you know, opening up what kind of work they can do" even though the labour minister begs to differ, "You can change averaging agreements with 30 days' notice; you can terminate people temporarily," as the minister says, "with no notice," the fact is that this government has completely flipped the table, completely handed all of this to the employers. It's quite unfortunate.

5:30

Moving on, looking at the idea of authorization for deduction as proposed in this legislation, this government is now saying that through this legislation employers can automatically take money out of the pockets of employees without their consent, which was not the case before, and in the instance of an accidental overpayment of wages to an employee, this government is making it so that employers are able to take that money back from workers without any kind of consultation or their consent. That's quite unfortunate because these things happen, and in those cases, you know, it's quite possible that an employee has spent that money.

We're seeing that even with the federal government's administration of the CERB program, potentially somebody was given money that they shouldn't have been able to access, and the government is coming back and asking them to pay for that. But the fact is that instead of coming up with a payment plan or ensuring that there's consultation and the opportunity for an employee to have their voice heard in instances where this happens, this government is saying that without any notice an employer can take that money back. Especially, you know, as mentioned, in the midst of a pandemic, when families are scrambling to find enough money to pay for whatever it might be, unfortunately this provincial government has done very little in the pandemic to support Albertans and their families through these times of need. In most instances the support from government has been coming from the federal government, and it's very concerning that at a time like this, this government is once again making it so an employer can take that money away from workers in the case of instances of overpayment.

Now, once again, when we look at averaging agreements – and I spoke to some extent about this in previous discussions – the idea is that an employer can change these averaging agreements to make it so that even if somebody was previously eligible to get paid overtime, an agreement could be made, once again, without the consent of an employee to change what is considered overtime. I had raised an instance for myself in an industry that would be considered open for exemption, in my previous line of work, that there would be instances where my employer would tell me: well, you're going to work 14 hours today, and, you know, either tomorrow or another time this week you will not work even though you were potentially scheduled to, and we'll just call it even. You won't get paid overtime, but at least you'll get that time off at straight time, of course. They weren't offering overtime by any means. You know, I raised the point that that happens often and that this government is making it easier for that to happen. Unfortunately, the Government House Leader said: oh, that's illegal. The fact is that they are making that easier to happen and even more legal through this legislation.

Just like the previous member, I have a lot of concerns about who was actually consulted with this legislation. Once again, the

employment standards engagement document says that “because the majority of respondents were employees, the weighting of satisfaction and dissatisfaction rates was considered when developing policy options.” So when we look at the idea of something like getting paid in a timely fashion, within three days of being laid off, and this government’s decision to extend that to 31 days, well, you know, it was quite unanimous that employees supported the idea of getting paid in a reasonable manner, and employers said: oh, no; that doesn’t work for us; we’d rather have a full pay period to pay them back. Well, that seems like a no-brainer that that’s going to happen. But instead of finding a balance between the two competing groups, this government completely put it in the hands of employers, which is really par for the course with this government.

We’ve seen, you know, the idea of \$4.7 billion, the corporate tax cut that this government has pushed through and with zero accountability to where that money is going, which is extremely frustrating. At the same time, we have seen zero results from that money being spent and given to large profitable corporations, and instead of pausing and taking some time to consider what industry stakeholders are asking for and the inability of the economic development and trade minister to create any kind of new growth in our province, instead of re-examining those opportunities, this government is moving forward even faster with that \$4.7 billion handout.

Even more so, on top of that, instead of the idea of creating programs like investor tax credits, which this government has gotten rid of, and tech programs, which, thankfully, this government seems to finally be turning the corner on and deciding that diversification is more than just a luxury, as this Finance minister has said in the past, that it’s a luxury that we can’t afford right now, instead of moving forward with those decisions, this government is going to put all of that responsibility on the backs of employees. When this minister says, “We’re creating flexibility and choice and more opportunity for job growth,” what they are really saying is that they’re going to put more burden on the backs of employees. There are many aspects within this legislation that hint towards that quite clearly.

The frustrating part is that many of the amendments that we brought forward are very reasonable. The idea of finding balance, whether it be in the authorization for deductions, as I’ve talked about, or the idea of striking the extension of final pay, that people deserve to be paid in a timely manner and a reasonable manner: this government has totally ignored those calls. It’s unfortunate because we know that the majority of employees expect to be paid in a timely manner and expect that if they are working overtime to support their employer once again they expect to be paid at a fair and reasonable rate as well. This government does not seem to consider the idea of working overtime to be something that should be valued. They would rather turn their backs on those workers.

Now, once again moving to the idea of the changes that we’re seeing in this legislation around stat holidays and the changes that they’re making that will allow for an employer to choose between two four-week periods to determine holiday pay, to be clear, they’re leaving that, once again, in the hands of employers to decide which they would rather take. Well, they’re going to take the route where they can pay workers less. That’s quite clear. Once again, it’s not the fault of these employers that that is the case. It is the government’s decision, through their legislation and through their actions, that is allowing these employers to do that. You know, I won’t hold it against employers for taking advantage of the leeway that this government is going to give them. At the end of the day, they’re there to make a profit, and by no means, once again, would I hold that against them. But we are here as legislators to find a

proper balance in the workplace, and unfortunately this government has not done that, by any means.

We’ve also raised concerns that this wasn’t consulted on for nearly long enough, and we called on this government . . .

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I would like to recognize the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the Member for Edmonton-West Henday’s comments. He had mentioned a little bit earlier, although very, very briefly, his background previous to becoming an MLA. You know, certainly since Bill 32 came out, I’ve had many phone calls simply from friends that happen to work in the building trades about some of the language that’s being proposed in Bill 32, and, shall we say, those phone calls have not been very positive. Certainly not directed at me, of course. I was just wondering if maybe the Member for Edmonton-West Henday might be able to comment a little bit on maybe some of the feedback that he has heard either from constituents or even his own friends that he has known from his time before becoming an MLA and on what kind of conversations have come out of those.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and I appreciate the comments from the Member for Edmonton-Decore. You know, he and I have had many discussions on this legislation and many of the other changes that this government has proposed over the last year, from, you know, taking action against working Albertans and even back to the election, as I discussed, about the prospect of changes to overtime compensation.

5:40

I guess, more specifically on my relationship with my own union, I spoke earlier in the debate about being a proud member of IBEW 424, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Like the previous member stated, any member has the opportunity once a month – well, several times a month if you would like to travel around the province and go to each branch’s meeting – to go down to the union hall, to have these discussions with the leadership but also the general membership, and these things are voted on often line by line.

It’s quite apparent, through the changes that this government is making, that most of them if not all of them have never been to a union meeting in their life, and in the case that some of the members in the government have been to a union meeting, then shame on them for allowing this legislation to continue forward, the idea of opting in for certain expenses from the union. The fact is, Madam Speaker, that any union member has the opportunity to vote on each of these pieces. Every dollar that’s spent is broken down at these meetings, even to the extent of any money that is used for third-party advertising.

The fact that this government thinks that this is a widespread issue – well, I mean, they don’t, really. The fact is that they are doing everything in their power through this legislation and others to vilify the union movement. Something about getting paid overtime, something about having weekends off, something about labour standards and safety standards in the workplace really upsets this government, and they’re showing it through this legislation. It’s very unfortunate that in the midst of a pandemic, when people are trying to make it by, when people are trying to work as much as they can, if they have a job, to get that overtime, this government is saying that employers can take it away.

We had this discussion when the government proposed changes to holiday pay earlier and the fact that it was around Christmastime. This government decided that right around Christmastime, well, you'll no longer get many of the general holiday pay opportunities that you once had. Merry Christmas, Albertans. There you go.

It's very unfortunate that the government continues down this path of undermining workers, whether they're physicians or construction workers or front-line workers of any kind, that this government is doing everything in their power to undermine those workers, to take away their compensation, to take away their ability to negotiate their compensation, to take away their ability to get general holiday pay, to take away their ability to get fair notice before they are about to be terminated. There are just so many problems with this legislation, and it's completely unfair for this government to invoke closure on Committee of the Whole before we've had an opportunity to present all of our amendments, many of which have been very reasonable, around the idea of extending final pay.

One final comment. I'm not sure if I'll fit it in, but the Minister of Service Alberta recognized the idea of prompt payment being an important issue for contractors but has now turned his back on the very employees that expect the same prompt payment if they are to be terminated, so it's extremely unfortunate. I think it's shameful. That member recognizes the importance of prompt payment for contractors but not employees.

The Acting Speaker: For third reading on Bill 32, are there any other members wishing to rise and join debate? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall has risen.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's quarter to 6. As you can see, it's difficult to stay up this late for anyone, but we are discussing an important piece of legislation, and I think it's important for us to be here and represent the constituents who elected us to do that.

While the minister was introducing third reading, I was listening to the minister's remarks with interest. The minister opened up debate with comments like, "It will restore balance" and "It will give union members choice in how their money is being spent" and with comments like, "The NDP is on the wrong side of this fight."

The problem with these assertions is that when you say that you're restoring the balance, the presumption there is that the law as it exists now is not balanced, and as my colleague from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview mentioned, for the longest time before we became government, Alberta labour laws were lagging far behind other Canadian provinces. They were designed to favour employers, and the changes we made were not really some radical changes. Those changes were based on common sense. They were based on an interjurisdictional scan of how other provinces were doing that, and they were just giving Albertans the same rights that Canadians in other provinces have enjoyed for decades. Saying that this government and this minister are restoring the balance? No. They're changing these laws and taking Albertans backwards, where they were prior to 2015.

Then the minister claims that through this piece of legislation the government is giving employees a choice, and the choice we could find in this legislation for employees is that they can choose to get paid whenever employers want to pay them after termination. That's the best government could offer. They can choose to let employers decide how averaging agreements will work. They can choose to let employers decide how overtime will be calculated. They can choose to let employers and government decide what wage variances are needed. They can choose what employers may decide about their rights for picketing and strikes. Quite frankly,

Minister, that's not a choice. That's not a choice at all. It's a fundamentally flawed piece of legislation.

5:50

It's a blatant attack on the hard-earned rights of working Albertans. There is nothing in this piece of legislation for working families, for working Albertans. With all these changes, the minister even went further to say that the NDP is on the wrong side of this fight, again, as if there is some fight going on between two groups of Albertans, one being employers, the other being employees, and in that fight the minister asserts that we are on the wrong side of the fight. I think we do know which side we are on. In these circumstances, when Alberta has already lost 350,000 or so jobs or their hours have been reduced, they're going through a global pandemic, their lives and livelihoods are impacted, and instead of getting them back to work, instead of supporting them, instead of helping them to get through this pandemic, government has decided to attack what they already have, their rights. Sure, in this fight we are on the side of workers, and I guess time will tell who was on the right side and who was on the wrong side of this fight.

But for a government: once they are elected, their job is not to divide Albertans. Their job is not to create these kinds of divisions. Their job is not to build these narratives as if employers and employees are some competing forces who are in some kind of fight. The job of the government is to support all Albertans. The job of the government is to create circumstances that are fair to all Albertans, create circumstances that offer opportunities to all Albertans.

Many of the things that the minister touched on during his opening comments are not in favour of employees. For instance, they said that union members will have choice in the changes they're making to their dues. They're pursuing them as a matter of policy, as a matter of principle, that they want those Albertans to have greater control on their resources. If that's the policy goal, if that's the principle that government wants to abide by, if that's the principle that government wants to hold, I think, then, there are many other examples where government should apply that principle.

For instance, the Premier's office still continues to hire Paul Bunner, a racist speech writer who has written extensively the kinds of things that should have no place in our society. He has called Indian residential schools a bogus genocide story. He has extensively commented about racialized communities, Muslims, the LGBTQ community, and all three treaty organizations, their chiefs, and thousands upon thousands of Albertans have spoken against that, demanding that Paul Bunner be fired. The reason for that is that they want greater control on how their money is being spent, because Paul Bunner still gets paid from public dollars. If you're giving union members that choice, that they should have some control of how their money is being spent, how their dues are being spent – the money the Alberta government is paying to Paul Bunner is also taxpayer money, and the taxpayers rightfully are demanding that their money shouldn't be spent on a person who is racist, who has a history of racism – apply that principle in this instance as well.

Then if that's the principle we will follow, I think that \$7.5 billion of Albertans' money was given to a private company, Keystone XL, for the Keystone XL project, and Albertans have been asking for information on that investment, how their money is being spent. Albertans are asking for details. What risk analysis was done on this project? Before, I think, the government accuses us of not supporting any pipelines, let me be very clear that we have

supported the Keystone XL pipeline when we were in government, and we still believe that it's an important project.

We supported Kinder Morgan, and if there is progress being made on that project, it is because of the work that we did on that pipeline. We understand what role pipelines play in our economy, what role they play in taking our energy resources to other markets. The thing is that Albertans as taxpayers – it's their money. If you're talking about greater control, I think they deserve to know how that money was invested, why that money was invested, especially at a time when there were clear political, financial, and regulatory uncertainties facing that project. The presidential candidate has threatened to cancel that project.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I will recognize the hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to respond to a few comments made by the members opposite, particularly in regard to some of the amendments that they suggested to Bill 32, and then, time permitting, I'd like to talk a little bit about overtime averaging arrangements. I'm paraphrasing the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, but he was talking about, "You know, we made reasonable, thoughtful amendments to Bill 32," suggesting that good ideas should come before political ideas. I think I may have that backwards in terms of how he phrased that. The members opposite suggested that they proposed a number of good ideas that and then we have refused them as government from a partisan point of view. I wanted to – actually, let's go analyze that. Let's talk about a few of the amendments that the other side has proposed.

6:00

First, I want to talk about the amendments in regard to termination pay, and this is the timing of termination pay. As you know, Madam Speaker, we put a suggestion that it would be within 10 days of the next pay, so in essence the next pay to a maximum of 31 days. The members opposite suggested an idea that it would be just on the next pay. Well, here's the problem with this. We explained this to the members opposite when we had the debate on this particular one. If you're on a weekly pay schedule and it's a short time period from when the termination occurs, there's not enough time for an employer to calculate all the finals because it's not just about what you earned in that period. It's what the entire termination pay, any outstanding annual vacation, banked overtime, et cetera would have to be on that, so there wouldn't be enough time. So not enough flexibility on the front end made by that suggestion, and on the back end, if you're on a monthly pay cycle and you are terminated early in that cycle, like on day 1 or day 2, you would actually have to wait longer than what our proposal was, the maximum of 31 days.

To suggest that this was a good idea and we just rejected it for partisan views, Madam Speaker, is simply not the case. It just wasn't a good idea. It didn't meet the policy objectives and actually could have resulted in unintended consequences, resulted in people even waiting even further to get their pay.

Let's look at another one, the general holiday pay. You know, members of the other side made an amendment, and it was based on the premise that the proposal made in Bill 32 would significantly reduce general holiday pay for someone taking a vacation. For example, if someone took a two-week vacation in the four weeks prior and they worked for two weeks, the way that we've structured the proposal in Bill 32 is that we would take the earnings for the two weeks that you worked and divide it over the whole four-week

period, in essence cutting general holiday pay in half. Madam Speaker, as explained last night on that particular amendment, that is simply not the case. That is not how the language works. We are going back to the language that we had before the members opposite put in Bill 17 and added the complication to in terms of how payment is made. We're going back to that language, applying it in the same way, and you would just average the earnings over the two-week period, in essence not changing the daily wage at all because of the annual vacation that is taken.

Let's examine one other proposal or amendment that was proposed by the other side, talking about rest periods. What was that reasonable amendment? Just eliminate it. That was the reasonable amendment. It was a conversation about: we can do this. There are multiple amendments that were made forward where it wasn't about a change in the wording, it wasn't about a slight modification, it wasn't about even trying to deal with the policy intent. It was: no, we're just going to strike it out altogether. Madam Speaker, I suggest that, you know, when the other side makes an argument that good policy should trump partisanship, I wholly agree. It should. This is good policy. We are making changes here because we want to bring balance back.

I'll touch on this just a moment because the Member for Edmonton-West Henday indicated that the government has "ripped up everything" we have done in Bill 17. Again, that is not correct, Madam Speaker. There are a number of elements that were made in Bill 17 on the Employment Standards Code in terms of multiple leaves that we have left and we committed to leave in our platform and we didn't change. Also, in the Labour Relations Code there are a number of elements in terms of first contract arbitration, remedial certification, reverse onus. We left those in because it was good policy. Now, we've modified it to make it be able to apply correctly, but we modified it. Our focus is rebalancing the labour laws, reducing red tape, and getting Albertans back to work. That's what Bill 32 does, and I'm proud to be able to stand up and be able to talk to that and support that bill. Again, I urge all members to do so.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Sorry. There were two seconds left, hon. member.

However, for third reading on Bill 32 are there any other members? I would like to recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: I appreciate that, Madam Speaker. I too want to start by focusing on some of the things that the Minister of Labour and Immigration talked about when he introduced third reading of Bill 32. Those, not unlike my colleague from Calgary-McCall, focus on the pendulum having swung back towards the employer and the billion dollars of investment the NDP have chased out of the province.

Before I begin that, I want to just remind or share with my colleague from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview that 10 amendments were prepared and brought forward for discussion here. We did the work of reviewing Bill 32, and we did the work of bringing those amendments to this place.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

With regard to the pendulum I think, like my colleague, that the pendulum has always been swung in the direction of employers in this province. This is Alberta, you know, and we have had a government, prior to the NDP in 2015, that was 44 years of Progressive Conservative rule in this province. If you look at the crossjurisdictional scan – and I can remember as a cabinet minister sitting with the former minister of labour, looking at the

crossjurisdictionals – Alberta was not at the front of the pack in terms of labour codes and other labour policies in this country. As my colleague from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview correctly identified, Alberta was a laggard with regard to those things. Our work was to look at how we could bring the code and labour policies in this province affecting workers, addressing unions into the 21st century, updating those policies. We did that work, and I'm proud of the work we did. I'm glad to hear the Minister of Labour and Immigration say that he doesn't believe that all the work we did was not worthwhile and that some has been kept.

To just focus a little bit on some of the media with regard to where we are now, you know, I looked at some of these titles and have scanned some of the articles. For instance, this one is Alberta's Bill 32 Is a Seismic Break in Labour and Employment Law. That's in the Canadian Law of Work Forum, July 10. A seismic break in labour and employment law. You kind of get a sense that it's returning back to where Alberta was in some respects. This one by Mr. Doorey, Alberta Tests Right-Wing Republican Inspired Labour Laws – that's in the Canadian Law of Work Forum – and on and on. There's one from the U of C Faculty of Law blog. Scanning that, you get the question mark. It says: Restoring Balance? Bill 32, the Charter, and Fair Democratic Process.

Mr. Speaker, just a quick review of some of the media that came out after the introduction of Bill 32 would indicate that with regard to the pendulum analogy that was put – many people here have talked about that the pendulum has not been restored to the side of employers. It's always been on the side of the employers.

Our work in 2015 was an attempt to ensure that employment and labour laws are modern, up to date, and fair for both employers and workers in all sectors. I can remember the minister of labour at the far end of the front bench there saying, by way of example, that it's important to do this work, and it was consulted widely on. She would often use the analogy or the example of the last time that parts of the code had been improved. I believe she used to use things like when *Laverne & Shirley* was a new hit show on TV. I can't even remember when that was, probably the early '80s. I'm proud of having a government that dug in, that looked at improving parts of labour law in this province, labour law that had lagged behind other provinces and jurisdictions because of the inertia that had occurred as a result of 44 years of PC rule, which was changed in 2015.

6:10

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just go on briefly to the next point that the Minister of Labour and Immigration made, and that's the billions of dollars of investment that were chased out of the province, he said, by the NDP government with the updating of labour legislation in this province. I too wondered about all of that when I heard it. Earlier in the evening when the Premier was talking about the very same thing in terms of the GDP in this province and implying the same thing, that the policies of this government – in his, you know, paraphrasing we're a disaster and chased out billions of dollars of investment, and Alberta will never be the same, that sort of thing.

He said: take a look at the data. I thought I knew the data. I went back and checked the data. The data doesn't show that we're at a \$360 billion GDP in this province. The most recent numbers, 2019, that we have show that we're at \$334 billion. That's a significant stretch from \$360 billion. And he talked about – and I don't think in the year 2020 we grew \$26 billion in this province. He talked about a drop of 20 per cent in GDP. If we look at the most recent data we have, it's 20 per cent off \$334 billion. That's \$66 billion. It's \$268 billion, Mr. Speaker. That's pretty startling when the most

recent information we have is \$334 billion. We haven't been that low since 2007.

I'd submit that, you know, the UCP government is on – it's your watch now. A 20 per cent drop. Though there has been a pandemic – it has affected the whole world – though there has been a drop in oil prices – it has affected the whole world – I would submit that there's an effect that your policies have had on the significant 20 per cent drop in GDP in this province. For sure there was a drop when we were government. The 2015, '16, '17, '18, '19 numbers go from \$326 billion down to \$314 billion to \$329 billion to \$336 billion to \$334 billion. There's a classic V there in terms of a recession; 2015-16 were recessionary years. That's when we were working on this labour legislation. It hadn't been brought in. We, of course, did bring it in and passed that bill in 2017, the Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act, consulting on it in '15 and '16. But like my colleague from Calgary-McCall spoke to a little while ago, we had a drop in world oil prices, too, that we didn't cause. You didn't cause them, and yours were pretty significant, too. The point I'm trying to make is that there was a recovery, that this NDP government oversaw, back to \$334 billion that now has been eroded, and the UCP government is in the driver's seat around all of that.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Premier was wrong when he said that – and I don't agree with the Minister of Labour and Immigration, where he says that investment was pushed out by our policies and our actions. If that's the case around the NDP government, it's also the case around the UCP government because the 20 per cent drop, probably – I heard the Premier speak at a press conference the other day where he said that, you know, the deficit is going to be north of \$20 billion in this province. North of \$20 billion is towards \$25 billion, which is alarming, obviously, but that's on the UCP's watch.

I just wanted to underline that the work we were doing around the Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act, I'm proud of that work, Mr. Speaker. It did things like ensured that minimum wages could not be lower for those with disabilities. My review of this document that's before us – Bill 32 will allow something like that to be re-established in this province.

Earlier in the tenure of this government there was a reduction of minimum wages for youth. Again, that's not something that we supported. We, in fact, went the other way with the view that work is work. I can remember the discussion that was here with the previous legacy parties of the UCP, and though they didn't agree, we valued work, whatever age the person was and whatever capabilities the person had, and believed that minimum wages should be paid and there should be no substandard of wages.

Now, I wanted to just spend a few minutes on the consultation process that the UCP did with regard to this bill coming forward. I believe that there were – I'm just looking at the respondents and seeing that three-quarters of those respondents were employees and trying to reflect on: how did so much change that it seems to be swinging the pendulum away from employees? In my view, I saw that regardless of the employee views that were elicited through this consultation, I think that the employers, stakeholders were more successful in getting their views heard than employees. As we can see, only 12 per cent of the respondents were employers, but when I look through the bill and the analysis that has been done on the bill through the articles that I referenced earlier, it looks to me like there are answers from those respondents that were cherry-picked and put into this bill that would benefit the employers again.

The bill overall – I think that in terms of analyzing some of the things that I saw in the bill, I was disturbed with the focus on what seemed to be changing radically the way workers relate to their unions. Not being part of a union for many, many decades . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the comments from the Member for Calgary-Buffalo. I was hoping I might be able to take an opportunity with which to tap into his experience, having been the Finance minister in the previous government. When we're talking about the economy, bringing in investment, I'm wondering what kind of impact that might have when we look at potential labour peace within the province. We have seen legislation that's come forward in this House that is very, very clearly creating a lot of unrest. Let's be honest. I have heard, you know, through the grapevine, shall we say, the words "general strike." I mean, you hear that kind of thing; that's not necessarily a good thing.

6:20

I was wondering if the Member for Calgary-Buffalo might be able to comment a little bit about how investors might look at coming into the province, knowing that they could be faced with some significant labour unrest with doctors, with labour unions, the public-sector employees and such. I was hoping he might be able to offer some insight on that.

Member Ceci: Yeah. You know, not being on the inside and more conscious, I guess, of newspaper and other media reports and being a bit of a – watching politics across Canadian jurisdictions and North America in particular and knowing that there are some unions in this province who are very much lining up to look at taking Bill 32 to court to assert their rights and not see them rolled back and believing that they have a really good case of pressing that in courts of law, I think that doesn't add to the certainty that investment looks to in jurisdictions where they want to locate, whether those are international companies or indeed local ones who want to expand.

Investor certainty is created by a stable, growing economy – and we don't have that right now – where the rule of law is upheld everywhere – and we do have that – where there are protections in place for workers, employers, and there's a balance. What I think investors would see, with the discussion we've had in this province around Bill 32, are some concerns that we don't have balance. I think it's always in the interest of good development to have stability, and in this province there are many, many sectors of our economy where there's not a lot of stability. You can look to the education sector. You can look to the health sector. You can look to government and see where there's – you know, at the local and municipal level many governments are concerned that the actions of the UCP are overstepping their own local jurisdictions. All of those taken together, I think, and looking at our newspapers on a daily basis would lead one to conclude that there's a time in this province where there's a lot of unsettled feelings going forward, and there needs to be greater stability.

With that said, I'll take my place. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: With 30 seconds left on 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any hon. members wishing to join debate? I see the hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Motions

Time Allocation on Bill 32

36. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in third reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move Government Motion 36. It would seem that after more than 26 hours of debate on this bill, the opposition is no longer offering original arguments or making thoughtful contributions, at least from my perspective. Instead, they're riding out the clock. They're holding this Chamber hostage instead of letting members return to their constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, despite the ongoing pandemic this Legislature, Alberta's Legislature, has continued to sit more than any other jurisdiction in Canada, and in this time we have achieved results for our constituents and for Albertans. We have delivered far and above our intended legislation. Yet now in the last days of the session the opposition is keeping us here to repeat the same tired talking points for hours and hours on end, most of which, if not all of which, have nothing to do with the legislation before the House.

As such, I'm moving time allocation this evening because it's time to have the Chamber move on. As I've always said, Alberta's government will keep its promises to Albertans despite the NDP trying to block legislation inside this Chamber. I implore the opposition, if they have anything of value to add and if they want to get to work on this piece of legislation, now is the time because, as I said earlier tonight, we will pass our platform commitments inside this House, Mr. Speaker, and we will keep our commitments to Albertans.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Under Standing Order 21(3) there is an opportunity for an opposition member to respond, and I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Speaker. Wow. This government is just breaking records left, right, and centre on shutting down democracy and debate in this province. As Albertans are getting up to go to work, the Government House Leader, the Premier, and this government are shutting down debate, which will impact millions of Albertans, quite frankly. It's interesting how quickly this government has invoked closure, both at Committee of the Whole and in third reading here, on two bills.

You know, the opposition has a few tools at their disposal in order to ensure that Albertans are aware of the legislation that the government is bringing forward. As we've seen in the past few days, the NDP opposition has been working hard to reach out to Albertans of all stripes to get their input. At times one of the tools that we have at our disposal is to slow down debate because we want to consult. We want to talk to Albertans and hear their opinions, plus we also want a little time to come up with amendments to improve legislation. Well, this government has clearly indicated that they are not interested in hearing from the Albertans that the NDP opposition represent.

I know the Premier and government love to brag about the last election, but the reality is that they did not get every Albertan's vote. In fact, hundreds of thousands of Albertans did not vote for

them. So the purpose of this place, Mr. Speaker, as you know, is to ensure that there is robust debate. Now, I appreciate that the Government House Leader is enjoying counting hours on how long a bill is being debated, but once again I ask the question of: is there, Minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, a magic number, and once that number of hours has been reached, democracy has been served, and now we can implement a gag order, effectively silencing Albertans on these very important pieces of legislation?

Keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, these bills, both this bill and Bill 30, that was passed earlier this evening, have significant implications on our province, on the future of our province, on the people who have built this province and continue to build Alberta, on the people that keep us safe, on the people who teach our kids. These impacts, I fear, are going to be devastating, but it all starts with the fact that this government is taking advantage of its majority in order to limit debate because they do not want to hear from the Albertans that disagree with them, the Albertans that are raising the alarm bells on the implications of this legislation that we are debating.

Now, Mr. Speaker, with the final closure motion we will have one more hour to raise our concerns. I will remind the minister that on this bill there were 10 amendments that the NDP opposition put forward in Committee of the Whole. Of course, the government implemented time allocation or closure on that stage of the bill. I can tell you that students who learn about the stages of a bill are shocked when they learn that the government can use closure in order to silence the opposition, to end debate, and, interestingly, Mr. Speaker, all happening before many Albertans even wake up. This final bill will be voted on in this Assembly in a way that – frankly, this government has used the cover of night in order to accelerate the passage of two bills.

6:30

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that governments in the past have used this type of motion very, very sparingly where – we see that when this current UCP government does not like to hear from Albertans about some fatally flawed bills, the easiest way is to silence them. That way they don't have to hear the concerns, the proposals, the amendments. I can tell you that in the past six years this current UCP government has used closure several times, many more than the previous NDP government.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I urge members to not support this motion.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 36 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 6:32 a.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Loewen	Shandro
Allard	Long	Singh
Copping	McIver	Stephan
Ellis	Nally	Toews
Glubish	Nicolaides	Toor
Goodridge	Nixon, Jason	Turton
Gotfried	Nixon, Jeremy	van Dijken
Guthrie	Panda	Williams
Issik	Pon	Yao
Kenney	Rutherford	Yaseen
LaGrange		

Against the motion:

Bilous	Eggen	Nielsen
Carson	Irwin	Sabir
Dang		

Totals: For – 31 Against – 7

[Government Motion 36 carried]

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 32

Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020

(continued)

The Acting Speaker: Are there any hon. members looking to join debate on Bill 32? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise here, what I guess is this morning at 10 to 7, right after closure on Bill 32 has been implemented, giving the Official Opposition one more hour with which to add some comments. I have several. I will try to be as quick as I can because once I'm done, I intend to give the government a chance, which I will get to shortly.

Mr. Speaker, from what I can tell with regard to the language in Bill 32, this supposed Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020 – I think that title is absolutely ridiculous because there is no balance when it comes to the language that's contained within Bill 32, you know, such things as talking about transparency for unions. Let's be honest. Members opposite can't even get transparent about a donor list, and they want to start talking about unions being transparent with their memberships?

6:50

You know, I hear about supposed good policy around this, yet we see language in here which is going to impede people's constitutional rights with which to potentially strike, which we all know is going to end up in the court system. This is going to cost taxpayers dollars. I mean, my gosh, this government has gone as far as to reduce funding for the fall alert system, pinching pennies, yet we're prepared to pretty much go to court, waste taxpayer dollars on something that will likely get shot down, because we've seen a Supreme Court decision around people's abilities to strike.

Some of the other things that I'm looking at – you know what, Mr. Speaker? I'm going to just simply say this. It leads me to the conclusion that members opposite actually have absolutely no idea what a union is about, what it's supposed to do, what it's mandated to do. I think it's important to put a little bit of that in context. I want to refer quickly to, during debate of Government Motion 28 – it was the very first part that I'm cluing in on here. It was: "(a) condemn the actions of public-sector unions who are blocking a proposed wage top-up for health care aides in continuing care facilities."

Now, I've been able to spend some time within the labour union – the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview had mentioned a couple of decades – to be specific, 26 and a half years. I could say that I know one or two things about a union, but this statement that I see here tells me that they don't, because I would challenge any member of this Assembly, of the members opposite to name one single union anywhere on the planet that is in charge of payroll. There isn't a single employer that would give up control of payroll to the union, because that's what that part of the motion was saying,

that the union wasn't paying the employees. That's the employer, Mr. Speaker.

Now, it's very well known what members opposite feel about unions, which is why they're bringing in Bill 32, which is union-busting language. That's what this is about, because I've heard – Mr. Speaker, in the 29th Legislature unions got referred to as organizations that are almost akin to human traffickers. I've heard how unions, when they go on organizing drives, bust into people's homes, force them to sign union cards, and intimidate them if they don't. Clearly, members opposite have never ever been on a union organizing drive.

So when we are looking at labour language that at one time used to be the worst in the country and then was brought into just mainstream – that's average. That is average. We weren't leading the way. We weren't bringing in new, groundbreaking language although I would love to see new, groundbreaking language brought forward in labour legislation because – at the end of the day, we always hear about these big union bosses. I love hearing all about it. It's so funny because at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the union is the members. It's up to the members. These union bosses work for the members.

Listening to all this rhetoric that I've heard over the course of time is simply ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous, which leads to my whole point of all of that, that clearly they have no clue how a union operates, what's involved, who's responsible for what. But I'll tell you what, if you ever want, I can hook you up with an annual general meeting with one of the biggest private-sector unions in this province, and we'll show you how a union meeting is run and how transparent it is.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that I was going to give members opposite a chance, so I have an amendment to propose. I will pass those up to you and await your instructions.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. If you could please read it into the record and please continue with your comments.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the motion for third reading of Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, be amended by deleting all of the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, be not now read a third time because the Assembly is of the view that the government has not conducted satisfactory consultations with members of the public regarding the amendments proposed by the bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot about this consultation that the government undertook. I have undertaken to look where those consultations were and who they talked to, and I know what I'm doing. I believe I mentioned this earlier. It's very, very difficult to find, and I knew what I was doing. So how is the public supposed to be able to look at that and be able to say, "Oh, look, they did actual, thorough consultations"?

I did check with the largest private-sector union in the province. They made a submission, but nothing happened after that. They weren't talked to. You're talking about a union that represents over 30,000 Albertans. I'm very proud to say that that happens to be my former union, UFCW local 401, and the president, Tom Hesse, has heard nothing from this labour minister. Right there, when we look at some of the changes that are proposed within Bill 32: I've asked, and none of them would be in favour of that, on the entire board of 401. I've talked to the vice-presidents of the union as well because, see, it's not just the union bosses that run the union; it's the rank-and-file members who sit as vice-presidents within 401 who are

making the decisions, and they're spread all across the province, Mr. Speaker. They're in all kinds of different workplaces.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, because time is now short – I have much I would like to say, but I know that my colleagues on this side of the House also have a lot to say – with that, I will take my seat, and hopefully the government will see the light of day and accept this amendment.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

This will be referred to amendment RA1. We are on 29(2)(a) should there be any takers for five minutes of questions.

I see none. Going forward, then, are there any members who would like to speak to RA1? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. I would like to just say a few words in regard to this amendment. I think, considering how many amendments and how much we have heard from Albertans in regard to how flawed this bill is, Bill 32, that it seems reasonable that we do delay its passing. I think that there are a number of areas that have gone wanting in terms of an explanation. Clearly, the bill is flawed in a number of ways.

Workplace laws are generally a way by which we can ensure the safety and the security and the integrity of our workforce in any jurisdiction, particularly here in Alberta. As we move through very difficult economic circumstances and the pandemic, I think that now more than ever we need to ensure that stability in our workforce.

7:00

Let's not forget that we're talking about literally hundreds of thousands of people and laws that do determine holiday pay, overtime, the minimum wage. These are all issues that are touched on here in this bill, and they raise serious questions, I think, in many people's minds, in mine and Albertans' in general. We know that, for example, reforms around overtime and holiday pay simply brought Alberta in line with the rest of the country and in line with the rest of developed nations and economies around the world.

You know, I think there's a direct correlation, Mr. Speaker, between the integrity and the fairness of labour legislation in any given jurisdiction, any given country, and the success and the resiliency of the economy, that the labour force does serve and labour legislation does serve. By moving backwards in regard to these issues around holiday pay and overtime, the minimum wage, and so forth, we are not just compromising the security for workers that are affected by these laws, but I would suggest that we're undermining our economy as well here in the province of Alberta by changing how these things are delivered, right?

The overtime issue, I think, is particularly egregious. We know that it literally affects so many workers, and we know that we have a large seasonal labour contingent here in the province of Alberta. The changes that Bill 32 does around overtime are huge steps backwards. I find that it's amazing that this would even be considered.

Another issue that I have been really concerned about is the minimum wage exception, right? We've already seen this move backwards in regard to the minimum wage for youth. We know that we've heard and seen in other sectors of our economy workers potentially having an exception and having this exception being able to be granted simply by request. Again, the minimum wage laws are in place for a reason. We certainly have, you know, a minimum wage that is modest, but it at least is in keeping with, again, standards around developed economies and nations around the world. To start to differentiate between wages based on age or

what kind of job you're doing and so forth is, again, a way by which we can degrade the integrity of our workforce and thus degrade the integrity of our economy.

We know as well that much has been said around organized labour or unions organizing and collecting union dues, right? Again, this is a way by which unions can conduct their activities. I know, for example, that some of our unions in the province here collect union dues and then raise money for all sorts of worthwhile causes. I could see that many of those charity initiatives could be undermined and compromised by this law that is before us here today as well.

I believe that it's clear, as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore mentioned, that, you know, one of the biggest unions, for example, the UFCW, was not consulted in regard to this bill, and I would suspect that there are many other very large unions, representing tens of thousands of people, that were not consulted, too. So I think it's reasonable that we do delay the move for the forward passage of Bill 32. Certainly, based on the concerns that have been raised by Albertans around this bill and by the Official Opposition, it is reasonable and logical that we do not move forward to the passage of Bill 32.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, are there any hon. members? I see the hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm grateful to stand, just for a few quick moments, to provide a bit of balance in the discussion on Bill 32. I will be quick because I want to make sure that we give the members opposite as much time as they'd like to speak to the amendment as well.

The amendment, of course, speaks to consultations with the public. I just opened up the UCP platform in the last election, and it talks about workplace democracy and balance in labour legislation, including protecting workers "from being forced to fund political parties and causes without explicit opt-in approval." I'm grateful that Bill 32 is, in part, a fulfillment of that platform promise that we made. I'm grateful to stand and support this bill, because I think it's in the public interest. I'm quite excited about it, and I'm grateful to support my friend our Labour and Immigration minister in that respect.

In listening to a few of the opening comments made in this third reading of the bill, the members opposite referred to Alberta twice as a laggard and also the worst in the country, and that reminded me of the Leader of the Official Opposition stating very early on, when she became Premier, that Alberta was an embarrassing cousin. Now, I need you to appreciate, Mr. Speaker, that Alberta is not embarrassing, and I'm not embarrassed at all by what Alberta was or what it is. The culture of Alberta is entrepreneurial. That is how Alberta has competed and succeeded, and providing economic prosperity for Alberta families and opportunities for our children is what Bill 32 seeks to support.

I listened with great interest to the Leader of the Opposition describing Bill 32 as a profound attack on working people. I'm going to be honest. I'm not sure what is a more profound attack on workers than actually destroying their jobs. A profane perspective I've heard in respect of the members opposite's discussion of Bill 32 is that anything done to support Alberta businesses is somehow an attack on Alberta workers. That reflects a zero-sum game perspective. It is not.

This government is seeking to grow the economic pie for collective prosperity for both Alberta workers and businesses. The

Member for Calgary-McCall said that they are on the side of workers. This government is on the side of both Alberta businesses and workers. Rather than growing the pie, the NDP is more focused on pitting employees against employers.

Fighting over dividing the pie is less productive than seeking to grow the pie, and that is what Bill 32 seeks to do. It does require internal controls on picketing. I think that most Alberta individuals and families are more interested in getting and keeping a job from Alberta employers than fighting with Alberta employers. Too much time and energy was spent by the NDP aiding and abetting unions in seeking an adversarial relationship with employers such as unfettered access to secondary picketing.

I mentioned that I met Gil McGowan in person for the first time in the Legislature a couple of weeks ago. Again, during our committee meeting he did not like my questions, so without meeting me or knowing me personally, he decided to call me names and twist and distort my comments on Twitter. It is in the public interest to protect Alberta businesses from unions seeking to bully long-suffering Alberta businesses. It is not helpful for jobs to leave businesses vulnerable to unfettered tactics of individuals like Gil McGowan.

7:10

Now, I just want to close with a plea. The overarching aim of Bill 32, beginning with the end in mind, is to support more jobs for Alberta individuals and families, and I believe that that is what all of us in this Legislature, on both sides, desire. It's those Alberta individuals and families that all of us here love and care about. To have a job is a blessing. It allows individuals and families to be self-reliant, to seek happiness as they individually see fit. The toughest job is looking for a job, and our hearts go out and break for those Albertans who just want a chance to work.

I've said it once and I will say it again: the greatest failure of the NDP's socialist policies is that those policies contributed to a net loss of tens of thousands of private-sector jobs, and not once did I meet a business that thought the NDP did a good job in supporting the Alberta economy.

What does this government need to do to course correct, to provide hope to Albertans seeking jobs, including opportunities for our youth? We cannot control the incidence of a global pandemic or global economic forces like an oil price crash. However, there are constructive actions that we do have control over where we can act. A key one is establishing Alberta as the most attractive place to start and grow a business. That is what will result in more jobs for Albertans.

Another matter we have control over is ensuring that we erase dysfunctional government policy that penalizes or disincentivizes employment of Alberta families and individuals. We cannot afford to be complacent and allow such policies to drag down opportunities for jobs for Albertan individuals and families and opportunities for our children.

Bill 32 supports this course correction. I am grateful to support the public interest in Bill 32, and I'm grateful to our Labour and Immigration minister for bringing forth this important legislation.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available for questions and comments.

Mr. McIver: Well, I just wanted to know if the hon. member wanted to reiterate some of the high points there, because while we listened very respectfully while the opposition talked, there was nothing but racket. I thought they might have missed some of the important points, so if he wanted to reiterate a couple of those.

There was nothing but . . . [interjections] Again, even now, there's nothing but racket from over there.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South is the individual with the call.

Mr. Stephan: Sure. I appreciate that question. Perhaps some of the members opposite were not in the House when I had the opportunity to speak earlier in the process on this bill. One of the reasons I am speaking on this bill is that it's so important. It's interesting that the bills that I am the most excited about, that I feel are the most positive, in the public interest for Alberta families and individuals, are the very ones that the NDP seems to be the most opposed to.

You know, when I talked about the experience in terms of making sure that we have unions be accountable to the public interest, I had the opportunity to relate an experience when I was in university seeking to obtain an education to be self-reliant, to support my family. I had the opportunity to be in an airport. I had reserved an online car rental, and I went to go and rent that car. I was accosted by a union who sought to discourage me from using the services of their employer. I must confess, Mr. Speaker, being a young person, looking for the opportunity to even have a job, wanting to have an employer take a chance on me as I was starting on my career, and being grateful for that valuable training, I'm so grateful for that mentorship and training that Alberta employers have given me. I found that striking. Certainly, as it relates to secondary picketing, we don't ever want to see innocent Alberta businesses who may be suppliers or customers to unions being undermined with that.

I'm so thankful for Bill 32, and thank you for the opportunity to speak to that.

The Acting Speaker: With about two minutes left on 29(2)(a) . . . [interjections] Order.

Seeing none, are there any hon. members looking to join debate on RA1? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise in this House, perhaps for the last time, in fact. I have to say that I'm quite disappointed, to be honest, just with the way that it's worked out. I've not had an opportunity to speak to this bill, and while the government members will say that, you know, we don't take the time to read and to analyze, I've spent a lot of time reading and analyzing this bill. Quite frankly, it's shameful that this government has invoked closure when all of our members haven't had an opportunity to speak to this bill, haven't had the opportunity to share the concerns of many of our constituents who have raised many concerns about the content of this bill. I've got a number of colleagues who still want to speak as well, so because of that I have to keep my comments short.

I have to say, you know, that I've watched our leader, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, speak on this bill. I've heard her speak to some of the amendments that we would have liked to have introduced had closure not also been invoked during Committee of the Whole. I know my colleague from Edmonton-Mill Woods has done some incredible work in helping to draft those amendments and to truly put forward some amendments that would improve this bill. So again I have to put on the record that it's just shameful that this government would not allow more fulsome debate on a bill of this size. For those watching at home, of which there are many right now, this is a lengthy bill. There is a lot to unpack here, and I think we owe it to our constituents to be able to have the type of debate that that merits.

Again, I have to be fast, but I want to just quickly highlight some of the things that concern me deeply about this bill. I am also going to move an amendment here . . . [interjection] Oh, that's true. Okay. Thank you. It's been a long night.

Given that, I'm going to wrap up my comments here right away. However, I want very much this government to acknowledge the fact that they pushed through this large piece of legislation with very little consultation, as has been pointed out by a number of my colleagues. It's only right that we do move forward with the amendment as proposed to bring it back.

I'm going to speak a little bit more about some of my concerns, but again we don't have a whole heck of a lot of time, so with that I will end my initial remarks.

The Acting Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available for questions or comments.

Seeing none, on amendment RA1 are there any hon. members looking to join debate? Seeing none.

[Motion on amendment RA1 lost]

The Acting Speaker: Moving on to the bill proper, Bill 32, are there any hon. members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry; what is the number of the amendment that we're on?

7:20

The Acting Speaker: We are on Bill 32 proper.

Ms Renaud: Proper. Okay. Sorry. I'm a little late to the show here.

An Hon. Member: Early.

Ms Renaud: Or early.

Actually, I'd like to move an amendment on behalf of my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

The Acting Speaker: In the interest of being expeditious on this, if you could please just read it into the record and continue with your comments.

Ms Renaud: Absolutely. I can do that.

The Member for Edmonton-Rutherford to move that the motion for third reading of Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, be amended by deleting all of the words after "that" and substituting the following: "Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, be not now read a Third time but that it be recommitted to the Committee of the Whole for the purpose of reconsidering Part 1."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to spend too much time speaking about this particular amendment. I know some of my colleagues have been here for hours and have some important comments to offer, and, of course, we're all aware that the government is unwilling to spend more time than an hour, that they've decided to cut debate off on this important piece of legislation that will indeed touch the lives of thousands and thousands of working Albertans. Of course, they like to pretend to themselves that this is actually restoring some kind of balance, which it is not, and that it is in the best interest of Albertans, which it is not. Again, that's in keeping with much of the legislation that we've seen; not all but much of the legislation that we've seen.

I would encourage all of my colleagues to vote in favour of this particular amendment. Let's show Albertans that we actually do have their back, we will not pass this, and actually continue in

committee to continue to have some debate and perhaps mitigate some of the incredible long-term damages that this piece of legislation will do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, are there any hon. members looking to join debate on REC1, which is how we will refer to it? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me another chance to speak on this. There are a couple of things – and, again, I’m going to speak very quickly because there is just so much here. I need to get on the record that Bill 32 is absolutely an attack on unions, and it’s an attack on unionized workers. That’s a fact, and the fact that the members opposite are trying to dispute that shows that they know that’s true. You know, Albertans can’t be blamed for perhaps not knowing all the elements of this bill. I’m going to quote someone who’s actually a labour relations professor who says: Albertans can be forgiven for not understanding the details as much of this legislation is deeply embedded in specific details of our labour relation system.

At its core there’s a whole lot here that fundamentally is unconstitutional. There are sections in this bill – and my colleague the leader from Edmonton-Strathcona, who, of course, has the legal background, pointed it out quite clearly in her comments that there are sections that will very much be quickly challenged by unions and will very likely be struck down because they do contravene our Charter-protected rights. I know that workers will not stand for that. That includes things around like the percentage of the union dues, which, again, she spoke about quite eloquently. It’s also the measures around picketing. You know, I know many of us here have had the opportunity, at least on this side of the House, to stand with workers on a picket line, and it’s a pretty powerful experience. Again, the fact that this government would want to attack that fundamental right is quite shameful.

I want to speak about one other piece here before I finish, and it’s something that’s really personal to my own riding of Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. One of the things that is quite concerning as well about this piece of legislation – and I told you that I could speak about this for hours. It’s a shame, again, that this government has invoked closure and has stifled members’ opportunities to speak on it. One of the things that concerns me deeply is section 22.1(1): “In setting union dues, assessments or initiation fees, a trade union must indicate [which] amount or percentage” will go to causes like general social causes, like charities. One of the things that happens annually in the riding of Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood is a Labour Day barbecue. It is a barbecue that feeds hundreds and hundreds of folks who are experiencing homelessness, folks in our inner city, many of whom make their home, if they have a home, in my riding, and that happens because of unions. These are the types of activities, supporting our most vulnerable, supporting folks who are experiencing homelessness – these are the types of activities – that are curtailed because of this piece of legislation.

So I’m urging this government, one of our last times to do so, to accept our amendment. Let’s recommit this. Let’s put this back to Committee of the Whole. Let’s give it more time, and let’s do the right thing for once. You’re attacking unions. You’re attacking fundamental freedoms that are guaranteed, that are enshrined in our Constitution, and it’s wrong.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, are there any hon. members looking to join debate on REC1?

[Motion on amendment REC1 lost]

The Acting Speaker: Moving back to Bill 32 proper, I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-South.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s my pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta’s Workplaces Act, 2020.

Mr. Speaker, it is abundantly clear to all members of the opposition and, I believe, members of the public as well that this is not an attempt by the government to restore balance to workplaces. Indeed, it is an attempt to tip the scales in favour of employers, to make an unfair situation that allows employers to do things such as remove overtime pay, that allows employers to do things such as pick the pockets and not pay out monies that are owed to employees for up to 31 days, to take away averaging agreements and impose averaging arrangements that cannot be appealed while they are in effect. I think that these are all very dangerous things that this government is doing to attack working people. With that in mind, I would like to move an amendment. I have that for the pages here.

The Acting Speaker: If the hon. member could please read it into the record for the benefit of *Hansard* and then continue with his comments.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Manning I would move that the motion for third reading of Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta’s Workplaces Act, 2020, be amended by deleting all of the words after “that” and substituting the following: “Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta’s Workplaces Act, 2020, be not now read a Third time but that it be read a Third time this day six months hence.”

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Please continue, hon. member.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that this is a very reasonable amendment. I think that we need to put the brakes on this. We need to take a look at this legislation and instead say that there wasn’t adequate consultation done, there wasn’t adequate work done in terms of talking to both labour and employers, there wasn’t adequate work done in terms of ensuring that this would actually create a situation that employees wouldn’t have undue harm from.

I mean, we’ve talked at quite a bit of length here. Unfortunately, before we were able to continue having that debate, this government chose to limit debate. They chose to stifle debate on this legislation. They chose to end debate in Committee of the Whole, at a previous stage here, Mr. Speaker, and no longer allow any more amendments. We couldn’t keep trying to make this bad bill better. We couldn’t keep trying to improve this bill. And now here we see in third reading, the stage at which we have the opportunity to do things like recommit the bill or otherwise, that the government again is introducing closure and time allocation to stifle debate on this bill.

It’s clearly an attack not only on workers’ rights, but it’s actually an attack on the foundation of how we do democracy in this place. It’s an attack on the ability of this House to do its business, and I think it’s a bit rich when the government talks about coming to work and that the opposition should come to work. Well, Mr. Speaker, we are here. We were trying to do the work of this place. We were trying to introduce good amendments that would help with the

policy development of this government. We were trying to introduce policy that would improve Alberta workplaces and ensure that the stated intent of this minister was fulfilled in terms of things like restoring balance in workplaces, in terms of things like making sure workplaces were actually fair for employers and employees. Instead of being able to do that, this government decided that, no, we would not be debating this bill any further, we would not be going forward with Committee of the Whole or, in this case, third reading either.

7:30

Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear that when we see these attacks on democracy, when we see this use of time allocation, this government was not interested in hearing a fulsome debate. This government was not interested in an opposition who has been sitting here since last night, Mr. Speaker. It's now 7:30 in the morning. We've been sitting for 12 hours nonstop in this place because we wanted to debate this bill. We wanted to have a good, fulsome conversation. We wanted to have the opportunity to present the changes that need to be done to ensure that this bill actually brings balance to Alberta's workplaces. Instead of that, we see a government that time and time again shuts down debate in this place, shuts down debate in the Legislature, and will not allow even the discussion of what may be problematic in this bill. They simply think that they are so right that they cannot listen to Albertans, they cannot listen to the opposition, and indeed they are driving forward with their changes that will harm Alberta workers, that will harm the ability of workers to fulfill their duties. I think that's disappointing, I think it's shameful, and I think it's something that this government will have to wear moving forward, that they will not allow Albertans to have input on their legislation.

Certainly, I think that this amendment allows us to have that time to go back and say: "Look, Albertans do need to have more discussions about this. Albertans do want more debate about this. The opposition needs the opportunity to make more amendments and to keep consulting with Albertans on all the ways that this harms workers and all the ways this harms the public." Mr. Speaker, I think that certainly we encourage every single member of the Assembly to accept this amendment. I think that in many cases this amendment is sometimes considered an amendment that may kill the bill, but I think we should think of it as an opportunity for the government to fix the bill. I think we should think of it as an opportunity for the government to actually go back, do their homework, talk to labour, talk to employers, talk to everybody, and talk to Albertans and actually say: "Which Albertans wanted their pay to be withheld up to 31 days when they were terminated? Which Albertans wanted their overtime to be taken away and averaged away instead of being paid properly? Which Albertans wanted their holiday pay to be taken away and not calculated properly?"

Mr. Speaker, I think those are all really important questions that we have to continue asking in this place. We have to have an opportunity to bring back legislation that reflects the actual needs of workers and reflects the actual needs of employees because we know that when organizations and companies are thriving, it means that their employees are satisfied. It means that their employees are doing well and that they are satisfying the needs of their employees. That requires a system that is fair for both sides. It requires a system not like what this minister has brought forward. Indeed, this government has introduced a bill that stacks the deck in favour of employers, that tips the scales towards employers, is not fair to the average Albertan, is not fair to the average worker. Indeed, I believe it makes the rich get richer and keeps the working people down.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I hope that all of my colleagues will vote to support this, and I look forward to hearing more from my hon. colleagues.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should there be any questions or comments.

Seeing none, on amendment HA1 – that's how we will refer to it – I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to speak to this hoist amendment because I believe very, very strongly that Bill 32 – I don't just believe. I apologize; is it a hoist amendment? Yes, it is. I'm pleased to speak to this hoist amendment because Bill 32 is absolutely an attack on workers. Bill 32 is unconstitutional in multiple places. Bill 32 seeks to take wages from employees to benefit their employers. It does the opposite of its title. It does not return to balance in any way, shape, or form. Each and every measure inside of this bill is in some way detrimental to workers and to workers as a whole across Alberta as it seeks to suppress wages, as it seeks to remove their rights, and as it seeks to further cause labour strife in our province. I will speak to some of those things in my remarks.

I would like to start by just talking about some of the contradictions that exist in this piece of legislation. One piece of the legislation seeks to save costs on payroll, running paycheques for employers. In fact, the bill in its news release said that it would save \$100 million by deferring the final pay for workers who are terminated and no longer have employment. First off, there are huge concerns about the impact to Alberta workers, many of whom, we know, are living paycheque to paycheque, particularly during this pandemic, and I remind the House that we are currently in a pandemic. A number of workers have been terminated, and we expect that that is going to continue. In fact, the government expects that's going to continue because they've banked on \$100 million of savings at \$91 a pop for every paycheque run for terminated workers.

Now, that is on one part of the bill. In another part of the bill the government is laying on a stunning amount of administrative costs for any employer that is working with a unionized workforce. The amount of administrative overhead to manage the dues opt-in process that's envisioned in this legislation, this scheme is ridiculous. Now, that's on top of it suppressing a union's ability to advocate on behalf of its workers. That's on top of the misunderstanding of unions as a representative, democratic organization where members have many, many, many different avenues. They're ridiculously democratic, Mr. Speaker, and that seems to have been completely misunderstood by the government.

That's on top of the fact that by doing this opt-in piece, you are requiring the unions to give the employer the list of people who support the union. How could that potentially go wrong? Anybody who believes strongly that nurses should advocate for public health care and wants to opt in to the UNA campaign that is running right now, Let Nurses Speak, will now have their name given to the employer.

Another contradiction in the bill: it seeks to give the union member that empowering option to opt in or opt out. Choice – choice – for members, except you've closed the open period. I had hoped to talk a lot more about that particular piece because it is complicated. When I say, "Closed the open period," very few people even know what I'm talking about, but it's something that the Labour Relations Board and the Court of Queen's Bench have heavily considered, and it is important to give individual union members the right to choose who represents them. Instead, what

this bill does is that it allows employer-friendly unions and employers to block and prevent workers from being able to have a say in who represents them. So on one hand they say, "Oh, we have to give union members more options, more voice; this is about democracy," and on another they take it away completely, counter to the jurisprudence that we have in this province, never mind across Canada. Huge contradictions.

To be clear, those open periods – and I just want to put this on the record – incentivize the unions' efforts to make sure that they're protecting the interests of employees. By closing that, they are making sure that the current union doesn't need to work that hard. It's harmful to workers. It will, overall, suppress wages.

The changes in the construction section: we had hoped to have more time to be able to talk to stakeholders because it is complicated. But this government is just rolling the dice that they've got it right, that they're not going to disrupt a major industry in our province, when I have talked to major stakeholders, people who live and breathe construction, who tell me that they are so concerned about what this is going to do and the impact it will have on our economy. Let us not forget that the impact to our economy when we do not have stable labour relations, when employees do not have an avenue to be able to express themselves is labour disruption, is work stoppages, and that is going to cost all Albertans. That is likely going to happen.

Now, when it does, we have some new challenges because in this bill we have new picketing restrictions. If we pair the new picketing restrictions with this government's Bill 1, we come into some real problems now. If somebody is on a picket line, Bill 32 says that if they stop or pause anyone for any reason, that is a wrongful act. Where will that wrongful act take place? On a sidewalk, likely. Bill 1 has designated our sidewalks, highways, and other infrastructure as protected. If someone is convicted of a wrongful act and that goes to the judge, the judge will now have to mandatorily issue a \$1,000 fine.

There are interactions here that I had hoped to be able to speak to more legal counsel about because what I've just said is what I think based on conversations with a few lawyers. It would have been helpful to be able to introduce amendments to discuss this through the Committee of the Whole process, but this government has shut down debate on a piece of legislation that changes the fundamental rights for all working people, not just minimum, basic employment standards but the Labour Relations Code, how any worker who has the right to seek to bargain collectively would engage and how that works.

7:40

They've done things like make it harder for first-contract arbitration, harder for someone to get that first union, extending timelines. Mr. Speaker, extending timelines for certification only benefits employers who are bad actors. Now, in this discussion I want to be clear that there are lots of good employers. Bill 32 isn't going to change anything for them, but the bad employers are going to love this: loopholes galore, ways to make more money off the backs of their workforce.

How will this bill interact with Bill 1? I sure hope that someone on the government side is going to write a blog post about it because we don't have any more time in this Chamber, and Albertans are concerned. How is this bill going to impact somebody who's trying to start a union in their workplace when now the certification timelines give way more room for unfair labour practices, when a timely and fair process is what every Albertan should have the right to? Why have we extended this to six months? We did not get the chance to introduce them, but amendments to adjust that, amendments to address many of these issues were in the works when

this government shut down debate on something as fundamental as the minimum, basic rights that all Alberta workers have.

This bill takes away breaks. This bill delays termination payments. Now, we did have a chance to introduce an amendment about the delaying of termination payments. The government told me that my amendment wasn't any good because someone might have to wait 41 days for their paycheque. I used their own language as part of my amendment. They were talking about their language, so even when we came to the time to debate some of these amendments, it was a very confused process.

Right now we know that this Bill 32 is going to allow an employer to deduct from employees' wages without getting their permission first. Here's the problem. The only time an employer – well, nearly the only time – needs to deduct wages is when the employer has made a mistake. So now the employer makes a mistake and can claw back whatever that mistake amount is, whether the employee is aware the mistake was made – I can tell you that not everybody checks their paycheque. Everyone should. I would recommend it. But the vast majority of people don't look at each paycheque to make sure that their employer got it right. So if the employer makes a small error over a long period of time and now that employee has been overpaid by \$2,000, the employer can take 100 per cent of that off a single paycheque. That would disrupt my finances, to all of a sudden be \$2,000 short. Being \$200 short can disrupt most finances. I mean, it's a huge issue.

An amendment where someone could only deduct 10 per cent at a time – yes, this is not the employee's money. Let's make sure that that gets rectified. But it's because of the employer's mistake. Why is the employee going to have to be punished for that? There are other situations like overpayments or vacation payments or what have you, but putting some sort of limit on employers just taking money out of someone's paycheque, when they're expecting it and they need to pay rent, I think is incredibly important.

This is changing the calculations for what someone can get paid for a stat holiday, giving employers options so they have more than one choice – this from the government that hates red tape – when we had just aligned these calculations, simplified them based on major consultations.

Part of this set of changes is to open up more work for 13- and 14-year-olds to make sure that when those 13- and 14-year-olds go to work, they don't need to get a permit. So the department of labour, the ministry of labour, won't know who they are, where they are. Very concerned about that, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to freedom of association and freedom of expression, there are multiple places in this bill that actually attack these very important rights. We've already seen announcements from some of our major trade unions that they will be challenging this bill in court. These infractions, these infringements on key Charter freedoms could not have been done accidentally. The government made choices to get here. They have chosen to take from workers to give to their bosses. They have chosen to draft legislation that goes counter to labour court rulings, the Court of Queen's Bench rulings, and the Supreme Court of Canada rulings. They have chosen to introduce here in Alberta right-wing, Republican, American, right-to-work-style labour legislation that does not exist like this anywhere in Canada. Alberta's Labour Relations Code and employment standards, after decades, had finally made it into Canadian mainstream, not wildly out of balance but somewhere in the middle. Now this has just ripped us away from the mainstream into being the beachhead for right-wing, American-style labour laws, Republican, Alabama-style labour laws.

There are now restrictions on the use of automatic certification and the measures that the Labour Relations Board can take to

remedy situations. There are now over and over and over, as I look through my notes, just things that hurt workers, every single item in this bill, things that take money out of their pockets and things that infringe on their rights. This opposition caucus had been working diligently for the debate on this bill, for the amendments on this bill, talking to stakeholders about this bill because it's such a wide-ranging piece of legislation that impacts so many workers both through basic rights and through the changes to collective bargaining. And now debate has been limited.

I may be the final speaker. There may be another few seconds for someone else to stand up and say a word, but the debate is being cut off without key amendments even being able to be introduced, without debate being able to be held. I'm not sure most people even realize the changes that are happening to the construction section. I know I wanted to understand that much better because it is so key. All we have is a labour minister that says, "Trust me; I talk to people" instead of debate in this place that would have given us, perhaps, confidence or at least allowed us to identify where there may be issues. This is not democratic. This is not good legislation. This will hurt Albertans, and this process, held in the middle of the night during a pandemic, is shameful.

The labour movement is one of the only effective counterbalances to corporations and to the politicians who serve them. The voices of workers are what scares this government the most, and they are going to hear those voices. They already have. I know the government doesn't love it. I know a lot of the UCP MLAs don't respond to their e-mails, but the voices of the people will be heard, if not here, out there.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available.

Are there any hon. members looking to join debate on HA1?

Seeing none and noting the time now, I'd hesitate, if there was an individual speaking, to interrupt that individual, but that is not required at this time. Pursuant to Government Motion 36, agreed to earlier this evening, I must now put every question necessary for the disposal of Bill 32 at third reading.

On amendment HA1 to Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020, as moved by the hon. Member for Edmonton-South on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Manning.

[Motion on amendment HA1 lost]

The Acting Speaker: Moving to the question on the bill, the hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration has moved third reading of Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 7:50 a.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer Loewen Shandro

Allard	Long	Singh
Copping	McIver	Stephan
Ellis	Nally	Toews
Glubish	Nicolaides	Toor
Goodridge	Nixon, Jason	Turton
Gotfried	Nixon, Jeremy	van Dijken
Guthrie	Panda	Williams
Issik	Pon	Yao
Kenney	Rutherford	Yaseen
LaGrange	Schweitzer	

Against the motion:

Bilous	Eggen	Irwin
Carson	Goehring	Nielsen
Dang	Gray	Renaud

Totals:	For – 32	Against – 9
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[Motion carried; Bill 32 read a third time]

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my duty to advise the Assembly of something shortly, but just before I do that, I would like to take the opportunity to address a couple of housekeeping issues. First – I've been waiting to do this a long time – on behalf of the entire Chamber I think that we should welcome pages back to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. [applause] The Sergeant-at-Arms' staff did their best while they substituted. They did pretty good, but I don't think they did quite as good as the pages do. I, for one, am happy to see them back here. Yeah, sure. Why not? Give them a second hand. [applause]

Mr. Speaker, we're coming to an end of a historical sitting at a historical time for our province. It's hard to believe that we are sitting here on July 29, though the history books will show it as July 28 in the weird way that the Legislature works; it's still technically Tuesday. We started this sitting back on February 25, and I think that we have to recognize all the hard work that has gone into working as teams to keep us safe inside the Chamber. The leadership of all caucuses, of course, the Sergeant-at-Arms' staff, the Speaker's office, the LAO, the clerks, all the staff that are involved, government officials to be able to get through this unprecedented sitting: I thank you all for your hard work and of course the 87 members of the Legislature for their hard work this sitting. I wish you safe travels back to your riding. As I always say at the end of a sitting, remember, if you haven't slept most of the night, as many of us have not, to take some time to make sure you rest up. We all want everyone home safe.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, it's my duty to advise the Assembly that pursuant to Government Motion 32, agreed to on July 22, 2020, the business for the 2020 spring sitting is concluded.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. members.

[The Assembly adjourned at 8:09 a.m. on Wednesday to Thursday, August 27, at 10 a.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 30th Legislature - 2nd Session (2020)

Activity to Tuesday, July 28, 2020

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

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

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

Bill 1 — Critical Infrastructure Defence Act (Kenney)

First Reading — 4 (*Feb. 25, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 12-18 (*Feb. 26, 2020 morn.*), 96-98 (*Mar. 2, 2020 aft.*), 791-98 (*May 27, 2020 morn., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 859-91 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed*)
Third Reading — 861-69 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 17, 2020; SA 2020 cC-32.7]

Bill 2* — Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Amendment Act, 2020 (Hunter)

First Reading — 30 (*Feb. 26, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 857-58 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 1004-09 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1238-44 (*Jun. 9, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 1364-70 (*Jun. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 17, 2020; SA 2020 c9]

Bill 3 — Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 30 (*Feb. 26, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 431-46 (*Apr. 7, 2020 morn.*), 458-65 (*Apr. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 465-76 (*Apr. 7, 2020 aft.*), 477-507 (*Apr. 7, 2020 eve.*), 572-83 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve.*), 659-66 (*May 6, 2020 morn., passed*)
Third Reading — 703-09 (*May 7, 2020 morn., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c8]

Bill 4 — Fiscal Planning and Transparency (Fixed Budget Period) Amendment Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 62 (*Feb. 27, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 858 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 869-75 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 933-35 (*Jun. 1, 2020 aft.*), 970-72 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve.*), 1040-43 (*Jun. 2, 2020 eve.*), 1077 (*Jun. 3, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1257-66 (*Jun. 10, 2020 aft.*), 1311-16 (*Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 1442 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft.*), 1452-55 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c14]

Bill 5 — Fiscal Measures and Taxation Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 110 (*Mar. 3, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 224-32 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*), 222-23 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*)
Committee of the Whole — 232-33 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*), 234-41 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 241 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*), 242-48 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Mar. 20, 2020 outside of House Sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c3]

Bill 6 — Appropriation Act, 2020 (\$) (Toews)

First Reading — 215 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 216-22 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 222 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., deemed passed on division*)

Third Reading — 222 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., deemed passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 20, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force March 20, 2020; SA 2020 c1]

Bill 7 — Responsible Energy Development Amendment Act, 2020 (Savage)

First Reading — 827 (*May 27, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 858-59 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 891-99 (*May 28, 2020 aft.*), 972-76 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1266-72 (*Jun. 10, 2020 aft.*), 1370-75 (*Jun. 15, 2020 eve.*), 1406-11 (*Jun. 16, 2020 aft.*), 1413 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve.*), 1479-81 (*Jun. 17, 2020 eve.*), 1539-40 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1636-37 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., adjourned*), 1678-79 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c16]

Bill 8* — Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 431 (*Apr. 7, 2020 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 509-21 (*Apr. 8, 2020 morn.*), 551-58 (*Apr. 8, 2020 aft.*), 559-72 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 593-618 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve.*), 671-73 (*May 6, 2020 morn., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 709-12 (*May 7, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force May 12, 2020, except Part 2, which comes into force on July 1, 2020; SA 2020 cP-26.87]

Bill 9 — Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2020 (Madu)

First Reading — 276 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 277-80 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 280-82 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 282-83 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 20, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force March 20, 2020; SA 2020 c2]

Bill 10 — Public Health (Emergency Powers) Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 296-97 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 307-20 (*Apr. 1, 2020 morn.*), 337-44 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 354-57 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft.*), 407-09 (*Apr. 2, 2020 morn.*), 426-28 (*Apr. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 428-29 (*Apr. 2, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force April 2, 2020; certain sections took effect on earlier dates; SA 2020 c5]

Bill 11 — Tenancies Statutes (Emergency Provisions) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 297 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 298-301 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 301-03 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 303-05 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c6]

Bill 12 — Liabilities Management Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Savage)

First Reading — 297 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 320-25 (*Apr. 1, 2020 morn.*), 344-49 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 350-54 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft.*), 401-05 (*Apr. 2, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 406 (*Apr. 2, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c4]

Bill 13 — Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2) (Madu)

First Reading — 431 (*Apr. 7, 2020 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 521-26 (*Apr. 8, 2020 morn.*), 537-51 (*Apr. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 583-93 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve.*), 619-35 (*Apr. 9, 2020 morn.*), 648-57 (*Apr. 9, 2020 aft.*), 673-74 (*May 6, 2020 morn.*), 688-99 (*May 6, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 699-701 (*May 6, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force May 12, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c7]

Bill 14 — Utility Payment Deferral Program Act (Nally)

First Reading — 687 (*May 6, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 724-45 (*May 7, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 758-86 (*May 8, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 786-90 (*May 8, 2020 morn., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force May 12, 2020, with certain provisions having effect as of March 18, 2020; SA 2020 cU-4]

Bill 15 — Choice in Education Act, 2020 (LaGrange)

First Reading — 887-88 (*May 28, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 937-54 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve.*), 1011-40 (*Jun. 2, 2020 eve.*), 1058-67 (*Jun. 3, 2020 aft.*), 1228-38 (*Jun. 9, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1375-78 (*Jun. 15, 2020 eve.*), 1470-79 (*Jun. 17, 2020 eve.*), 1541-51 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve.*), 1575-88 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft.*), 1620-25 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft.*), 1639-47 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1657-59 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force September 1, 2020; SA 2020 c11]

Bill 16 — Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 888 (*May 28, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 954-70 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve.*), 1109-12 (*Jun. 3, 2020 eve.*), 1127-35 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft.*), 1179-81 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve.*), 1209-22 (*Jun. 9, 2020 aft.*), 1285-96 (*Jun. 10, 2020 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1428-29 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve.*), 1455-59 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft.*), 1551-55 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve.*), 1588-90 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft.*), 1647-50 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1676-78 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c18]

Bill 17 — Mental Health Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1203-09 (*Jun. 9, 2020 aft.*), 1272-74 (*Jun. 10, 2020 aft.*), 1316-23 (*Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1396-1406 (*Jun. 16, 2020 aft.*), 1413 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve.*), 1461-70 (*Jun. 17, 2020 eve.*), 1605-08 (*Jun. 23, 2020 eve.*), 1630-36 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft.*), 1650-54 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1675-76 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; certain sections come into force on June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c15]

Bill 18 — Corrections (Alberta Parole Board) Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 912 (*Jun. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 989-1004 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft.*), 1011 (*Jun. 2, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1413-24 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1655 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c12]

Bill 19 — Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 989 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 1079-98 (*Jun. 3, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1424-28 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1495-97 (*Jun. 18, 2020 aft.*), 1555-56 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c17]

Bill 20 — Real Estate Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 1057 (*Jun. 3, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 1125-27 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft.*), 1169-79 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1185-90 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1279-85 (*Jun. 10, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c10]

Bill 21* — Provincial Administrative Penalties Act (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1181-85 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve.*), 1296-97 (*Jun. 10, 2020 eve.*), 1355-57 (*Jun. 15, 2020 aft.*), 1442-52 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft.*), 1819-22 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1983-99 (*Jul. 14, 2020 aft.*), 2071-74 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2264-68 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2020 cP-30.8]

Bill 22 — Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (Hunter)

First Reading — 1301-02 (*Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1591-95 (*Jun. 23, 2020 eve.*), 1655-57 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1798-1804 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 1879 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 1939-57 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve.*), 1965-66 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2050-51 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft.*), 2053-59 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c25]

Bill 23* — Commercial Tenancies Protection Act (Fir)

First Reading — 1392 (*Jun. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1529-35 (*Jun. 22, 2020 aft.*), 1601-05 (*Jun. 23, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1879-80 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2181-83 (*Jul. 20, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020, with certain sections taking effect March 17, 2020; SA 2020 cC-19.5]

Bill 24 — COVID-19 Pandemic Response Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1494 (*Jun. 18, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1537-39 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve.*), 1569-75 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1625-30 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1679-81 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020, with certain sections taking effect on earlier dates; SA 2020 c13]

Bill 25 — Protecting Alberta Industry From Theft Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1494 (*Jun. 18, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1719-35 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1804-05 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1904-05 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft.*), 2031-32 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c24]

Bill 26 — Constitutional Referendum Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1568 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1735-41 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve.*), 1764-72 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1845-56 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1964-65 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2081-86 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c20]

Bill 27 — Alberta Senate Election Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1568 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1741-47 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve.*), 1772-79 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1822-27 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn.*), 1899-1904 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1999-2001 (*Jul. 14, 2020 aft.*), 2074-76 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2076-81 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c19]

Bill 28 — Vital Statistics (Protecting Albertans from Convicted Sex Offenders) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 1619 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1704-17 (*Jul. 6, 2020 aft.*), 1779-82 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1856-60 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1880-82 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1896-99 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c26]

Bill 29 — Local Authorities Election Amendment Act, 2020 (Madu)

First Reading — 1619-20 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1784-97 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 1962-63 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2163-81 (*Jul. 20, 2020 eve., passed*)
Third Reading — 2239-64 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force September 1, 2020; SA 2020 c22]

Bill 30* — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1695 (*Jul. 6, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1783-84 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 2032-37 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve.*), 2086-2103 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve.*), 2189-97 (*Jul. 20, 2020 eve.*), 2210-27 (*Jul. 21, 2020 aft.*), 2289-96 (*Jul. 22, 2020 aft.*), 2313-28 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2360-61 (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Committee of the Whole — 2432-475 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2512-20 (*Jul. 28, 2020 aft.*), 2523-31 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 2539-61 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve.*), 2562-69 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 29, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force July 29, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c27]

Bill 31 — Environmental Protection Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 1760 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1878 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 2023-31 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2233-39 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve., passed*)
Third Reading — 2309-12 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c21]

Bill 32 — Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020 (Copping)

First Reading — 1760 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1861-63 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 2003-23 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve.*), 2051-53 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft.*), 2059-69 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft.*), 2147-62 (*Jul. 20, 2020 aft.*), 2268-73 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve.*), 2296-307 (*Jul. 22, 2020 aft.*), 2328-40 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2361-63 (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Committee of the Whole — 2404-32 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2475-85 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2502-12 (*Jul. 28, 2020 aft.*), 2531-39 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed*)
Third Reading — 2569-78 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve.*), 2579-86 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 29, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c28]

Bill 33* — Alberta Investment Attraction Act (Fir)

First Reading — 1760-61 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1807-19 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn.*), 1927-37 (*Jul. 13, 2020 aft.*), 2117-27 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2227-31 (*Jul. 21, 2020 aft.*), 2233 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve.*), 2340-44 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2312-13 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2363-65 (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 2401-04 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2485-88 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 29, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 cA-26.4]

Bill 34 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 1839 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1966-69 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve.*), 2116-17 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2117 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 2312 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c23]

Bill 201 — Strategic Aviation Advisory Council Act (Gottfried)

First Reading — 62 (*Feb. 27, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 136 (*Mar. 5, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)
Second Reading — 914-26 (*Jun. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1156-61 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft.*), 1337-47 (*Jun. 15, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 1514-22 (*Jun. 22, 2020 aft., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 31, 2020; SA 2020 cS-19.8]

Bill 202 — Conflicts of Interest (Protecting the Rule of Law) Amendment Act, 2020 (Ganley)

First Reading — 136 (*Mar. 5, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 1149-56 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly;*), 1156 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft., not proceeded with on division*)

Bill 203 — Pension Protection Act (Gray)

First Reading — 1148 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 1839 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly; not proceeded with*)

Bill 204 — Voluntary Blood Donations Repeal Act (Yao)

First Reading — 1839 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 2288 (*Jul. 22, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Second Reading — 2379-93 (*Jul. 27, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Bill Pr1 — The Sisters of the Precious Blood of Edmonton Repeal Act (Williams)

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

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