



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Wednesday evening, March 24, 2021

Day 90

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 30th Legislature

Second Session

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

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

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

### Party standings:

United Conservative: 62

New Democrat: 24

Independent: 1

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Martin Long	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Tourism
Muhammad Yaseen	Parliamentary Secretary of Immigration

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Chair: Mr. Orr  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Rowswell

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Gray  
Issik  
Jones  
Phillips  
Singh  
Yaseen

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

Chair: Mr. Neudorf  
Deputy Chair: Ms Goehring

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Barnes  
Bilous  
Irwin  
Reid  
Rosin  
Rowswell  
Sweet  
van Dijken  
Walker

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

Chair: Ms Goodridge  
Deputy Chair: Ms Sigurdson

Amery  
Carson  
Glasgo  
Gotfried  
Lovely  
Neudorf  
Pancholi  
Rutherford  
Sabir  
Smith

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

Chair: Mr. Schow  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Sigurdson

Ceci  
Lovely  
Loyola  
Rosin  
Rutherford  
Shepherd  
Smith  
Sweet  
Yaseen

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

Chair: Mr. Cooper  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Ellis

Dang  
Deol  
Goehring  
Goodridge  
Long  
Neudorf  
Sabir  
Sigurdson, R.J.  
Williams

### **Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills**

Chair: Mr. Ellis  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schow

Amery  
Dang  
Getson  
Glasgo  
Irwin  
Nielsen  
Rutherford  
Sigurdson, L.  
Sigurdson, R.J.

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

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Reid

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Barnes  
Deol  
Ganley  
Gotfried  
Jones  
Lovely  
Loyola  
Rehn  
Renaud

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

Chair: Ms Phillips  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Guthrie

Armstrong-Homeniuk  
Lovely  
Neudorf  
Pancholi  
Renaud  
Rowswell  
Schmidt  
Singh  
Turton  
Walker

### **Select Special Committee on Real Property Rights**

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Rutherford

Ganley  
Glasgo  
Goodridge  
Hanson  
Milliken  
Nielsen  
Orr  
Rowswell  
Schmidt  
Sweet

### **Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

Chair: Mr. Hanson  
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Dach  
Feehan  
Ganley  
Getson  
Guthrie  
Issik  
Loewen  
Singh  
Turton  
Yaseen

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

[The Speaker in the chair]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, be seated.

### Government Motions

#### Keystone XL Pipeline

70. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly express profound dismay at the revocation of the permit issued by the President of the United States authorizing the Keystone XL pipeline border crossing as the Assembly is of the view the decision will:

- (a) lead to the loss of an estimated 60,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs associated with the Keystone XL project in both Canada and the United States;
- (b) undermine North American energy security, making the United States more dependent on OPEC oil imports in the future;
- (c) damage the critically important Canada-US bilateral relationship; and

be it further resolved that the Assembly express its gratitude to the majority of members of the United States Senate and the coalition of state governments who are seeking a reversal of this decision; and

that the Assembly call upon the government of the United States to compensate the government of Alberta and TC Energy for damages created by the arbitrary revocation of the presidential permit.

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

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Great to see you this evening. Welcome back, through you, to all members of the House to the first evening sitting of the spring session. May there be many more.

Let's get it started off with moving Government Motion 70, which is on the Order Paper in my name. This motion in some ways is self-explanatory. I know that the hon. the Minister of Energy will shortly rise, I anticipate, inside the Chamber to set the tone and the direction when it comes to this motion.

It's important, though, that this Chamber, the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, send a clear message of, one, support for those that are within the United States that are fighting for our interests and for America's interests as I have outlined in this motion. The jobs that are lost as a result of this decision by the President of the United States are lost on both sides of the border. That's important to understand, but it's also important to understand, Mr. Speaker, that there are politicians and Americans on the other side of the border who are fighting for what is right to be able to make sure that there is an opportunity for Keystone to be able to proceed going forward and recognize the folly of the decision by the President of the United States when it comes to Keystone.

It's also important to give the Official Opposition a chance, yet another chance – we have had many times over the years – to be able to rise inside the Chamber and actually stand with energy workers in this country, in this province, Mr. Speaker. I know that it appears to me that the Official Opposition often forgets the fact

that the oil and gas and the energy industry is the largest employer and the largest job creator in the province of Alberta and the largest employer in the country of Canada.

We do know that from time to time it slips out, the NDP's true feelings. Actually, I should back up, Mr. Speaker. You will know from your time in opposition that it didn't slip out too much when they were in government. They always pretended like they were supporting the energy industry. Their whips did a really good job. In fact, the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar during his time as the government whip worked really hard, I think, to keep them in line on that message to look like they were pro oil and gas.

But since they have gone to opposition, it's slipped a lot. I don't know if the new whip doesn't have control over it, or they just really want to get their true feelings when it comes to the energy industry in our province and in our country and in the world, Mr. Speaker, out there, but they're sure doing a good job of making it clear that they don't support the energy industry. [interjections] I know that some of them – and they're heckling right now. You can hear them right now. They're heckling away that they do support the energy industry.

Having said that, given some of the protests that they participate in or the individuals that they spend their time with, Mr. Speaker, that are really focused on anti oil and gas, like Tzeporah Berman and others, I would say that those actions show that they're not really in support of the energy industry, but they're going to get a chance at the end of this motion to stand inside this Chamber and vote for what is right for the province of Alberta and to stand with the men and women who work in the energy industry in our great province.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, are there others wishing to join in the debate this evening? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Government House Leader has afforded me this opportunity and a chance to speak in support of the energy industry, certainly that's what I will do. I do rise to express my profound dismay at the revocation of the permit by the President of the United States.

Just to also set the record a little bit straight, when we were in government, it was the first government in Alberta's history that worked with the industry, worked with Ottawa, and got the pipeline going towards the west coast. That's the only pipeline in play, and that's the history in the last 70 years. When Conservatives were here for 44 years, when they were there for 10 years, they didn't build any pipeline whatsoever.

The second thing is that, Mr. Speaker, I wish that we had this discussion about Keystone XL a year ago, before getting into this deal. Perhaps someone on our side, perhaps some private member of this House may have made a case to the Premier that the risk of this project and spending money, pledging \$7.5 billion was way too high. That was akin to betting on the presidential election only on the one side, that Donald Trump will win and this project will proceed. When we were in government, we pledged 50,000 barrels a day to this pipeline, and actually we pledged in a way that the pipeline will be built and we will be supporting it as government.

At a time, I think, when the Alberta economy is not doing so well, oil prices are not doing so well, and Alberta is ranked second highest in unemployment – the Government House Leader mentioned that there's an estimated loss of 60,000 direct and indirect jobs. I think – let me mention this as well – that we have also lost 50,000 jobs before the pandemic under this UCP government's watch, 50,000 jobs. And the strategy they came up with for job creation was just a one-trick pony, that they will give billions of dollars to the wealthiest in this province and sit and wait

and expect that they will create jobs and that they will get the economy going, but that didn't happen, Mr. Speaker.

Sadly, that trickle-down economic theory, which has failed around the globe, was doomed to fail here as well, and it actually did fail, because taxes are not the only consideration for any business to invest in Alberta. That's not the only consideration. That is the reason, Mr. Speaker, that we saw EnCana, who benefited millions of dollars from that handout – they just wrapped up and moved down to the United States. We saw TC Energy also benefit from that handout and lay off Albertans right here in Alberta in Calgary. We saw Husky Energy getting millions of dollars from the UCP's corporate handout and laying off workers right here in Calgary, right here in Alberta, and not just that; they also took that money and they moved down to Saskatchewan, they moved down to the east coast. Both jurisdictions have a higher tax than Alberta even before this tax break.

Alberta had a tax advantage of \$1.3 billion when we were in government. Still, they got that money, and they moved to jurisdictions with higher taxes.

7:40

Imperial: same thing. They benefited from this corporate handout. Suncor benefited from this handout, and in Calgary and Alberta they laid off 2,000 Albertans. Then Cenovus also benefited from the UCP's handout, and they laid off 1,000 people. Actually, they merged as well. At one point the Minister of Energy said that it's a sign of confidence in the market. Being a student of economics, I never read that anywhere.

So that's the situation going on. At this point I think Keystone XL was a critically important project. If I talk specifically about Calgary, the downtown vacancy rate is sitting at 30 per cent, and it's supposed to go up. And what are we hearing from this government? Nothing. The Minister of Finance said last year, when we were rolling out these corporate handouts, that diversification was a luxury. And when Calgarians complained about unemployment, lack of jobs, vacancies in downtown, the same Minister of Finance also said that it was not his responsibility to fill those towers. So at the time government pledged \$7.5 billion in this pipeline, that was quite a bit of money, Albertans' money, which we believe should have been invested more prudently.

With that, I do move an amendment to this motion, and I do have the requisite number of copies for distribution.

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, if you can pass those to the page. I'll just ask you to wait a moment before you proceed. We'll get the table one, and I'll get a copy. Then you can proceed once I have declared it.

Hon. members, this will be referred to as amendment A1. The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall – if you would like a copy of the amendment, please indicate so by raising your hand. The pages will deliver them. Any others will be left on the tabling tables.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can read that into the record as well.

**The Speaker:** Please.

**Mr. Sabir:** The Member for Calgary-McCall to move that Government Motion 70 be amended by adding the following after "presidential permit":

be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Alberta to immediately publish

- (a) a complete estimate of the potential claim for damages by the government of Alberta as a result of the revocation of the presidential permit, and

- (b) a detailed breakdown of the financial commitments made by the government of Alberta and TC Energy, including equity investments, loan guarantees, and reimbursement plans, under the agreement between those parties that was entered into in 2020 in respect of the Keystone XL project.

Mr. Speaker, that's a very straightforward amendment. While the government wants us to send a unified message, before we get out of the gate swinging at President Biden, we actually need to know how much we are on the hook for, how much money we're looking at, what our losses are, what the damage is, what the terms are of the agreement and be able to properly weigh our options of what we can do.

Certainly, on this side of the House we agree that it's a lot of money and Albertans need their money back. There's no question about it, that it's a lot of money that was not invested by this government very prudently, but, still, Albertans need that money back, so we agree with the government. In order to send that unified message, we need to know how much money we're asking for. What if I get out of here, I support a government motion, and somebody asks me: okay; you're all sending a very strong message to the United States government, but how much are the damages? I think that none of us will know, not even the government private members. They're often not told about how money is spent.

Earlier the Government House Leader also mentioned that, when in government, we forgot how to support the energy sector. We never forgot the energy sector. We had the backs of the energy sector and those who worked there.

If the government thinks that by spending \$30 million on their ridiculous war room, they're supporting the energy sector, I don't think anyone in the energy sector will agree with that. Even if you ask Tom Olsen, the head of that sector, in private, he will also agree that it's not going very well. Twice they were caught copying logos, impersonating journalists, going after the *Washington Post* and now after a cartoon serial, which I haven't seen yet. If that's your idea of supporting the energy sector, I think rethink if that's what the energy sector needs.

Then the government announced that they will do an inquiry. That inquiry has changed terms of reference at least two or three times that I'm aware of. It's over budget, it's over time, and groups they are hiring and individuals they are hiring are often those who are leading conspiracy theories. If that's the government's idea of helping the energy sector, I think we need to rethink about it. These two things, whether it's the war room, whether it's the government's inquiry, have both damaged the reputation of this province.

Earlier the School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, also released a report that Alberta was the province that curtailed the environmental regulations the most, and it's this government's lack of leadership on pressing issues like the environment that's holding our energy sector back. That was reason one that TC Energy was not able to get financing in the open market. It was the lack of the UCP's leadership on the environment. That was the reason that Teck Resources was not able to find financing in the open market, and they stated that in their letter as well. The reason for that was the UCP's lack of leadership on issues facing our energy sector.

7:50

With this amendment it's an opportunity for this government to come clean with this House, to come clean with Albertans about how much of their money is at stake, how high the costs will be for Albertans, because that story has changed quite a bit. Initially it was a \$1.5 billion equity investment. Then it was a loan guarantee that was not used. Then the 2020 estimates indicate that only \$384 million went into equity and \$892 million went into loan

guarantees. The government's story has changed multiple times. Nobody knows how much we are on the hook for. The Official Opposition doesn't know, and I can bet that not a single private member on that side knows how much money Albertans are losing on this deal.

Now, we know that it's at least \$1.3 billion, and that's a huge amount of money as well. At a time when this government is cutting \$30 every year, at a time when this government is cutting the indexing of AISH benefits, that's a lot of money that Albertans are on the hook for. It's Albertans' money, and they have every right to know how their money was spent. What were the details of that deal? They'd be able to assess how much we will be able to recover.

I think this amendment is a pretty straightforward amendment, and I hope that all members of this House will vote in favour of transparency, they will vote in favour of accountability, they will vote in favour of better government by telling Albertans how much of their money was spent on this deal. Again, on this side of the House we are certainly dismayed that this permit was revoked. We are certainly dismayed that the opportunity for good-paying jobs was lost. The North American market could have relied on Alberta oil, could have used more Alberta oil. That opportunity was lost.

Again, I'm urging all members of this House to vote in favour of this amendment, in favour of a transparent disclosure about the details of this deal and how much Albertans will be paying as a result of this deal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, is there anyone wishing to speak to amendment A1?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A1 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 7:55 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Dang	Phillips	Schmidt
Irwin	Renaud	Sigurdson, L.
Pancholi	Sabir	

8:10

Against the motion:

Aheer	Issik	Savage
Allard	Jones	Schow
Amery	Loewen	Schulz
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Nally	Sigurdson, R.J.
Barnes	Neudorf	Smith
Copping	Nicolaides	Toews
Dreeshen	Nixon, Jeremy	Toor
Fir	Panda	Yaseen
Horner		

Totals:	For – 8	Against – 25
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[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

**The Speaker:** We are on the motion, Government Motion 70. Anyone wishing to speak? The hon. the Minister of Energy.

**Mrs. Savage:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise this evening to speak to Motion 70, the Keystone XL motion, but first I want to correct some misinformation from the Member for Calgary-

McCall's earlier statement. I believe he said that no pipelines were built before they were in power. In fact, between 2006 and 2015 pipeline capacity doubled – it doubled – out of the western Canadian sedimentary basin to allow more than 3.8 million barrels a day of crude oil to leave our province. That capacity doubled, and it included building the Keystone base pipeline. It included the Alberta Clipper, the Kinder Morgan anchor loop, and it included the line 9 reversal project, which allowed Alberta crude to get from Sarnia, Ontario, to Montreal, Quebec, to displace OPEC oil.

Mr. Speaker, during that time there were a lot of pipelines not only approved but constructed, built, and in service. In fact, it wasn't until 2016 that pipelines started getting cancelled, vetoed, delayed, and put off. I wanted to correct that record.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Keystone XL pipeline and the benefits of it for Alberta because I don't believe that in the previous member's statement he spoke much about the Keystone pipeline, Keystone XL. He spoke about a lot of things but not about that pipeline. For more than a decade people in Alberta and the United States had anticipated the completion of Keystone XL. We have patiently and sometimes not so patiently awaited for approval from the U.S. government to proceed on the project, a project that would have put thousands of workers in both Canada and the United States to work, a project that would have generated billions of dollars of employment income for workers and their families, and a project that was already under construction and has held long, widespread, bipartisan support from U.S. lawmakers, including all governments, every single state government, in the states where the pipeline travels through.

Despite this support, Mr. Speaker, the presidential permit for the KXL pipeline was revoked in January. We are deeply, deeply, deeply disappointed by this decision. More than that, we are saddened for the thousands of people who have lost their jobs and the many more who are coping with the devastating consequences of this decision. This includes more than 2,500 men and women who were working on the construction of this project in 2020 in both Canada and the United States. All along the pipeline route this work has injected hundreds of millions of dollars into the North American economy and created thousands of jobs, jobs at a time when people desperately needed them most.

Our belief in the enormous benefits of KXL to not only Albertans but to all of Canada and all of America is underscored by our investment in this project. After years of waiting for approval and actively advocating for its go-ahead, we invested in KXL because it is tied to our long-term economic interests. KXL would have generated at least \$30 billion in increased royalties over 20 years for Alberta taxpayers, and it would have created thousands of jobs for Albertans. It would also have ensured the safe transportation of our energy to meet North America's energy demand and security, not only now but in a postpandemic world.

Mr. Speaker, this pipeline was the most studied pipeline in American history. Multiple state and federal reviews deemed it safe and within the public interest. The U.S. State Department's own exhaustive analysis, conducted under President Obama's own administration, concluded that Keystone XL would actually reduce emissions. It would have reduced emissions because the alternative to moving this energy would be by higher emitting and less secure rail transport, and even more so the pipeline would have been the first pipeline – the first pipeline ever – to have been fully powered by renewable energy sources. This means that Alberta, Canada, and the KXL pipeline would be and should be part of the U.S. solution in the U.S.-Canada energy transition.

Mr. Speaker, where does that leave Alberta now? As I said, it leaves us disappointed, but it does not leave us out. Our government continues to support and advocate for other crucial pipeline projects

that will create greater market access for our provinces. I have spent the last 15 years advocating for pipelines, and I will spend the next 15 years advocating for pipelines. Our entire caucus will continue to support pipelines and the men and women who work in the energy sector. We support the development of any project that can unlock new markets for Alberta's products. That includes oil and gas, and it includes new mineral production and hydrogen.

In terms of the KXL decision, Mr. Speaker, we are carefully examining our options. This includes looking at state challenges and considering avenues to recoup our investment. The fact remains that the vast majority of Americans support this project, including every single state government along the pipeline route. Last week 21 U.S. states launched a lawsuit against President Biden's administration for revoking the permit. While Alberta is not a part of that legal challenge, we welcome opportunities to support the states involved. We encourage their efforts, and we will continue to co-operate with them and other state governments.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share my support for this motion, and I encourage all members of the House to support it. I encourage them to support it. The members opposite did not support the KXL pipeline when they were in government. We are encouraging them to support it today and to support the men and women that work in the energy sector, for the first time that that would ever happen with the NDP.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment. Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), the hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

**Mr. Toews:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to just rise and send my appreciation to the minister who just rose and spoke in such an educated and informed way around KXL. I also rise to speak in favour of Motion 70 and was also deeply disappointed with President Biden's . . . [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Toews:** . . . revocation of the KXL pipeline. I would have . . .

**The Speaker:** Order. I appreciate your commitment to the cause here, but if the Speaker is interjecting, perhaps you might take some direction.

The hon. the Minister of Finance has the call and only him. I would appreciate it if I could hear him.

8:20

**Mr. Toews:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm deeply disappointed in the revocation of the presidential permit on KXL. Keystone XL would have been a pipeline that would have provided significant, profound revenues and wealth creation for the people of Alberta for decades. As the previous speaker noted, KXL and the activity from that pipeline would have generated over \$30 billion in Alberta government revenues over 20 years and provided opportunity for tens of thousands of Albertans and Alberta businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make a few comments just in response to the member's comments, the Member for Calgary-McCall. The member could not recall the fact that we were very transparent with Albertans in Budget 2021 in terms of the exposure of Albertans with respect to our investment in KXL. In fact, it's on page 32 of the budget, for the member's information. Transparency in this situation I believe is critically important, and that's why we

included a full page in Budget 2021 on the full exposure of KXL to the Alberta government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to contrast this investment right now, which provides \$1.3 billion of exposure on a pipeline that would have generated over \$30 billion of wealth for Albertans over two decades, with the risky, irresponsible investment of the members opposite, who risked \$3.7 billion to move 120,000 barrels per day for a mere two years, with no plans for a profit. On top of that, at the same time they implemented the policy of curtailment, which meant that, for sure, crude by rail would be a money loser. The two investments cannot be compared, and we will not be lectured by the members opposite on responsible investment.

Mr. Speaker, I also hear from the members opposite a continued vitriol against employers. In fact, the members opposite would want us to push up business taxes by 50 per cent at a time when we desperately need economic recovery. I cannot think of a more irresponsible policy. They can't stand it when businesses make money and strengthen their balance sheets. I submit that had energy companies not had strong balance sheets in this province in March and April, many more would have failed, and many more would have required direct government intervention. I'm thankful that many energy companies in Alberta had strong balance sheets, aided by our preferential corporate tax rate.

Mr. Speaker, we're seeing very positive signs in the Alberta economy, record venture capital investment into the province in 2020. We're seeing increased expectations for CAPP investment in the energy industry. The Conference Board of Canada, the Bank of Montreal, the National Bank, now Desjardins Bank are all predicting Alberta to lead the nation in economic growth in 2021. Our economic policies are working.

I want to thank and send my appreciation to the state Senators who are rising up defending North American energy security, defending economic recovery in general, Mr. Speaker, recognizing the great value that our energy workers, the men and women who work in the energy industry on both sides of the border, provide to our continent. I want to thank state legislators for rising up and defending our energy industry.

Mr. Speaker, I call on all members of this Legislature to support this motion.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, there are approximately five seconds left under 29(2)(a). That concludes the time allotted for 29(2)(a).

Is there anyone else wishing to speak to Government Motion 70? The hon. the Member for Grande Prairie.

**Mrs. Allard:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, being the Member for Grande Prairie, I couldn't resist the opportunity to speak in support of oil and gas. It's certainly relevant to me and my constituents, and I would say that many Albertans, most Albertans, are very concerned about the oil and gas situation. I'm pleased to rise this evening and speak to Government Motion 70.

I want to, first, express how deeply disappointed I am that one of President Biden's first actions in office rescinded the presidential permit for the KXL pipeline border crossing. Mr. Speaker, I believe that once elected, officials are expected to govern and not continue to campaign. Once elected, we're to strive to work in the best interests of our constituents, and cancelling Keystone is not in the best interests of those 60,000 workers and their families on both sides of the border. That's why the majority of the U.S. Senate and a coalition of, I believe 21, state governments are seeking reversal of this decision, and I applaud them for doing so. I reiterate my deep disappointment over this decision by President Biden and his administration, a decision that will adversely impact, as I said,



60,000 families as those jobs are lost and those opportunities are wiped away at the stroke of Biden's pen.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the United States is Alberta's most important ally and trading partner. Among all of the Canadian provinces, Alberta has the deepest economic tie to the U.S., which represents almost 90 per cent of our Alberta exports, in 2019 just over \$103 billion. The decision to rescind the permit for the KXL pipeline border crossing is an insult directed at Alberta, and it's resulted in the immediate loss of over 2,000 jobs.

I call upon the U.S. government to compensate the government of Alberta and TC Energy for the damages they've caused, created by this arbitrary and illogical revocation of the permit. I call upon all members of this Assembly to do the same and demand compensation for this poor decision from our neighbours to the south. Alberta's government will continue to fight for these jobs and all of the jobs this project would have created. Job creation, especially at this time in history, Mr. Speaker, is critical to the economic future of both countries, so why block this important project, which was well under way and would have delivered thousands of jobs at this critical time in the world, as all jurisdictions begin to focus on economic recovery coming out of the pandemic?

For months we were told that the Biden transition team would not stop communication with foreign governments. Now a decision has been made without even giving Canadians a chance to communicate with this administration. Is that the way you treat your friends and allies, Mr. Speaker? I would say not.

In addition to economic growth, the KXL project would strengthen North American energy security, further strengthening the historic Canada-U.S. relationship by building modern infrastructure for the safe and secure export of energy between the countries. With that, we could help the U.S. become less dependent on foreign imports from hostile OPEC dictatorships, who don't share Canada's commitment to environmental sustainability or our exceptional human rights record, Mr. Speaker.

Under President Obama the U.S. State Department conducted an exhaustive analysis that found that Keystone XL would reduce emissions by removing oil from more emission-intensive methods of transportation. So I ask you, Mr. Speaker: how is this a win for the environment? Alberta oil sands producers rank at the top of the world in global assessments of social and environmental standards to this moment. For the record most oil sands producers have committed to net zero emission targets in their operations. TC Energy has made great progress in planning and collaboration on this project, bringing on First Nations on both sides of the border as well as the enthusiastic support of major U.S. unions and all state governments along the pipeline route.

If the Biden administration refuses to open the door to a constructive dialogue, then the government of Canada must impose trade and economic sanctions to defend our country's vital economic interests. It was the failure of Canada's federal government to respond with strength to the veto of KXL in 2015 that led to the impasse we're witnessing now. That failure sent the message that Canada's government doesn't intend to stand up for our largest industry, and that's shameful, Mr. Speaker. The Canadian government must fight for KXL the same way they rightfully stood up for Canada's interests when the previous President threatened to rip up NAFTA and impose tariffs on exports like steel and aluminum. Hundreds of thousands of energy workers deserve the same strong defence that their national government gave to steel workers.

With over \$100 billion worth of exports to the United States every year, Alberta serves as an important partner to create prosperity for citizens on both sides of the border, but as friends and

allies of the United States we are deeply disturbed with Biden's decision to rescind the presidential permit for KXL. This is a gut punch for the Canadian and Albertan economies and to each and every man and woman who lost their job in this decision.

8:30

Alberta is calling on the Canadian government to enter into a respectful dialogue with the Biden administration about energy, energy security, environmental stewardship, and Keystone's role in our relationship. Failing that, Canada must demonstrate that we will stand up for ourselves against attacks on our vital economic interests.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of this motion, and I stand in support of energy workers and their families on both sides of the border. I call on every member of this Assembly to do the same and support this motion.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or a comment for the Member for Grande Prairie.

Seeing none, are there others wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and speak for a few minutes on Government Motion 70, in support of the Keystone XL project. It's meant a great deal to my riding, being the riding where almost the entirety of the pipeline runs, from Hardisty to Consort to Oyen to Empress. I was able to witness firsthand all of the positive impact that the one year of construction had, and it's truly a sad state we're in right now.

This is a fairly simple motion speaking to our profound dismay at the revoking of the permit issued by the President of the United States authorizing the Keystone XL pipeline border crossing, which is already built. I've seen it. That is done. In the Assembly's view, this decision will

- (a) lead to the loss of an estimated 60,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs associated with the Keystone XL project in both Canada and the United States.

That would be the estimated overall jobs once completed.

I know that in the construction season there were 2,000 jobs on the Alberta side, another 800 in Saskatchewan, and I saw estimates of between 10,000 and 11,000 throughout the states where the pipeline was being worked on. These are good jobs. They were predominantly union jobs, good-paying jobs, career jobs. I know, just in the few times I was able to visit Oyen and meet the crew, Albertans from all over, that I met workers on this pipeline that were probably from all of our ridings. Just the gratitude that they had to this government for trying to put this forward in the best interest of everybody was really compelling. It meant so much to them and their families when these good jobs were in short supply, and they knew what, overall, it meant for the province, that this was an overarching goal that we could all get behind.

I spoke to the mayor of Oyen briefly today about another issue, and I told him this motion was hitting the floor. He said: well, make sure you reiterate to the House just the impact this had on our community. Like, if you can picture Oyen, it's 1,000 people, 1,100 people, but they had a camp of 900. They estimated they were probably spending \$125 to \$150 a day in the community while the camp was there. It was about \$3 million to \$4 million a month in that small town and community; I mean, the mom-and-pop grocery stores, the few restaurants and lounges, the tire shop, the hardware store. The houses were all sold. You couldn't find a place to rent. There were farmers renting their shops or to people in RVs, you know. This was the whole community embracing these jobs and

these workers. The other thing the mayor told me: also tell the story about how the workers had a charity night and raised \$75,000 for the local charities in the town of Oyen. Just an incredible back and forth of Albertans repaying that gratitude.

The second part of this motion was that the Assembly views that the revoking of the permit will “undermine North American energy security, making the United States more dependent on OPEC oil imports in the future.” We know the refineries in the Gulf want this oil. We know it’s the most valuable product. They can make the most things out of it, and they can buy it at a discount. To have a pipeline that can take it there in the most efficient way, in the safest way when we know that those same refineries will buy that oil and that it’ll come from a tanker – you just know that the labour standards, the human rights, the environmental standards won’t be there, can’t be there, and they aren’t there.

You’re also seeing the domino effect of the logistics of North America trying to fill this void. You see Canadian Pacific Railway – a great story – a Canadian company, a Calgary-based company, buying Kansas City Southern for \$25 billion to secure contiguous track to the coast. All this means – I have nothing against crude by rail. That was a terrible deal for the opposition, but I have nothing against it in the sense that it gets the product out that needs out. But it costs more, and it is more dangerous, and there is more environmental risk. That’s what we know. For 830,000 barrels a day it takes 4.3 million railcars a year. It takes a lot of NDP governments to secure that many railcars.

The third part is that the Assembly views that this will “damage the critically important Canada-U.S. bilateral relationship.” Canada is an exporter and Alberta is an exporter, whether it’s beef, lumber, grain, or oil. You know, it’s our only land border that we share. They’re the biggest economy in the world. Our Prime Minister said that this was his number one issue, and it didn’t even get talked about, so I don’t know how that could not offend our country if it means so little and is just a political football to the new administration down south.

The fourth part of the motion: “be it further resolved that the Assembly express its gratitude to the majority of members of the United States Senate and the coalition of state governments who are seeking a reversal of this decision.” I think there are 21 Attorneys General that filed the lawsuit in Texas federal court, two Democratic Senators, including Joe Manchin, who’s the West Virginia Democratic Senator and chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and Jon Tester, the Democratic Senator from Montana. This project means a lot to his state. Definitely, we want to show our support in favour of those people who are also speaking out because they know what this means to their areas. This means good jobs, and this means a return of the economy and a better circumstance for their people.

Just before I let someone else speak, I just want to say, you know, that I did get a chance to speak to some of the TC folks that were working on this project while it was being built in Oyen and got to see how proud they were of their presentation. They knew all along that this project had political circumstance in its future – that was not hidden from anyone – but they also thought that they would get their chance to show the next administration how this pipeline was not the same pipeline that was vetoed by the Obama administration. They feel like this pipeline in no way is the same in any way other than name, with the green initiatives and pledges that TC put forward to operate the pipeline at net zero emissions when it came into service in 2023 and then to ensure that enough renewable energy would be available to match the KXL power consumption by 2030. They pledged \$10 million to green energy training to prepare skilled labourers for energy jobs of the future. They were

all in and in the best way. They knew that this pipeline had its opponents, but they put their best foot forward.

The indigenous participation, Natural Law Energy, comprised of five Nations, were working to acquire an equity position of up to a billion dollars, and that was just on the Canadian side. The same conversations were being had south of the border.

**8:40**

I just wanted to comment that I’ve driven to Oyen many times, before I was in this role, too, and I drove by the rusty pipe yards for a decade. As sad as I am that we’re suspended and in this position now, all things come around. There’s a lot more pipe in the ground than there was. I think that in the future some American administration will say: “Look, here’s a product we need. It’s more efficient. It’s cheaper. It’s good for everybody. It’s a win-win.” But until that day comes, I’m very excited to support Government Motion 70.

I’ll cede my time.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. The Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I’m always pleased to stand and comment on our incredible energy sector and the work that’s being done. I want to thank the Minister of Energy for not only having the incredible background in pipelines but for all of the work that she has done alongside the Premier to try and get this pipeline built. Thank you so much.

I wanted to bring forward just a few comments with respect to this, especially about women in the workforce and women in the oil and gas sector. It was amazing, you know, when we were fighting for these pipelines back when I was in opposition and we were having the Rally 4 Resources. You would go and stand alongside the families and the folks outside who were fighting, actually, the previous government to try and get those pipelines built but mostly to have them stop denigrating the sector, the work that was being done, and especially the women that are in the sector.

When you look at the women who are in the sector and the growth in the sector especially – you know, pipefitters and tradespeople, environmental sciences, surveyors – if you look at organizations like Women Building Futures and the incredible women welders that are coming out of this, that have transitional jobs – and these are recession-proof jobs that continue on long past any particular sways in energy sectors or anything else, for that matter – when we look at what the upstream impacts are for jobs right across this country, it’s amazing to me that anybody ever, especially in this province, would have stood in the way of a pipeline, would have stood in the way of prosperity for women and men in this province. If you look at even the flexibility in the job schedules for women who are working – and many of these companies actually had daycare on-site to make sure that women’s babes were taken care of. There were grade schools that were built as a result so that women could work in the sector.

When we were out at these rallies and when I had the privilege of travelling around the province and meeting some of these incredible truck drivers who were at the oil sands – they drive these massive trucks, massive trucks that pull product in and out. Actually, they’re better drivers because the way that the pedals were set up for their feet, they didn’t ruin the clutches as much as the men did. It’s a really, really amazing job. And when you talk to them – you know, they’re literally 30 feet up in the air in these monster machines just killing it out there, doing such an amazing job. A lot of these women, as a result of a tax on pipelines, politicizing

pipelines, politicizing the energy sector, have had their incomes reduced by half if not more. Some of these women were the breadwinners in their family. In fact, a good chunk of them were because they were employed even better than their spouses, husbands, or partners. When you lose half of your income like that overnight – and this was not a slow change. It happened like that, because of government ideologies, both here and in Ottawa.

It was interesting to me. I remember when our Prime Minister was first elected. They called him the feminist Prime Minister, and I thought to myself: how is that even possible? He's literally attacking every single woman in this province that is impacted positively by energy, whether that's in health care, whether that's schools that they build, whether that is in any of the amazing jobs that are held by women in this province, that were impacted by folks on that side, that attacked the energy sector over and over and over again.

It's amazing to me. I mean, I met draftspersons, tech and innovation. If you talk to anybody, Canada should be an energy superpower. Let's talk about women outside of these borders. What about them? What about energy poverty in places like India, Africa, China? Do those women not deserve to have access to cheap energy, to be able to have lives and livelihoods at the same level, potentially, that we could? But that wouldn't matter because you would never stand up for that. It would go against the ideology of actually standing up for oil and gas.

I'm hoping that everybody in this House will stand up in favour of pipelines to make sure that we hold the United States accountable. They have a government right now that supposedly stands up for women. Interestingly enough, every single time they kibosh a project like this, millions of women are impacted. Girls are impacted. So I hope that our friends across the way, who are now talking amongst themselves I'm sure trying to come up with a way to demonize the sector and the work that they do with women, will stand up in favour to fight back against a government right now in the United States that is actually taking jobs away from women and girls, that is stopping the technical evolution of work that is being done and the diversity that comes from this sector, especially here. We're seeing it here with tech and innovation and girls being able to do coding and go into technical jobs that will help to support this sector.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, is there anyone else wishing to speak to Government Motion 70? [interjections] Order. The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be the MLA for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, representing many blue-collar workers in Alberta's Industrial Heartland. I'm glad to be speaking on Motion 70 as the Keystone XL pipeline is vital to creating jobs in our economy. I'm very disappointed that the newly elected President of the United States has rejected and cancelled the Keystone XL pipeline. This project, which has already started construction, is vital to both Canadian and American economies. I'm thankful to Alberta's government, especially the Premier, for advocating so strongly to keep the KXL project afloat. The project brings an estimated 60,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs associated with the Keystone XL pipeline in both Canada and the United States. Oil and gas are Canada's largest export and most important job creator. With the stroke of a pen, President Biden eliminated thousands of jobs at a time when they're so desperately needed.

Environmental groups pushed President Biden to cancel the Keystone XL pipeline because they believed that it was harmful to the environment, but the reality is that new advancement in pipeline

technology would have been incorporated into the Keystone, making it a low-carbon method of energy transportation and a critical part in delivering affordable energy while achieving our shared climate goals. Keystone will be the first pipeline fully powered by renewable energy. This is an amazing project and will replace the larger carbon emitters that will transfer the same fossil fuel products.

I'd like to point out that President Biden's cancellation of KXL has not solved any problems with oil and gas production and use. The reality is that oil and gas are not going to stop being used. Even if we'd like to be running our transportation and our electricity on renewable energy, the products to make renewable energy are still made with fossil fuels such as plastic, but as you can see from the renewable energy pipeline that Keystone XL was designed to be, we can live in a world with both renewable energy and fossil fuels.

The Premier has had conversations with Senators that will be affected by the Keystone pipeline, such as those in Texas and Montana, and they have indicated that they are in full support of this much-needed project. That's why 21 states in the U.S. have sued to overturn President Biden's cancellation of the KXL. This was a rushed and incorrect decision, and I'm grateful to the majority members of the United States Senate and the coalition of the state governments who are seeking the reversal of this decision. Alberta, Canada, and the United States will benefit greatly from the development of this project.

On February 1 I was listening to a blue-collar radio program as I was backing out of my garage to go buy groceries. I listen to it quite often. It brings back memories. The announcer is Stan Campbell, and it's a national radio program called Trucker Radio. I was really pleased that he spoke out in support of blue-collar workers in Canada and the KXL pipeline. I actually wrote this letter to him.

Dear Stan Campbell,

On February 1, 2021, I listened to your Trucker Radio show and was reminded of my father who was a trucker all his life. He hauled pipe, equipment and groceries all over this great province of Alberta, even hauling over ice roads in the middle of winter.

I want to acknowledge all the sacrifices truckers make to ensure their deliveries arrive at their destinations on time. I remember my father coming home to shower and grab a change of clothes and a home-cooked meal – but most of all – to [come] see his family before it was back to the road, shifting gears. Looking into his glassy, bloodshot, sky-blue eyes, I often wondered why he worked so hard. It is now apparent to me that he was born to drive in the hammer lane.

As a member of the Alberta Legislature, I want to thank you for your outpouring of support for Alberta and I want to lend my voice to the chorus of voices that are downright furious at the Biden administration's ideological decision to kill the Keystone XL pipeline. This decision has cost thousands of families good-paying jobs on both sides of the border, which would have added billions of dollars to both economies.

My heart goes out to all the truckers that haul pipe and equipment like my dad [did], as well as the welders, pipefitters, plumbers, mechanics, rig workers, and anyone else associated with pipelining and oil and gas.

8:50

I am also beyond frustrated that the Trudeau Liberals refuse to defend our responsible energy industry. Here in Alberta, we are amongst the most ethical producers of oil in the world. This is a well-known fact. Our prime minister is quick to stand up for other industries, but when we need him to stand up for the energy industry – Canada's number one export industry – he can't be found.

If the federal government is not going to stand up for Canadian Jobs, then as Canadians we need to think hard about

just who is representing us in Ottawa. A prosperous Alberta means a prosperous Canada.

The Keystone XL ordeal is turning into a national disgrace. I urge Prime Minister Trudeau to do the right thing for Alberta and Canada, pick up the phone, call President Biden and fight for responsible energy projects like Keystone XL.

I hope you continue to support those in favor of Keystone XL. From Alberta, we appreciate your efforts in supporting Canadian and American workers, and we cherish your support for our responsible energy industry.

Sincerely, Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk  
MLA Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville

I call on members of the Assembly to support Motion 70 as it will play a great role in Alberta's recovery plan. I am proud to support Canadian energy by supporting Motion 70.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment for the hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. Of course, she's aware that the use of names of any sort – perhaps even her own – inside the Assembly would be unacceptable.

On Standing Order 29(2)(a), the hon. the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you. I was just enjoying the story so much, and I was wondering if the member would stand up and explain the impact that this had on you, especially as an energy worker and your father growing up as a trucker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Well, my father, when we were growing up, was as present as he could be. He was building this great province, hauling pipe. I do remember his stories about going across ice roads. I would always be worried because the ice roads weren't like they are now. They'd have to go with a plow in front of them, and sometimes he would even say it would be the army and they would be breaking through the ice. I'd always be worried about him driving into the ice with his pipe.

I remember him telling me how sometimes he wouldn't have time to stop and eat as he was going across the ice road, so what he would do at that point is he would drive and eat a sandwich and drink his jar of water. He'd put coffee in a jar. I do remember stories like that. But I remember as a little girl packing my suitcase, going for a walk trying to find where my father was because he was busy building this great province.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Are there others on Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, the hon. Member for Calgary-Peigan on Government Motion 70.

**Ms Fir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to rise in this House to speak to this motion. As I have on previous occasions, I will always defend our oil and gas industry. When Keystone XL was finally approved after being denied for years, I, like so many others, felt hopeful and optimistic. We finally got the boost that we needed. Finally, some good news for Alberta's oil and gas industry. Warmly welcomed good news after years of continually having our energy industry and livelihoods threatened by the actions of the federal Liberals, the at the time Democratic government in the United States, and of course the members opposite when they were in government. We were finally going to be able to get our ethical oil and gas back in the global market. We were finally going to be

able to give hard-working Albertans and Americans their jobs back. We were on track to regain being the prosperous, generous province of Alberta again.

All taken away in one day with one rashly made, not well-thought-out decision by an incoming president. An action based on emotion, not fact. It was a crushing blow. Mr. Speaker, there were several reasons I decided to run for government. One of the biggest was my dismay at the complete lack of support the at the time NDP government had for pipelines and for Alberta's oil and gas industry.

I spent over 19 years of my career in the oil and gas industry. I am so proud to have worked in an industry that has the highest standards in the world for clean, safe, ethical operations, reclamation, and human rights standards. Now more than ever the world needs oil and gas from Alberta. Alberta produces the most ethical oil and gas in the world, and that is something that everyone in this country should want more of. As for pipelines, studies have shown that pipelines are the safer and greener alternative, producing less greenhouse gasses than trains. Pipelines are the safest mode of energy transportation. Alberta has and will always be a stable, secure, and responsible energy provider to our neighbouring countries, and this project would continue that. I am exceedingly proud of this industry.

This is exactly why I stand here to strongly defend pipelines in Alberta's energy industry. By revoking this permit, the President of the United States took so much away from the people of this province, this country, and their own country. The jobs lost due to the cancellation of this project aren't just Albertan jobs. They are American jobs, too, an estimated 60,000 direct and indirect jobs from this project alone.

Mr. Speaker, it is astonishing that the President was able to revoke this permit so swiftly. They should regret making such a rash decision that will have immeasurable consequences for years to come. We on this side of the House will never stop fighting for the industry that keeps our province and this country viable. We will never bet against Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment.

Seeing none, are there others wishing to join the debate? The hon. Member for Camrose.

**Ms Lovely:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak to Motion 70. I, like the majority of Albertans, am extremely disappointed in the recent actions of the President of the United States revoking the permit which authorizes the Keystone XL pipeline border crossing.

While door-knocking in my Camrose constituency, I met people who lost their jobs working in the oil field due to the actions of the previous NDP government and current federal government. It is no question that this industry employs a large number of individuals in my community.

Like the motion states, this revocation is detrimental to the important relationship fostered between Canada and the United States. This revocation will lead to the loss of an estimated 60,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs associated with the Keystone project in both Canada and the United States. Fortunately, 21 states have filed a lawsuit arguing that President Biden exceeded his authority when he issued his executive order on the 20th of January revoking permits for the oil pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, in December 2011 the U.S. Congress passed the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation Act of 2011, which became public law 112-78. The bill was introduced on December 23 and passed by unanimous consent in both chambers. In doing so,

the President was required to grant TC Energy's application to construct and operate the Keystone XL cross-border facilities or report to Congress why he believed the project deserved national interest within 60 days of the law's enactment. If the President failed to grant the permit or to make negative national interest determination within that time, the act provided that the Keystone XL permit "shall be in effect by operation of law."

Despite concurring with the State Department at the time and not granting the permit, President Obama and the State Department indicated that they would consider a renewed permit application in the future. TC once again renewed its State Department application for a Keystone XL cross-border permit. The State Department twice more concluded that the proposed Keystone XL would not materially affect greenhouse gas emissions. Even still the permit was declined.

When President Trump granted the permit for development of Keystone XL in 2019, he celebrated the U.S.-Canada relationship. Today not so much. Not only did President Biden neglect to consult with the affected states before making this detrimental decision to revoke the permit; Canada was not consulted. Is that how the U.S. President wishes to treat their oldest trading partner? Did he and his office even consider the far-reaching consequences his decision would impose on not only domestic policy but foreign policy as well? This is not about Trump, Biden, or Obama. This is about jobs of Albertans. Alberta jobs are at stake because of a decision that was made outside of the consultation of the Premier or the Prime Minister.

9:00

You know what else is wrong, Mr. Speaker? The Leader of the Official Opposition defended President Biden's decision. In fact, she said in a press release that "it should come as no surprise that Joe Biden is opposed to the project. As the former Vice-President, he was a vital member of the Obama administration and even stood next to President Obama as his administration rejected the permit in 2015." No, I don't see her providing any support or assistance to the Premier during this critical time. Instead, we see her choosing to attack the Premier and our government as if it was our fault that the Keystone XL was cancelled.

I want Albertans to know that our government always stands for their jobs, our oil and gas sector, and the prosperous economic future of this great province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a).

Seeing none, are there other speakers wishing to speak to Government Motion 70? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise to speak to this motion this evening. Back in December I was given the position of representative to the Council of State Governments - West (and Midwest). As part of this appointment I play a role and may speak to any of the council's six standing committees advocating for Alberta and for Canada. The specific committees of agricultural and natural resources, economic development, and Midwest-Canada relations are extremely relevant given the news about the Keystone XL pipeline.

Given that the proposed route of the Keystone XL falls into many of the midwestern states, working with the Council of State Governments on this issue is of utmost importance to me and to Alberta's interests. Like many Albertans and Canadians, I'm very disappointed in the current presidential administration's decision. However, my role on this council provides me a unique opportunity to advocate for the Keystone XL pipeline and the economic development and trade relationships that benefit all of us. The

Canada and United States relationship has always been strong. However, this decision is detrimental to that relationship, especially for Alberta's relationship with the United States.

Over the past few months I have met with members and staff from the council through virtual conferencing. I am encouraged by the sense of excitement to work together, and I hope to use that excitement to better develop understanding of what Alberta truly has to offer. While we may be caught in the wake of this decision, it is very reassuring to see U.S. members of the Council of State Governments eager to work with their Albertan and Canadian counterparts towards a future that benefits both countries. In fact, many of the west and midwestern states have been hoping for Alberta to take a more vocal and active role on this international stage, and I am honoured to serve our province in this way. Working on a better understanding of the true benefits both sides can realize in co-operation and agreement is my ultimate goal, but of course I will always stand for Canadian and Albertan values and interests no matter what.

A strong point of agreement that I and my colleagues in this House hold is the importance of energy security, not just energy security but reliable, environmentally safe energy, ethically sourced energy. As it stands and as many of my colleagues have already stated, the Keystone XL pipeline is one of the safest and most environmentally friendly pipelines ever proposed. I would like to pause and reiterate something from that last sentence and the use of the word "is" instead of "was" when discussing this project. I have continued hope that this project will go forward.

I support this motion and believe that revoking the permit for this project is a mistake that can be rectified through diplomatic means and appropriate pressure both from Canada and individual states within the United States of America. Stopping construction on this pipeline makes the United States more reliant on the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, predominantly dictatorships, for their energy and less reliant on energy from Alberta, where we follow rigorous environmental protocols and stringent labour rules to protect our workers and our people.

I sometimes feel like a broken record saying this, but as we continue to navigate our way through this pandemic and towards economic recovery, we need to get people back to work. As has been mentioned, the 60,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs associated with the Keystone XL project are a huge step in the right direction. This is not just about Canadian jobs. This is about American jobs, too. Killing those jobs limits both countries' economic growth, both in the short term and the long term.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta's excellence in the energy industry needs to be told. If we are going to continue this struggle to bring our energy to market at its maximum potential, then we all have to be vocal about what we have to offer. I look forward to sharing the truth about Alberta's great story with colleagues from Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Alberta energy is the best energy available. Especially to our southern neighbours, it is getting easier and easier to use advanced technology such as those that would be used with the Keystone XL and pipelines to ensure the safe delivery of oil to our continental partners.

A note on energy transition. The President and his supporters have cited the urgent need to move away from oil and other energy products in favour of renewable sources of energy. Mr. Speaker, if we could realistically get to that goal tomorrow, I would do all I could to get there; however, that is not the reality we face. Transitioning to other energy sources takes time and lots of the current sources of energy that we have. Providing safe, ethically

sourced energy to the market is the best option we have right now to work towards other projects and working with our energy industry to transition to those possibilities in the years ahead. As a representative to the Council of State Governments I will bring these facts about Alberta's energy industry forward every chance I get.

To quote the poet Dylan Thomas:

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Mr. Speaker, we will not go gently into the good night. It falls on us to fight for the economic prosperity of this province, for the economic prosperity of Canada. Now is the time to make our voices heard across this nation and across the United States and support this motion. I will use every opportunity to represent the values of Albertans and Canadians in my new position on the Council of State Governments, and I will continue to renew our relationship with the United States while prioritizing what is best for our province and our country, which is co-operation and mutual benefit for our environment and our economy. There is a lot of hard work ahead, but I look forward to facing these many challenges, and I will not go gentle into that good night.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment for the member.

Seeing none, are there others wishing to join in the debate? The hon. Member for Morinville-St. Albert and the Associate Minister of Natural Gas and Electricity.

**Mr. Nally:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tonight has been a very thoughtful debate on Motion 70. In fact, it has been downright encouraging to hear about the role of responsible energy projects like KXL in achieving carbon neutrality. In particular, I enjoyed hearing from the Energy minister, who probably has more senior-level experience in the pipeline industry than anyone I know. I never actually thought of it in the perspective that she presented today. What she presented was prior to 2015, and the egress that we got was incredible. It was only after 2015 that we started to see pipeline failures.

So I started thinking: when Northern Gateway was cancelled, do you remember what you were doing? Mr. Speaker, do you remember how that came down? Because I won't forget. I will not forget the day when the Prime Minister came out of his office and he cancelled KXL, and shortly after the Leader of the Opposition, the then Premier of the province, came out and said it was the right thing to do.

**An Hon. Member:** Shame.

**Mr. Nally:** Yeah. Shame.

So we shouldn't have been surprised, Mr. Speaker, when they didn't fight for Energy East, nor should we have been surprised when they didn't fight for KXL. In fact, you would be forgiven if you were to think that they ran a victory lap on KXL having the permit revoked. Such was their history with pipelines in this province.

To hear the passion on this side of the House for the energy industry has been fantastic. I enjoyed listening to the Minister of Finance, because nobody in this House knows more than the Minister of Finance in terms of the difference that KXL would have made to all Albertans in this province, Mr. Speaker. It would have made an absolute difference on egress.

And that's not all. You know, having a chance to listen to the hon. Member for Grande Prairie – and I have to tell you, when the hon. Member for Grande Prairie speaks on energy, I listen, because

that member is from energy central. That hon. member lives in a community that lives and dies on energy, Mr. Speaker, and nobody knows that more than the hon. Member for Grande Prairie. Listening to the impact that KXL could have had on her community, on her constituents was something to hear.

**9:10**

In fact, I have to tell you. I enjoyed listening to the hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler. I have never heard it put that way before in terms of: how many NDP governments does it take to put enough oil on railcars? You have to laugh, right? You have to, because it was such a bad business decision. Listen, I have no problem if private business wants to put oil on trains, but government should not be in the business of putting oil on trains. In fact, the Premier of the province, the then leader of the United Conservative Party, warned them not to do it because it was a bad business decision, and we saw that. I think over \$2.4 billion is what it would've cost us had the Minister of Finance not cancelled the contracts, and I think we were able to limit the exposure to \$2.2 billion. But, Mr. Speaker, that was still \$2.2 billion that hit the taxpayer. Shameful.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I quite particularly enjoyed hearing the hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. We have a close relationship, we share a border, and we work together on many issues. But I had never heard the hon. member speak before about her personal experiences and her family members who worked in or around the energy industry. As she was speaking, I could see her dad driving that ice road in his big rig, hauling those pipelines. I could see the hon. member and how she would've felt as her dad was driving, and she was wondering if he was safe. To hear the passion on this side of the House is incredible.

You know, I can't sit down, Mr. Speaker, without mentioning the hon. Member for Chestermere-Strathmore, who was probably the only person in the House that spoke about energy poverty. That's something that we don't speak enough about. The fact is that there are parts of this world – by the way, the 800 million people that go to bed hungry at night are the same 800 million people that don't have access to clean, affordable energy. We have the solution to energy poverty right here in Alberta, and the fact that leave-it-in-the-ground extremists would be working against us is most unfortunate. It was encouraging to hear the hon. member speak to that and also to the role of women in energy. We know that right now COVID-19 has disproportionality affected women, and I tell you, those energy jobs that could've come from this would have benefited women directly. I appreciate the hon. member taking some time to talk about that because it's an important issue.

There's no doubt that on this side of the House we support responsible energy development. We can't sit down tonight and end the discussion on Government Motion 70 without mentioning one more thing, and that is that Alberta is the third-best environmental, social, governance leader in the world, Mr. Speaker. Third highest. Why? Because innovative technologies for clean, affordable energy happen right here in Alberta time and time again. That's the type of innovation that we've come to expect from our responsible energy developers.

Mr. Speaker, I have appreciated tonight's debate, and I have found it most informative. I'm so glad that we had the opportunity to do this. I would love to do it all night, but at this point I'm going to adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** Well, you could certainly ask the House if they agree with you.

**Mr. Nally:** Yes. Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. members. I would like to call the committee to order.

### Bill 53 Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act, 2021

**The Deputy Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered at this time? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

**Ms Pancholi:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to rise in Committee of the Whole on Bill 53, Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act, 2021. I've had an opportunity to take a look at Bill 53, and it serves a need that was certainly identified by a number of nonprofit organizations. I'm thinking particularly of community leagues in my constituency. The intent, of course, of this bill overall is to allow for virtual meetings, for example, for annual general meetings of nonprofit organizations, who typically have their bylaws and their meeting requirements set out by statute. Like many things that happened over this past year, we quickly realized that there were things that were not permitted – our statutes, our practices were not set up to consider the possibility of a pandemic, when people would not be able to meet in person. We had to pivot in many ways, and Albertans had to pivot in many ways over the last year. Of course, we're very familiar with this.

One of those things that came up, especially as it became clear that the pandemic was going to stretch for some period of time, was that, of course, our organizations, nonprofits, and societies are required by their bylaws and by statute to have regular annual general meetings, and it quickly became clear that they couldn't meet for their typical annual general meetings. Many of them were still doing great work, and they certainly did not want their status as a registered society to be in jeopardy because they failed to meet the requirements, so there were a lot of questions about how these organizations and community leagues and nonprofits could continue to abide by their bylaws, by the statutes that govern them when they could not meet in person.

Now, this is a need, as I mentioned, that was identified quite early on. I certainly got many phone calls, actually, and many messages to my constituency office from community leagues and organizations, saying: what are we supposed to do? I was quite surprised as well, upon reading the legislation, that it didn't allow for attendance at annual general meetings, for example, by virtual means.

I do understand that in the sort of immediate period after the pandemic became a reality, in the spring of 2020, a ministerial order was passed by the Minister of Service Alberta that did allow for virtual meetings for nonprofits and societies. However, that ministerial order expired and was rescinded at the same time as many ministerial orders which were issued during the pandemic under the public health emergency order. They expired around middle to late August.

Of course, many of us would have hoped that we would be through the pandemic. We certainly were not. Of course, the second wave was still to come, and we certainly saw that there were continuing restrictions on gatherings and in-person gatherings. As the weather got colder, it became very clear that the lack of ability to meet virtually was going to affect the ongoing work of community organizations and nonprofits who do critical work,

perhaps even more critical during this time of a pandemic, when those local connections, those community collections became really important and, of course, yes, their fundraising. Now, of course, we know that, unfortunately, in Budget 2021 many of the same organizations which were serving these critical local needs and bringing people together in ways that they safely could now have their funding cut. But that's a story for another day, Mr. Chair.

Certainly, with the expiry of this ministerial order, there was need for some changes to the very statutes that set out meeting requirements. I have to say that this Bill 53 is intended to, basically, allow for organizations to meet virtually rather than in person. It makes changes to a number of different acts. It changes the Business Corporations Act, the Companies Act, the Condominium Property Act, the Cooperatives Act, and the Societies Act all in generally pretty similar ways, basically saying that virtual meetings are permitted. This is a good change, and I think the critic for Service Alberta, the hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday, spoke positively with respect to supporting these changes, which we certainly intend to do.

9:20

I do have to highlight, though, that I'm questioning why it took so long to bring this very simple change, which we are, I think, generally all in favour of, because it has really hindered the ability of these organizations and nonprofits and societies and companies to be able to do their work. While we saw that many other jurisdictions moved quickly to make the changes necessary to allow for virtual meetings for their incorporated entities, for some reason it took this government between August and now, March, over six months, to make the same kind of change that other jurisdictions were doing.

We know, for example, that Ontario made these changes, British Columbia made these changes, the federal government made these changes all in the spring of 2020, and here we are in 2021 – as per usual this government is behind the times – finally bringing forward this change. In the meantime it has left about six months of confusion for a lot of organizations who are trying to conduct their business and to operate as a society, as a nonprofit, and they've been left in this limbo.

It's not as if, Mr. Chair, there wasn't ripe opportunity to make these fairly simple changes much earlier. Of course, for those of us, which is almost all of us, who were in the Legislature in the fall, for example, we saw several pieces of legislation that were not at all critical to the pandemic or to the operation of businesses and societies during the pandemic. We saw, for example, legislation around allowing toll roads. We saw legislation around lifting car insurance caps and making car insurance more expensive. These are things that we saw in the fall. We saw the weakening of the quality and safety standards around child care. We saw allowing big money back into local elections. We saw making workplaces more unsafe for workers. Those were high priority for this government in the fall. This fairly simple change, which would have made the operation of businesses and nonprofits in Alberta much easier, for some reason was not a top priority.

So while I applaud that the minister and the government have finally caught up with the times and realized that this is a fairly simple change, I do have to question what took them so long. I know they were very busy with a lot of various other activities that were not related to either making a job strategy or getting Albertans back to work or planning for an economic recovery. The evidence of that was pretty clear in the budget they recently tabled. But certainly it's about time.

You know, we do stand in general support. However, there is one change within Bill 53 that we question, that we're unclear about,

and those are changes related to the residency requirements of board members that are set out in these changes as part of Bill 53. It seems to be an odd fit with what the spirit of the rest of the bill changes are, around allowing virtual meetings. For that reason, Mr. Chair, I would like to table an amendment, please.

**The Deputy Chair:** Can you just actually give us, essentially, the Coles Notes of it? I think reading it into the record might be a little long. And for the benefit of . . .

**Ms Pancholi:** Well, for the benefit of the Assembly, Mr. Chair, since I'm not sure that all members will want physical copies of it . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** Sure. Absolutely.

**Ms Pancholi:** . . . I would be happy to read it into the record.

**The Deputy Chair:** Feel free to read it in.

For all members there will be, of course – all you have to do is put your hand up, and you can get one delivered. On top of that, there will of course be copies for availability right on the tables at both of the entrances into here.

If the hon. member could please continue. For the benefit of all those here this will be referred to as amendment A1.

**Ms Pancholi:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On behalf of the Member for Edmonton-West Henday I'd like to move that Bill 53, Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act, 2021, be amended in section 2(3) by adding the following immediately after the proposed section 90:

Residency requirements

90.1(1) For the purposes of this section, "resident Albertan" means an individual who

- (i) is a Canadian citizen or has been lawfully admitted to Canada for permanent residence, and
- (ii) is ordinarily resident in Alberta.

(2) At least 50% of the members of the board of directors of every company must be resident Albertans.

(3) No business of a company may be transacted at a meeting of a board of directors unless at least 50% of the members of the board of directors in attendance at that meeting are resident Albertans.

(4) A company that fails to comply with this section is guilty of an offence and is liable to a fine not exceeding \$5000 and every director of the company who authorized, permitted or acquiesced in that failure is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding \$1000.

(5) Non-compliance with this section does not invalidate any resolution passed or decision made at a meeting of a board of directors.

(6) This section does not apply to an extra-provincial company or a non-resident company.

Mr. Chair, the intent of this friendly amendment, which we believe is a friendly amendment – and we do hope that the members on the other side of the aisle would agree – is that, you know, we believe that residency requirements should be included in organizations and that boards of organizations should be made up of an Albertan majority. I think that that's pretty standard. As I mentioned, Bill 53 for the most part is pretty standard in that it simply seems to be updating a number of pieces of legislation to allow for attendance at meetings virtually; however, there is another change that is made within Bill 53 that sort of stands out from the other changes that I described.

It seems to basically remove the requirement that 50 per cent of a board of directors should be Alberta residents. While it may be that this is intended to be consistent with other changes that were

made by this government or introduced and passed by this government through the red tape implementation act, those changes have not come into effect; therefore, as it stands right now, the law in most other relevant provisions is that a board of directors should be made up of 50-plus per cent Albertans because, of course, these are Alberta companies, Alberta nonprofits, Alberta societies. You know, we're really saying that – I think that it should be a pretty simple agreement – those boards of directors should be comprised of at least a majority of Albertans. We've been clear on this side of the House that we don't support changes to residency requirements in the Companies Act. Therefore, this is pretty standard to align with actually what's currently in place and in force in Alberta, which is a requirement of that 50 per cent residency.

I do hope that the members opposite will consider this a friendly amendment and will consider this amendment in the spirit in which it was introduced and consider voting in favour. As soon as that can happen, as soon as we can have a vote on this in this House, of course, we are eager to be able to allow companies and nonprofit organizations and registered societies in Alberta, who have been operating in a bit of a vacuum for the last seven months, to have the opportunity to operate in good faith, using virtual meetings as so many other organizations have been doing. It's unfortunate that they had to wait for so long for this clarity, but I am glad that this clarity is finally being brought forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

We are on amendment A1. I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Cross has risen.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am proud to rise this evening to speak on this amendment to Bill 53, the Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act, 2021. This is the Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act, and the Member for Edmonton-West Henday, I believe, may be trying to introduce an amendment that has nothing to do with the bill before us today. Now, in fact, perhaps that member was not necessarily paying attention to what we had been debating here today, where we talked about virtual meetings, as referenced by the name of the legislation before us, once again, the Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act, 2021.

Now, last spring we did indeed debate residency requirements as part of the Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020, and we did so because those requirements were the very subject of the amendments as appropriate. Now, Mr. Chair, the Member for Edmonton-West Henday may not be happy about it, but members of this Assembly voted to pass that legislation and those amendments, and indeed, to the members opposite, this amendment has been brought forward by the Member for Edmonton-West Henday. However, since that member seems intent on debating old legislation, I'll just remind you, Mr. Chair, that during the debate it was made very clear that those residency requirements came about as a result of consultation and because corporations and groups were requesting those changes to be made.

9:30

There were requests for those amendments because it would enable them to attract and recruit more qualified directors, which, in turn, would help serve the boards and the corporations that they served. Prior to last spring's amendments, jurisdictions without residency requirements had a competitive edge over Alberta. By passing those amendments last spring, we levelled the playing field and provided corporations and nonprofits with more incentives to incorporate in Alberta, and that's a good thing, Mr. Chair. That encourages growth, and it encourages jobs.



Now, I don't know why the Member for Edmonton-West Henday would like to provide other jurisdictions with a competitive advantage over Alberta, and I don't know why that member wants to remove incentives for corporations and nonprofits to incorporate in Alberta. In addition to this amendment from the Member for Edmonton-West Henday making life more difficult for businesses and corporations, this amendment clearly shows that the member and his colleagues would like to make life more difficult for nonprofits as well.

I'd like to point out what passing this amendment would mean, and while I'm certain that you're paying attention, Mr. Chair, I would encourage all other members in this House to do so. What the Member for Edmonton-West Henday is suggesting that we do here today is put stricter residency requirements on nonprofit organizations than for-profit organizations. I'm not sure why the member wants to have stricter requirements for nonprofits than for for-profit companies. I would encourage the members opposite to explain that to us this evening.

Furthermore, if this amendment passes here this evening, there would be inconsistency in Alberta's nonprofit legislation as the Societies Act actually contains no such provisions for residency requirements. I'll also note that making such changes would mean that Alberta is no longer in line with other jurisdictions when it comes to residency requirements for businesses and corporations. It would put us in the minority of Canadian jurisdictions that have residency requirements for nonprofits.

Finally, I'll remind all members of this Assembly, but especially my colleagues on the opposite side of this House, of what Cal Johnson of the Law Society said about the amendments to residency requirements last spring.

The Law Society of Alberta wishes to gratefully acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of the Alberta government in the introduction of proposed amendments to the Business Corporations Act to eliminate certain resident Canadian director requirements. We expect this to have a positive impact on the business environment in Alberta.

I encourage all members of this Assembly, on both sides of the House, to support Alberta's nonprofit and for-profit groups equally. For those reasons, I encourage all of my colleagues and all members of this Assembly to vote against this amendment.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members looking to join debate on amendment A1?

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

**The Deputy Chair:** We are back on to the main bill, Bill 53, Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act, 2021. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-South has risen.

**Mr. Dang:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill 53 in committee here. I think I'd like to keep my comments brief. I think that generally I believe this is actually a very important piece of legislation. Indeed, this is something that I think should have been introduced months ago, almost a year ago now, when the pandemic first began, as part of the emergency measures that were passed in this place.

I think that over the last year we've seen organizations struggle with or have difficulty navigating the bylaw requirements and the meeting requirements, particularly, of course, the virtual meeting requirements. Virtual meetings weren't permitted prior to the passing of this bill, if it is passed. Of course, I think that we need to pass this legislation so that these organizations are able to conduct

their business. I know many organizations have upcoming annual general meetings that will be very pressing for them, so I do believe this is a timely matter that we need to act on.

Despite that, however, I do have a couple of concerns that I've been hearing from condo owners, condo boards, and others in my riding. Indeed, I spoke on the phone with a number of concerned citizens around this legislation, around some of the requirements around electronic voting. I think that it simply is a little bit confusing in terms of how electronic voting must be available for every single meeting by default. I think that's something that's a little bit difficult. There's no transition period. There's no allowance for boards that may not be able to afford that or things like that.

I think that certainly, as we look at the structure that was brought in, I'm a little bit concerned that it looks like this bill was written a bit hastily. Considering that the government had at this point over a year to draft this bill and knew this was going to be a problem and knew this was a problem and that this was raised by stakeholders as much as a year ago, when the pandemic first began, I'm a little bit disappointed that, basically, a number of organizations are being put in a very strange spot, where they are forced or rushed to update their bylaws in the weeks to come here.

I mean, I'm a little bit disappointed that the drafting of this bill hasn't, I feel, been up to par, and many of my constituents have written to me and spoken with me on their concerns around this. I think that we should have seen some more clarification from the government, and we should have seen more foresight from the government. It's unfortunate that we didn't, but I do recognize how important it is to pass this.

With that, I mean, I encourage my colleagues to pass this legislation, and as changes are needed, hopefully we'll be able to revisit this in the future and make the changes as they are necessary.

Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you once again, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure once again to rise before this Assembly and speak to Bill 53, the Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act, 2021, at this committee stage. Enabling businesses, corporations, associations, condominiums, and nonprofit groups to meet virtually is a practical response to the needs that have become much more prevalent during this pandemic. As the minister said when he moved second reading of this very important bill, life as we know it has changed substantially in the past year. Albertans now rely on technology to connect personally with family and friends but also professionally with colleagues, with stakeholders, and even in committee meetings.

Our legislation needs to reflect that change, and that is why we are discussing these changes to the Business Corporations Act, the Companies Act, the Condominium Property Act, and the Societies Act. Mr. Chair, unamended, each of these pieces of legislation are either completely silent on meeting requirements, instead relying on bylaws as set out by the associations or companies involved, or they refer directly to in-person meetings or to voting by the raising of hands. We need to change this to better help organizations, businesses, and associations to move ahead in our digital age.

It's not just the ability to adapt and move forward with the technology requirements of 2021 and the years and the decades ahead, but this is also about ensuring the continued protection of lives from the COVID-19 pandemic. While there are still public

health guidelines in place, we need to ensure that we're doing everything we can to keep Albertans safe.

**9:40**

I'll take a minute here, Mr. Chair, to reference the ministerial order that was in effect from spring through the summer. This was an important step to take and ensured that the important work of associations, nonprofits, businesses, and organizations could continue. I think it's equally important to reiterate that this legislation, if it passes, will be retroactive to August 15, 2020, and therefore will validate any work that was conducted via electronic meetings in the past months.

I'll also take the opportunity to highlight some of the work of the minister on this. I believe that we can all agree that when an e-mail or a letter goes to a minister's office, the usual response comes via the same method. However, I know this personally: the Minister of Service Alberta elevated this because he knew how important the issues were and continue to be to Albertans. Instead of receiving written responses to their inquiries, they received telephone calls, which is a really nice touch, Mr. Chair, and I'd like to thank the minister for doing that. I'd like to especially thank all of the staff within his department for adding that personal touch. Now, my understanding is that should this legislation pass, follow-up letters will also be sent to all of those who wrote to the minister's office on this particular file. That personal touch and extensive follow-up should also be applauded.

Now, I heard a little bit from my colleagues in Edmonton-South and Edmonton-Whitemud when they mentioned that it's a little too late, that this should have happened a long time ago, and I think that's incorrect, Mr. Chair. The minister acted quickly in the spring to enable this, and this legislation, introduced early in this spring session, will be retroactive to the end of that ministerial order that I just spoke about. There will be no gap.

Furthermore, I think I would be remiss, Mr. Chair, not to say that these changes could have potentially been made by the former NDP government if they felt that it was necessary to move on it. The NDP government didn't move, as they didn't move on many files of importance. Why did it take so long for the previous government to act on any of the Service Alberta files, so long that they didn't act at all?

I'm thinking, Mr. Chair, of the work that this government and this Service Alberta minister did in relation to granting mobile-home communities the right to access the residential tenancy dispute resolution service and seeking further input from people all across the province on other issues of concern. Or what about dealing with the dysfunction that we heard about with the real estate sector and ensuring that the regulator was effective and able to do the work that it was required to do or perhaps efforts that we've seen just recently to address prompt payment in the construction industry? Albertans with concerns on each of these files have been advocating for changes for years, and it took this government to deliver it.

The members opposite also mentioned that other jurisdictions acted sooner, and I'd like to clarify this for this Assembly as well, for the members opposite, and for all Albertans. Only the provinces of Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador have permanent legislative measures in place to enable electronic meetings. Saskatchewan is still debating legislation. Changes to the Yukon Societies Act have not yet been proclaimed. Ontario, Manitoba, and B.C. have only had temporary measures to this effect, so we're actually one of the first jurisdictions to make such provisions permanent.

The questions that the members opposite have asked in relation to privacy are, in fact, important, and I'm happy to clarify and

provide some information on that, Mr. Chair. It's important to realize that attendance numbers in all meetings vary greatly, depending on the type of meeting and the size of the organization, nonprofit, business, or association. Some of these meetings will include only a handful of people, perhaps up to a dozen or two. In such cases, members would know one another, and it would be easy to identify who should and should not be present at a particular meeting.

If I think of these meetings, I think of the Zoom meetings that we have, the Microsoft Teams Webex. We've all been to all of these, many of these. It's pretty simple, depending on the size of the meeting, to identify who's there and who's meant to be there. On occasion a number comes up, as all of us have experienced, and those numbers are not recognized, but it is the practice of the organization who is hosting the meeting to verify the identity of the participants. This is a very manageable issue, Mr. Chair.

When there are larger meetings such as AGMs, where the membership is much greater and more diverse, there will be a responsibility and a mechanism and a procedure of those hosting the meetings to conduct their due diligence. Emerging technologies such as optical character recognition and artificial intelligence have the ability to confirm someone's identity in a more sophisticated way, of course. Any time an individual or a group adopts new technology, they are strongly encouraged to review the safety measures of the individual digital platforms to ensure that members using it are protected. This is true whether we're talking about Zoom or some of the other high-tech options available.

The alberta.ca website, in fact, also includes some information and online courses related to phishing, malware, and ransomware, to name a few. These are especially important to highlight as March is Fraud Prevention Month, and it's a time when we want to ensure that Albertans know about the resources available to them to protect themselves online.

Additionally, it's important to note that the intent of this bill is not to be overly prescriptive but to be enabling legislation, Mr. Chair. What this means is that it doesn't bind the organizations to host virtual meetings, but it simply allows for another tool to allow them to do so. The changes being proposed in this bill enable virtual meetings to take place, but nonprofits, businesses, associations are not bound or obligated to do so. There is an expectation here that each of these groups consider whether they want to update their bylaws and how they want these bylaws to look, what they want to be their specific guidelines. The way that this legislation is drafted ensures consultation with the membership so that changes to bylaws reflect what the membership wants. This is important because we know a one-size-fits-all approach simply doesn't work.

Now, I've heard again a little bit of concern about section 31, Mr. Chair, so I think it would be worth while for me to speak about that just a little bit. I'll use the condominium corporation as an example. Let's say that a condominium corporation wants the option not to have physical meetings in the municipality where the condo is. Maybe there's a condo in Strathmore, and they want to have their meetings in Calgary. The condo must have a vote on that, but they do not need to vote on it every single time they want to meet in Calgary or in Red Deer or in Edmonton or anywhere else for that matter. At that in-person meeting they can vote on it and ensure that the motion is appropriately worded so that they don't have to have an in-person vote on this again.

Finally, the members opposite raised concerns around section 90 of the red tape reduction implementation act. I'm happy to clarify those as well. As you know, Mr. Chair, members of this Assembly debated and voted in favour of passing that bill when it was before us last fall. The bill has passed, but parts of it have not yet been proclaimed. The changes before us today include a full repeal and

replacement of all of section 90. If we do not make those changes to what was in the fall's RTR bill, we risk having duplication or conflicting sections in places where the two bills are proclaimed and brought into force. This is something of a housekeeping issue.

Mr. Chair, I've covered a bit of ground here, including some of the technical information which may or may not have been of any interest to anyone, so I'll end my remarks. Thank you.

9:50

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members looking to join debate on the bill proper? Seeing none, I am prepared to ask the question.

[The remaining clauses of Bill 53 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

**The Deputy Chair:** Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed? All those in favour, please say aye.

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

**The Deputy Chair:** Any opposed, please say no. That is carried.

### Bill 60 Appropriation Act, 2021

**The Deputy Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered at this time on the bill? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview has risen.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Yeah. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'd like to add my voice to the debate on Bill 60 and talk a little bit about the UCP budget that was just presented on February 25. Certainly, I'm going to be looking at my critic areas because, of course, that's the area that's most important to my work. We know that seniors in this province are the fastest growing population of any demographic. We have 665,000 Albertans over the age of 65, and that is growing faster than any other age group. Also, seniors are living longer, and their average life expectancy is 84 years.

COVID has really created much suffering for Alberta seniors. Over 1,200 have died in our continuing care system this past year. Many have become further isolated due to the pandemic. Social isolation was already a significant issue but was made much worse by the pandemic.

Certainly, this isn't a status quo situation. Much needs to be done to serve the needs of seniors, yet what we have is a status quo budget. Despite the government indicating a substantial show of support for seniors, this budget really changes little. Due to the growing number of seniors, the line item for the Alberta seniors' benefit certainly has increased, but that's an aggregate form. There are so many more seniors. No one is getting more money in their pockets. That's why it's gone up; it's not because any individual senior is getting more.

Of course, the government had said that they would modify the eligibility criteria for new applicants but held off on this as well as the benefit phase-out rates. Because the UCP didn't do sort of this more draconian move, they're suggesting to us that we all should be happy about that, you know, that they're supporting seniors. But because they didn't do something that was going to hurt seniors certainly doesn't make me one of their champions for what they did do. This is on the backs of previous budgets where they deindexed the Alberta seniors' benefit and they cut 46,000 dependants off the seniors drug plan. It's a time when seniors should be supported, but this UCP government isn't doing that. We're going backwards. They're not supporting them, and that's a big concern.

The UCP repeatedly says that we must be in line with other provinces. This is sort of one of the principles, I suppose, of the MacKinnon report, and then also in the fiscal plan it's identified as one of the anchors of the budget, that, you know, we must do what the comparator provinces do. But what's strange and really confuses me is only looking at expenses. No one in the UCP ever looks at revenue, which is just a logical thing to do. We have \$13.3 billion that is less in revenues than the next lowest taxed province. Why isn't the UCP government looking at that? Why is that not even on the table? It makes no sense to me, and I know that it makes no sense to many Albertans. We have room to move, and of course governments have choices. The UCP is very clearly indicating their choices by not looking at the revenue side of the ledger at all.

Certainly, there is abundant room, especially in this unprecedented time, to redistribute the wealth more fairly. Seniors are worthy recipients. Of course, they have built this province, and now, in a time of need, when they need support, when I think arguably you could say that the seniors demographic has suffered more than any other during this pandemic, what do we hear from the UCP? You know, status quo and even regression. That's disturbing to me.

Another thing that certainly the budget talks about – I talked to the Minister of Health and I tried to talk the Minister of Seniors and Housing about this – is sort of the line item of the Health Advocate. I've been told repeatedly by, certainly, the Minister of Health, because I've rarely heard from the Minister of Seniors and Housing, that seniors do have an advocate. They had a stand-alone office when they came into government, but that was eliminated upon the UCP's election. They say that it's all in the same office as the Health Advocate now, and the line item now is in the Health budget. It was about a million dollars, which was in Seniors and Housing, and it's less than that in the Health budget.

But what is confusing, and I certainly – despite the protestations that, of course, seniors have an advocate to speak for them, the Seniors and Housing minister in estimates was not able to say that she'd ever received a report from that advocate, had a consultation with that advocate, that they had served seniors in any way. She refused to speak about that, and certainly the Health minister had nothing to say about that. But what I could find out just by looking at government documents, seeing what's in the budget documents, what's in the annual reports, is that the Health Advocate actually served about 1,300 cases or individuals, helped them. But that number was already served by the Seniors Advocate, so having amalgamated those two offices, shouldn't that number double? No. It hasn't; it's stayed the same.

Of course, when seniors have been impacted so negatively by the pandemic, when 1,200 of them have died in continuing care facilities in this province, we have heard nothing from the Health Advocate, yet she is to be a champion for seniors. That's disturbing to me, especially because the UCP government, the UCP ministers have assured me that there is someone who is certainly fulfilling that role. It's very clear that no one is, and perhaps some of that is because of who has been appointed to that role: the executive director of the UCP, someone without any expertise in health or seniors issues, someone who is completely a partisan representative, and someone who is not speaking. That's disturbing. I mean, that's disturbing to anyone, and I think that that's evident to everybody. It's certainly evident to people I've spoken with, the stakeholders in this ministry, and I think it's disturbing to most Albertans.

Another aspect, certainly, is just what is happening in housing, and that's complete decimation. Over the next few years the line items are going down to zero, so that means that the government is not going to support affordable housing in this province. They're

going to privatize it, and that means that we will not have the housing we need in this province. We already don't have enough, there's no doubt.

We have, you know, compared to – and we do this comparative thing sometimes when it works for the government, other times when it doesn't, but this is a comparison that we shouldn't be proud of. In Alberta 2.9 per cent of the subsidized housing units is available, but the provincial average is 4.2 per cent. We're significantly lower. It boggles the mind to think why the UCP government believes that actually, you know, decimating the affordable housing system, privatizing the affordable housing system is going to help that. Like, I don't understand that, and certainly the minister didn't seem to understand that either. She wasn't able to articulate any answers to those questions. I'm very concerned about what the budget is saying about what the UCP government is planning to do in very short order to devastate the affordable housing system in our province.

**10:00**

Besides all that, we know, too, that we are in an opioid epidemic that, of course, is made worse by the pandemic, but we have a UCP government that doesn't support harm reduction. Certainly, the report that they created didn't even look at the efficacy of safe consumption sites, that we know save lives. People have known this for decades, yet the UCP government is moving to a recovery model only. Of course, we need a continuum of services, but it's completely inadequate to reduce and, I hear, eliminate the harm reduction model through not funding it, not including new patients in the IOAT program, for example.

With that, Mr. Chair, I will pass it on to the next member.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any hon. members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for St. Albert has risen.

**Ms Renaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 60. This is my first opportunity to do so. I would like to first say that I do not plan on supporting this piece of legislation for a number of reasons that I will outline.

First of all, you know, I think we were all hopeful, waiting to see what the budget would look like, and of course we were disappointed. Not only does it lack vision but absolutely does not meet the challenges of today in so many areas. Whether it's jobs, whether it's just recovery in general, whether it's simply honesty and transparency for us to understand, it's just missing in so many ways. I spent a lot of time watching estimates. It's hard going back and forth sometimes, but what I did see was a common theme, and it was an inability or an unwillingness to answer very simple, straightforward questions. That leads me to believe they just don't want to talk about it or that there are things they're hiding.

Anyway, I do represent the city of St. Albert. There are a number of issues, I think, specifically why I'm not going to support this budget. First of all, let me say that in terms of education I think we've heard from a number of my colleagues about the extent of the devastation that is coming to education. The minister can spin it all she likes, Mr. Chair; the reality is that there is not enough to meet the demand. There is not enough to meet the current challenge or the growing need going forward, not even right now.

PUF alone, program unit funding: we received a letter from the St. Albert public school board – I know my colleague from Morinville-St. Albert also did, as did the minister – where they outlined, item by item, what those cuts were doing in terms of increasing the number of students with disabilities in a class, reductions of the EAs, OT supports, PT, all of these things. It just

went on and on and on. There was no reply. All we hear from the government is: well, we didn't make any changes; we didn't cut anything; nothing happened. It is just a ridiculous, endless shell game.

Postsecondary. I receive a ton of correspondence about postsecondary cuts. This is our future. Failure to recognize that is detrimental to all of our futures, so we're upset about it for a lot of reasons because of our future. We have seen tuition go up. We have seen devastating cuts to universities, changes upcoming to Campus Saint-Jean that are absolutely shameful. The government is being taken to court once again.

We have seen a brain drain, and I know this, sadly, on a very personal level because I have a son that spent years going to school here. He went to Toronto; he came back. He has a PhD. He's a paleontologist. Weirdly enough, he studies dead animal teeth – I mean fossil teeth, dinosaur teeth – and he had to move away to the United Kingdom to do his work. Now, here's another fun fact. The Holy Grail of dentistry is figuring out how to regenerate enamel, and they brought him there because he's a scientist and a researcher. There is a reason that he does the work that he does. He's working at King's university in the U.K. There was no future for him here.

My daughter is set to graduate next month, I believe, and she will be a teacher. She doesn't see a future for herself either here. She feels alienated here. She feels a lack of hope. That's just my own little, tiny family and my biased position.

The devastation that this government has caused in just two years is absolutely shocking. I could go on talking about the downloading of costs to municipalities, the unmitigated attacks on public-sector workers. Here's another fun fact. In St. Albert about 1 in 4 residents is actually a public-sector worker. They're teachers, they're nurses, they're scientists, they're guards, they're corrections workers, and they're disability workers, all kinds of workers. They're public-sector workers, and they contribute to the health and vitality of this province and, of course, the city of St. Albert. They have been attacked again and again. Most recently I think that one of the members, the member for Medicine Hat, went on another rant with his 6,000,047 reasons why, insinuating that public-sector workers make too much instead of looking at the important work that they do and the foundation they build for us from which to grow. That is another failure.

Failure in terms of COVID: I could talk about the failures of the critical worker program all day, but I will not.

I'll give you another local example, a security company in St. Albert, K-9 services. They employ 140 people in St. Albert, and they couldn't apply because it was too confusing. Of course, that occupation is eligible, but they would all have to apply through a different industry. So if there is a guard that is posted at a vaccine site, K-9 industry can't apply on their behalf. It has to come from somewhere else. More red tape, more bureaucracy, more confusion, and less support for Albertans that need it. That is just another example.

The support for businesses has been insufficient and very difficult to manage. We deal with casework like this all the time. It is absolutely unbelievable. No one is looking up, but I know the members opposite are getting the same e-mails I'm getting because I get copied on e-mails sent to them. It's really unfortunate that they're choosing not to recognize the weaknesses of these budgets, instead weakly leaning on spin and talking points that don't actually reflect reality.

There's absolutely a failure to address the needs of women. I'm not going to go into it because I know my colleagues have done an amazing job outlining all of the things that are missing. A failure to invest in women and families will continue to hurt us going

forward. This government's negligence on this front is more than evident.

You know, I know that in St. Albert there's been a concentrated effort to try to attract more investment, larger business. When we got the work progressing on Ray Gibbon Drive – and let me add a thank you to former member Brian Mason for helping us finally get that done after about a decade of work – finally getting that done, opening up some land, opening up investment opportunity, St. Albert saw one of the largest investments in recent history, Uline. They're trying to expand their tax base because it is, you know, heavily residential, but when companies look to invest in cities like St. Albert, they look at the big picture. I know that my colleagues have talked about that. Members don't seem to want to listen. The big picture includes education. The big picture includes quality of life for families. That means affordable, accessible child care. That means all of the things that are missing in this budget.

I'm going to move on and talk about the portfolio area that I'm assigned to be critic for, and that is Community and Social Services. Talk about some serious shell games and lack of transparency, Mr. Chair. That was not shocking but disappointing.

Let me just give you one example of the kind of shell games that are laced throughout this budget. There's a new Premier's civil society fund, right? There are 15 members on this. Only five are women, which seems to be pretty consistent with the numbers that this government chooses. The council itself: there are some outstanding people on there – I will give you that – but the diversity on that council does not reflect the reality of the diversity of this province. That is another failure. We have seen this time and time and time and time again. Zero transparency: there is no documentation about the work that they're doing, what they're advising government in terms of where the \$14 million will be invested. There's no financial disclosure for the panel members. Now, I would hope that these fine people on this panel will not make the same mistakes that the other panels have made.

**10:10**

You know, it comes out of budget estimate line 6.3. I asked: where did this \$14 million suddenly come from? Where did you move it from? Well, it came from line 6.3. Well, let me tell you what that section covers: FCSS, which is funding that municipalities contribute to, that funds all kinds of things like shelters, like food banks, all of the things that are so important like prevention of violence against women, against elders. That budget hasn't increased, yet we moved money over to a charities council or a civil society fund that gets to decide. We've created another level instead of just funding the things that we need to fund.

The clawbacks from income support and AISH because of federal benefits are absolutely astounding, yet this government continues to remove little, tiny supplementals from people on income support that live in grinding poverty, that most of us will never understand. They're removing supplementals that will push people into homelessness. There is no plan to address poverty. There is no plan to end homelessness. It is just more shell games and investments so that you can pat yourselves on the back and say: look at what we're doing; we're investing here. There is no jobs plan, no recovery plan for the 60,000 people that are on income support. That is an abject failure to meet the need.

Instead, you are cutting, giving yourself a little cover with some spin, but you continue to cut. You cut vital programs, and you cannot sustain or create a strong economy without addressing the people who are the most vulnerable. That is fact. There is a huge cost to failing to address poverty, which this budget has done. There are no targets, there are no outcome measures, there is no transparency, and there is no vision. There is nothing in this to

address these important issues. Instead, it is spin and talking points, and I'm incredibly sad that the members in this Chamber just lean on the talking points and fail to see what they're voting for and what they're supporting.

With that, I am again going to say that I will not be supporting this budget. These are just some of the reasons why, but I will not be supporting this budget. We could have done a whole lot better than this. This is disappointing.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member.

I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has risen to join debate.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I recognize that my time is very short, so I want to keep my comments on the budget in Committee of the Whole to the issue of climate change. I want to thank my friend from St. Albert for talking about the fact that the government didn't have any plan for jobs or any plan for dealing with homelessness.

It's also true that the government has no plan for tackling climate change, which is strange, Mr. Chair, because we just spent the first hour and a half of the evening sitting tonight listening to all of the members opposite talk about how responsible we are in producing energy for the United States and how dare President Biden cancel the Keystone pipeline when we've got such an excellent track record on tackling climate change. The only problem with that argument is that this government has done everything that they can to undermine all of the good work that my friend from Lethbridge-West and all of our government did to actually tackle the issue of climate change when we were in government.

You know, they have 10 strategies in their economic development plan. Not one of them deals with renewable energy. Not one. The one that even comes close has a geothermal strategy, but lo and behold, Mr. Chair, there's actually no money committed to it yet. There's no money committed to it yet, they have no forecast for how many jobs it's going to create, and they have no idea whether it's going to reduce any greenhouse gas emissions or not. It's absolutely ridiculous.

Not only have they failed to recognize that we need to tackle climate change; they're moving us backwards in many, many respects. If you look at the ministry business plan for the Alberta Environment and Parks ministry, there used to be about half a dozen measures on climate change progress. They scrapped every single one of them, Mr. Chair. How is it that we can expect the United States to take it on faith that we are responsible energy producers when the members opposite refuse to actually release the data to anyone who wants to look at the issue? It's absolutely mind-boggling to me. This government has completely failed on an issue that they said they care about. I wish that they had spent as much time actually tackling climate change as they did talking about it during the Keystone motion earlier this evening.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member. That was good timing as, of course, pursuant to Standing Order 64(4) I must now put the following question. Does the committee approve the following bill, Bill 60, Appropriation Act, 2021?

[Motion carried]

**The Deputy Chair:** Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 64(4) the committee shall now rise and report.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

**The Acting Speaker:** I see the hon. Member for Camrose is rising.

**Ms Lovely:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bills: Bill 53 and Bill 60. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

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

Does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, please say aye.

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

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

## Government Bills and Orders

### Third Reading

#### Bill 53

#### Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act, 2021

**The Acting Speaker:** I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise here this evening and open debate on Bill 53, the Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act, 2021.

This bill is incredibly important for numerous nonprofit and for-profit groups, associations, and businesses. We've all had to adjust to life in this COVID-19 pandemic, and a lot of that adjustment has included the use of technology. While life is certainly not the same, and I, for one, am very much looking forward to personal interaction in the future, this use of technology does ensure that we can keep in touch and continue to conduct business. It's impossible for me to imagine what life would be like if we were facing this pandemic prior to this explosion of technology, and while it's difficult not to have those in-person meetings and conversations, it is manageable.

One thing was not manageable, Mr. Speaker, and that was the ongoing business of Alberta corporations, nonprofits, associations, organizations, and other groups. The five pieces of legislation governing their meeting requirements were exposed as not being able to meet their needs because they did not enable virtual meetings to take place. A ministerial order provided some interim relief over the spring and summer, but these changes proposed in this legislation bring about permanent solutions by providing these organizations the ability to hold virtual meetings.

I need to pause here for a moment, Mr. Speaker, and reinforce that point. The changes proposed in the Service Alberta Statutes (Virtual Meetings) Amendment Act, 2021, offer the option to hold meetings electronically, but these changes do not mandate that all future meetings must be held in this manner. These are changes that make sense in a digital world and in the ongoing context of this pandemic. These changes allow such groups to operate safely and remotely.

I'd also like to reiterate a few points I made earlier in this debate. First of all, I want to say again to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members of this Assembly and to all Albertans that Alberta is one of the first provinces to enshrine this flexibility around meetings in legislation. To date only Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador have legislative measures in place though, of course, Yukon is getting close.

Second, I want to reiterate that because this legislation is enabling and not overly prescriptive, corporations, nonprofits, associations, and other groups have the ability to tailor what their future meetings will look like through their bylaws. Some meetings may involve a few people or a handful while other meetings may involve dozens or even hundreds. The reality is that this is exactly why this legislation is so appropriately drafted. It allows for these individual organizations to tailor their policies so that they work for them.

**10:20**

I'm really pleased to see that the Minister of Service Alberta has brought this legislation forward and done so this early in the spring session. Passing this legislation will provide assurances to the numerous groups involved all across the province that these amendments will be retroactive to August 15, 2020. As a quick refresher, Mr. Speaker, a ministerial order to enable virtual meetings was in effect until August 14. In the event that virtual meetings were held after that date, this legislation will serve to validate the business conducted at those meetings. I can think of many who will be very excited to hear about this legislation taking effect, should it pass, so I strongly encourage all members of this Assembly to support this common-sense bill.

I'm going to wrap up my comments here, Mr. Speaker, but I want to first thank the minister and his staff for engaging with so many Albertans and working very hard to bring this legislation forward. For all of the reasons that I've discussed here this evening, I am pleased to move that Bill 53 be read a third time.

Thank you.

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

Are there any members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise and speak to Bill 53 on third reading. I want to, first of all, thank the Minister of Service Alberta for bringing forward this much-needed legislation. I will say that, as painful as it is for me to admit that sometimes the government does things right, this is the right thing to do.

I'll even inflict further pain on myself by offering compliments to the Minister of Service Alberta in particular, who has certainly stood above his peers in cabinet by actually having a pretty decent track record of introducing useful legislation that benefits the people of Alberta. I certainly recall the Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Act amendments that he brought forward in the spring session last year, that have had a positive impact on many of the residents of Edmonton-Gold Bar. I certainly hope that he fulfills his commitments to see the implementation of that act through, because I know that there are many people in my communities who are struggling with the implementation of the Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Act. The minister also made some changes to the Vital Statistics Act that our party supported. You know, certainly, that minister is doing a much better job, in my view, than his colleagues in Executive Council and deserves to be praised when that is the case.

But as my friend from Edmonton-Whitemud said in her comments on this legislation at Committee of the Whole, this is a year too late, right? She clearly outlined the fact that the government wasted precious legislative time dealing with things that were of absolutely no urgency to the people of Alberta while we had to wait months and months to get this kind of legislation. I'm pleased, at least, that the legislation is effective retroactively to allow for those organizations that had virtual annual general meetings to have their business recognized. I think that's good. It

didn't have to be that way, though, Mr. Speaker. Had this bill been brought forward in the spring session of 2020, at the time when it was actually needed, the legislation wouldn't have had to contain that clause.

I will close my comments, though, tonight by saying that it is an unfortunate reality that the province of Alberta is facing that virtual annual general meetings are likely to be a reality for this province for months to come because this government has completely failed to get the COVID pandemic under control.

Mr. Speaker, it was very disheartening to see that almost 700 people were reported as COVID positive today. If one looks at the COVID cases over the past few weeks, we see that we are in exactly the same position now that we were in November, when every medical professional – everybody – was clamouring for this government to do something to protect people from COVID. It took them weeks and weeks of dithering until they finally enacted adequate public health restrictions, public health measures to start reversing the number of cases of COVID. Those health measures were in effect until private members of the UCP caucus started speaking out against them, and then the government was essentially cowed by their extreme radical right wing to ease these public health restrictions long before it was actually time to do so. So we find ourselves in the position of a rapidly spreading pandemic again that we were in in November.

Mr. Speaker, had the government even stayed the course that they were on in late January, it's probably the case that many of these organizations that will be affected by this legislation could have

reasonably foreseen to have had an annual general meeting in person this year, but now, because the government has refused to take the action needed to get this pandemic under control, it's likely that many of these organizations will not be able to have an in-person meeting even if they wanted to.

I'm pleased to support this legislation, but I urge the government to do something to get the COVID pandemic under control, because people are suffering and dying needlessly now because of this government's refusal to act in accordance with the best evidence, in accordance with what every scientist and epidemiologist is telling them to do. The government has done a little bit of the right thing. I hope they just do the rest of the right thing that's needed to get Alberta's pandemic under control and get this province back on track.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks.

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

Are there any members looking to join debate on third reading of Bill 53?

Seeing none, I am prepared to ask the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 53 read a third time]

**Mr. Nally:** Mr. Speaker, I see by the clock on the wall that it's getting late. We've made good progress here tonight, and I move that the Assembly adjourn until 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 25, 2021.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 10:29 p.m.]









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