



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, March 9, 2023

Day 16

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 30th Legislature

Fourth Session

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Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UC), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UC), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, ECA, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Copping, Hon. Jason C., ECA, Calgary-Varsity (UC)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (Ind)
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Glubish, Hon. Nate, ECA, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UC)
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Yaseen, Hon. Muhammad, ECA, Calgary-North (UC)
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Vacant, Calgary-Lougheed

Party standings:

United Conservative: 60

New Democrat: 23

Independent: 2

Vacant: 2

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Joseph Schow	Minister without Portfolio
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Devinder Toor	Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism
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Tany Yao	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health
Muhammad Yaseen	Parliamentary Secretary for Community Outreach

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Sabir
Smith, Mark
Yao
Yaseen

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Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

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Aheer
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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 9, 2023

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our King and to his government, to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to all in positions of responsibility the guidance of Your spirit. May they never lead the province wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideas but, laying aside all private interests and prejudices, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

Hon. members, as is the tradition of the Assembly, we take time to pay tribute to members and former members of the Assembly who have passed away.

Mr. Milton Pahl

October 30, 1943, to March 1, 2023

The Speaker: Milton Pahl was elected as a Progressive Conservative Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods on March 14, 1979, and was re-elected November 2, 1982. On November 19, 1982, he was named to cabinet as the minister responsible for native affairs, a position which he held until 1986.

Born in Hanna, Alberta, Mr. Pahl was a boxer in his youth, winning many Canadian and U.S. championships. He gave up his boxing gloves for school after his last match in the division trials to compete in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Mr. Pahl completed two degrees at the University of Alberta, a bachelor of arts in economics and a master of business administration. This set the stage for his successful career in business, involving management consulting and ownership of oil field related businesses. In 1992 Mr. Pahl received the 125th anniversary of the Confederation of Canada medal, which honours those who have made a significant contribution to their community. Mr. Pahl passed away March 1, 2023, at the age of 79.

In a moment of silent prayer and reflection I ask that you remember Milton Pahl each as you may have known him. Rest eternal grant unto him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him.

Hon. members, we will now be led in the singing of *God Save the King* by the hon. the Member for Calgary-Shaw.

Hon. Members:

God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King!
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the King!

The Speaker: Hon. members, please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: Members, seated in the Speaker's gallery today is a familiar face although maybe not today. He is the former Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, the hon. David Dorward. He is accompanied by Mr. Scott Hill, founder and former president of Play On! Canada. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Skilled Trades and Professions and the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to rise today to introduce 12 officials from the College of Alberta School Superintendents on behalf of the hon. Minister of Education, the Hon. Adriana LaGrange: superintendents Scott Morrison, Rita Marler, Clint Moroziuk, Wilco Tymensen, Andrea Holowka, Dwayne Zarichny, Daphne Mai'Stoina; deputy superintendents Greg Miller, Shan Jorgenson-Adam; chief superintendent Robert Martin; chief executive officer . . .

The Speaker: I appreciate the Deputy Premier's introduction; however, introductions need to be kept to 20 seconds. My apologies to those who have joined us. I invite you to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to all members of the Assembly I'm honoured to introduce Karolina Gruszowski, who is a social work student at MacEwan University who is doing her practicum at my office. She is also the proud mother of two and an immigrant and is dedicating her career to helping the most vulnerable. Please join me in welcoming her. Thank you, Karolina.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce Bryan Goehringer He's a friend of mine, but he's also a great community mobilizer and leader and has had a number of different leadership roles with a number of great not-for-profits in our community, including the Parks Foundation, Ambrose University, the Mustard Seed, and most recently Wood's Homes. Please rise.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Forestry, Parks and Tourism.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my great pleasure to introduce to you and, through you, to all members of this Assembly J.P. and Danielle Fortin from explore Nordegg. I had the privilege of joining them yesterday on a tour of the Legislature and for dinner at the Skål reception. I would like to thank them for their incredible work that they do for Alberta's tourism sector and the offer to come tour with them. I can hardly wait. Please rise and accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to welcome Mr. Glenn Miller, a special constituent of Lethbridge, to the Assembly. Glenn is being presented an honorary distinction by His Excellency Patrick Van Gheel, ambassador of Belgium to Canada, and Ms Lori Schmidt, honorary consul for Belgium in Edmonton, on behalf of the Kingdom of Belgium later today. Glenn is a retired military veteran with many accolades, awards, and distinctions to his name. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

Members' Statements

New Democratic Party Policies

Ms Renaud: Yesterday the St. Albert business community hosted the leader of the Alberta New Democrats at a chamber luncheon. I was excited for local business leaders to hear about our vision for a better future. What they heard, in brief, Mr. Speaker, was that an Alberta NDP government has a vision for the future, an Alberta where we can support communities by giving them the resources and tools they need to properly support local economies and infrastructure, where we build a resilient jobs economy that is securely built on a diverse foundation.

An Alberta NDP government will create good-paying industrial jobs while targeting growth in emerging industrial sectors. St. Albert business leaders also heard our leader's commitment to an exciting project, the development of the Lakeview business district. The success of St. Albert's three existing light industrial and commercial business districts supports the creation of a fourth, the Lakeview business district. An NDP government will work with the city of St. Albert right away with the goal of bringing this new district online for development by 2024. This would unlock 7,000 jobs and new growth for employers in advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, clean tech, health sciences, and more.

This is great news for the city of St. Albert, and we're just getting started. Stable, predictable funding to municipalities isn't just a talking point; it'll be a commitment. An NDP government will put a stop to the cuts. No more cuts. No more downloading of expenses to municipalities. We will trust science and facts when we make decisions on investment to rebuild our public health care system. An Alberta NDP government will rebuild our public system so that nobody has to pay to see their family doctor, so that we can all access public health care when and where we need it.

There's a lot at stake this May. So, Mr. Speaker, St. Albertans can rest assured that an Alberta NDP government will always be focused on them and what's important to them. There is a better way forward. Join us.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie-East has a statement.

Affordable Housing

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we approach the end of the UCP's first of many terms in government, more Albertans are taking pride in the ability to unlock doors to their very own homes. I'm proud to be standing here today to talk about affordable housing. Affordable housing does more for individuals and families than simply provide a place to sleep. Affordable housing serves a variety of Albertans, whether they be seniors, low-income families, individuals in recovery or transitioning out of homelessness, women and mothers fleeing domestic violence, and the list goes on and on.

Affordable housing often serves as a place for an individual or a family to have a fresh start, and we are proud to be providing that. I am honoured to serve as the MLA for Airdrie-East, and today our government made an investment in our community. Today it was announced that Alberta's government is providing \$54 million to support an increase of more than 600 affordable housing units right across Alberta. I'm so glad to see that \$5.5 million of that funding is supporting projects right in Airdrie.

Mr. Speaker, you have to ask yourself: how is this different than when the NDP were in office? Well, let me tell you. When the NDP were government, they made imaginary announcements that had no impact on Albertans except for negative ones. The difference

between us and them? Not only are we announcing the money for housing, but we're actually building it, too.

1:40

Our government is cleaning up the mess made by the NDP as they increased the wait-list for affordable housing by 76 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that's a huge increase, but our government is fixing it. Albertans do not trust the NDP to build housing that meets their needs. That's why they elected our government. Over \$1 billion in support for housing over the next three years is getting the job done.

Canadian Culture

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, the debate about multiculturalism is complex. Canada is growing with people who are looking for a fresh start in this amazing nation. Immigration is at an all-time high. The investments to support multiculturalism are substantial. If I could focus on one aspect, though, it would be on Canadian culture. There's a culture here, and it's an amazing one. The people that built the foundations of culture did it in times when the world was very segregated, when there were no jet planes that could move people across the world. It was a time when exposure to other cultures amounted to words in a book.

So to the woke mobs, people who claim to be so enlightened that they feel empowered to tear down statues of Sir John A. Macdonald, who rename streets like Dundas, and who denounce Christmas because it may offend a non-Christian: you're doing it wrong. My parents came to Canada after leaving postwar Japan and Philippines. They came to a country that had a culture of peace and tolerance, of freedom of the individual, and an environment where anyone could succeed if they put in the effort. They didn't expect to see much of the cultures that they left and came with an attitude of when in Rome, dress like a Roman, an attitude most people should take when they visit any nation out of respect for local cultures.

Recently I was made aware of things that happened at a recent election from another culture. There was active stalking of voting stations for a democratic election, with supporters who would whisper in the ears of voters to support a particular candidate. It's an act that's usually discouraged here in Canada, where people are supposed to be able to approach a voting booth with no fear of reprisal or undue influence.

I also discovered that another foreign act is to make promises of government contracts in return for support. At first I said that no one would dare do that here, but then we heard that a Liberal MP did just that. No wonder we see that trickling down to our local levels. The role models are there in this federal Liberal government. I do not wish to see a Canada where corrupt practices like immoral influencing of elections takes place. That is Justin Trudeau's version of Canada, not mine.

So to the woke mob out there: wake up.

Social Workers

Ms Sigurdson: March is National Social Work Month in Canada. It is a time to celebrate the social work profession and recognize its significant contributions to making a positive difference in the lives of Albertans. The Alberta NDP caucus not only recognizes social workers; we are social workers. The members for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, Calgary-Buffalo, Edmonton-Castle Downs, Edmonton-Rutherford, Edmonton-Manning, and myself, Edmonton-Riverview: we're all social workers. We've attained our credentials and worked in the profession.

The theme in 2023, social work is essential, highlights the challenges we have faced as we come out of the global pandemic.

Social workers are more essential than ever as we witness the hardships, pain, and suffering of individuals and communities during this time. We are essential to navigating systems such as those in health, education, and social services. We are essential to advocacy, which includes celebrating diversity and antiracism. Social workers collectively work towards a just and equitable society united by diversity and strengthened by our goals for inclusion and allyship. Every day social workers support people in navigating complex systems. We are uniquely positioned to identify and address systemic gaps, provide key services and programs, and strengthen communities.

Albertans have an opportunity this spring to elect a government that is committed to lifting up our communities. As a proud social worker and New Democrat I will be working to elect a government that will protect public health care, make life more affordable, create good-paying jobs, and ensure integrity in leadership. Happy social work month to my colleagues and friends.

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

Bail and Sentencing

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to be part of a team that accomplished what it promised. Despite challenges, we managed to take care of emergencies, dealt with a financial crash, and succeeded in getting Alberta back on track. Alberta gives hope in Canada and lives up to its motto of being the place for the strong and free. We have a caring people with grit and determination, a robust economy, a balanced budget, plenty of jobs, and we'll skirt by a recession simply because of determination and intestinal fortitude.

However, there is a frustration in knowing that despite all we can do, we can never do enough on the files that are managed by the feds. As an MLA we lobby our ministers, who, in turn, work with their colleagues to lobby the federal ministers, which may have some effect.

However, when it comes to crime, it's no surprise that the Liberal government has a serious disconnect with reality. The catch-and-release system they have created by way of sentencing and bail terms is having serious consequences. Mr. Speaker, it's utterly appalling. A constituent of mine's daughter, 30 years old, was abducted on her way on the highway going to work. Two masked individuals forced her to the side of the road, assaulted her, dragged her into the car, and literally tried to kidnap her. She managed to stick her leg out as the assailants slammed her leg in the door repeatedly, and she managed to fight her way out and get back to her truck.

Another constituent, driving his 15-year-old daughter on the way home, was pursued and struck repeatedly from behind by another vehicle. The offending vehicle was stolen and was driven by a person who has been known to police, a frequent flyer, if you would. The father pulled off the highway. The suspect continued ramming into their car, got out and attempted to assault the man with a hammer, tried to abduct his daughter, and then tried to assault the daughter. The daughter had to jump out of the moving vehicle. The individual was caught, bail set at a zero value, and released the next day.

Good folks in Alberta are paying the price for a system that consistently favours criminals. We must look at what we can do to protect ourselves because the justice system managed by the federal government, where ideology rarely meets reality, is simply not cutting it. Albertans, Canadians deserve better. Stay vigilant, watch out for each other, and vote in somebody else who can take care of business.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain.

Spruce Grove-Stony Plain Constituency Update

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last four years it has been my absolute honour to serve and represent the constituency of Spruce Grove-Stony Plain as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. As my first term is coming to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on some of our government's major accomplishments in my riding.

In terms of funding and investment, I am very proud of what we have been able to contribute and the incredible differences made in the area that almost 60,000 people call home. An \$18 million grant to the city of Spruce Grove for the new events centre; over \$6 million in grants and investments for the Meridian Housing Foundation; over \$15 million in transportation infrastructure expansion investments, to name a few. Over \$65 million in school projects or upgrades, including the development and completion of the Stony Plain central replacement school project, the completed modernization of the Woodhaven school project, and a recently completed new francophone school right in the heart of Stony Plain.

Serving as an MLA has also given me the opportunity to meet thousands of residents and hundreds of business owners, an aspect of my job that I will always cherish. The residents, business owners, community organizers, and volunteers in Spruce Grove-Stony Plain truly have an unparalleled commitment to their communities. This commitment has resulted in millions in community facility enhancement and improvement funding for organizations across the riding, which will benefit future generations of residents in the area.

Personally, I've been honoured to advocate for and support children in finding their forever homes and to push for extended producer responsibility on behalf of municipalities, environmental groups, and all Albertans. I'm extremely grateful for my 13 years of elected service at both the municipal and provincial levels and for what we have been able to accomplish thus far.

Looking forward, I'm optimistic for the future. I'm excited for the opportunity to continue serving the fine residents of Spruce Grove-Stony Plain and trying to make our area the best place in the province to live, work, and play.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Energy Company Municipal Tax Payment

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's rural municipalities are owed over \$268 million in unpaid taxes. Municipalities can't take on debt, so when they're faced with a shortfall, they only have two options. They're either forced to pass this burden on to their citizens through property tax increases, or they have to cut services.

Mr. Speaker, that's just not fair. But you don't have to take my word for it. Rural municipalities are saying it themselves. The RMA president, Paul McLauchlin, said: "Ignoring property taxes doesn't just hurt the municipality, it hurts rural communities and places an unfair burden on other rural businesses and residents."

This government has had over three years to do something about these unpaid taxes. However, under their watch the debt has tripled. When I asked the government about their failure, their response was: we're actively looking at options. I am embarrassed for the members opposite who represent those rural communities and have to return to their town councillors, their reeves, their constituents with that type of response, yet another cost that this government would put on the feet of rural Albertans.

But it gets worse. Rather than solving the crisis growing under their watch, this government came up with a different plan, to give \$20 billion to the Premier's friends. This debt is a black eye on the UCP, and their \$20 billion giveaway is an insult to rural Albertans. Every member of this Chamber knows it, and if the members opposite feel that my statement is unfair, then I might suggest that what they want to do is what they're forcing their constituents to do: wait for an Alberta NDP government to solve yet another UCP rural Alberta failure.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora has question 1.

Health Care System Capacity

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the current Premier thinks she can talk her way out of the health care crisis that she and the UCP created, Dr. Fabreau, a front-line doctor at the Peter Lougheed Centre, tells the truth. He says that "the UCP's new health-care slogan 'Help is On the Way' feels insulting." He goes on to say that one of his colleagues recently told him that "help is not coming, so we have to help each other." Can the member opposite tell health care workers the truth, that under the UCP his help is nowhere near on the way, that it's just more chaos?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the hon. member for the question. Help is on the way, and it's coming, and it's coming now. In part of Budget 2022 we increased the budget by \$600 million, with a commitment for \$1.8 billion over three years. In part of Budget 2023 – I'm hopeful the other side will help pass this – is an additional \$960 million, almost \$1 billion, for Health. We are investing in capacity in our health care system. We are ensuring that Albertans get the health care where they need it and when they need it. We're getting results, and I'm happy to talk about that in the next answer.

Ms Hoffman: Dr. Fabreau writes: "Our progressively shattered army of nurses, physicians and staff are giving up. We've lost waves of exceptional nurses." This is the real harm that the UCP has done to Alberta families by chasing away the front-line health care workers, that we all rely on. There are 34 Alberta hospitals partially closed due to staffing shortages today. Some of those have been closed for three years. Pregnant mothers are being forced to drive for hours in winter in labour to give birth far from their home. How can the member opposite tell those expecting parents that there is no crisis?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, I indicated previously that we're getting results. I want to make one comment about the question that the hon. member made, saying that, you know, we are driving staff away. That simply is not the case. We have more doctors, more nurses, more paramedics, more health care workers in this province than ever before. If we even just look at doctors, Q4 of last year in comparison with Q4 of the year previous, an additional 254 doctors. Our investments in human resources and the investment of money is getting results, driving down EMS response times, emergency department . . .

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

Ms Hoffman: It's doctors and nurses who are saying it, Mr. Speaker, and I know who I trust when it comes to the UCP or actual doctors.

Thanks to the UCP war on health care workers, there are entire cities in Alberta where you can't find a family doctor accepting patients. No laughing matter. Families in Red Deer, Lethbridge, and the entire Bow Valley have nowhere to turn but an overwhelmed emergency room. I'm looking forward to an Alberta NDP government connecting a million Albertans with family doctors and a family health team, and that's when the UCP chaos in health care will finally end. But for the moment does the member opposite still want to say to the families in Red Deer, Lethbridge, and the Bow Valley that there's no crisis?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, we fully appreciate the challenges in terms of recruiting staff. These are not only challenges that we're facing here in Alberta, but in fact it's being faced by jurisdictions around the entire country and in the first world. But there is hope. I'm very pleased, given the work being done by AHS and working with the colleges, that 17 family medicine physicians have committed to the community of Lethbridge. As of March 9, 10 physicians have begun practising, and as they work through their CPSA practice readiness assessment, it is anticipated that three will begin in March and April and the remaining between May and later this year. We are making progress. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood has the call.

Prescription Contraception Coverage Policy

Member Irwin: Yesterday the Alberta NDP made a historic announcement that we will provide universal coverage for prescription contraception. Sadly, the Premier and the UCP think Albertans should continue to pay out of pocket for the health care that they need. After our announcement I heard from so many women about how this policy would be life-changing. Vicki wrote to me to say, "I literally had a hysterectomy because it was free and my prescription for an IUD was [500] dollars out of pocket." Does the Premier want to tell Vicki that she thinks this is an acceptable choice for Albertans to be forced to make?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health has risen.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. We all agree that Albertans and Albertan women need access to contraceptives. The issue at hand here is simply a policy disagreement with how best to approach that. We believe that we should remove barriers to access, like ensuring that low- and fixed-income Albertans have access under their government-sponsored health benefits. In fact, because of public and private health care coverage, most Albertans have access to coverage for prescription contraceptives. We approve of this approach, and we approve of the need, and we're delivering.

Member Irwin: I would suggest the minister listen to some of the Albertans who've reached out to me, like Kassandra, who wrote to me saying that "while it [might] be hard to believe for some" – like the Health minister – "health insurance is a luxury many people just can't afford." Kassandra went on to say that universal access to contraception will absolutely change lives. We know this Premier and, clearly, this Health minister want Albertans to get used to paying for the health care that they need. On this side of the House we could not disagree more. I have countless stories to share with the Premier, the Health minister about how this policy will change lives. Are you willing to listen?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We fully agree that there should not be a barrier. Income should not be a barrier for Alberta women to be able to access contraception. In fact, we have a number of programs in place to be able to support low-income Albertans in this regard. Contraception is listed in the Alberta drug benefit plan, and we have a number of low-income plans, including the Alberta adult health benefit, the Alberta child health benefit, the assured income for the severely handicapped, income support. We will continue to support these plans and ensure that low-income Albertans have access to contraceptives.

Member Irwin: The minister just isn't listening to me or to the countless Albertans who've reached out. Aimee from Calgary wrote to me saying that she "spent . . . over [\$6,000] on hormonal birth control alone." These costs are overwhelming to Albertans already struggling with affordability, but the Premier thinks this is a sign of the system working, and clearly the Health minister does, too, and they have no problem forcing people to pay out of pocket for essential medical services. Does the minister really think it's okay for Aimee to pay \$6,000 just to meet her basic health care needs?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, as I've already indicated to the hon. member, we fully support and we agree that Albertans need access to prescription contraceptives. The difference is that while on that side of the House they want to actually pay for everything, even including for people who can afford it and people who have private plans already in place to do that, on this side of the House we want to ensure that everyone has access. We will support the low-income individuals to do that, so with the additional funding that we have, we can actually continue to fund the expansion of our health care system and make sure that Albertans get the services that they deserve.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Industrial Development in St. Albert

Ms Renaud: Yesterday we promised that an Alberta NDP government will break ground on a new business industrial park in St. Albert next year, which will support local business development and create 7,000 new jobs. We'll partner with the city of St. Albert to service the Lakeview business district near Ray Gibbon Drive, preparing the area for development and new business growth. Why didn't the government support this important job-creating initiative for the businesses of St. Albert?

The Speaker: The hon. the minister of northern development.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, I did listen to that announcement, and I thank the member for the question. I was kind of surprised because it sounded a lot like corporate welfare based on the announcement. You know, I'm surprised there's any air left in this place with the sucking and blowing coming from the NDP. I did have a chance to sit down with that group, and I talked to them specifically in relation to how we can remove regulatory burdens and how this government can help to assist and keep the best interests of Albertans in mind, because, of course, there's only one taxpayer, and that's Albertans. We have to manage their money properly and fairly, and we'll do just that.

Ms Renaud: Oh, that member's view of corporate welfare is weird.

The city of St. Albert has made servicing the Lakeview business district one of their top priorities for economic development. However, the district was not funded in the government's budget despite the project potentially accounting for half of the city's new jobs that will be created over the next decade. This UCP government has ignored the economic centres of cities and towns across the province. If the UCP really cared about jobs and investment in St. Albert, why didn't they fund this project in their budget?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, I remember four years of the NDP being in power in this province. Now, I don't know if you remember it, Mr. Speaker, but they brought in 97 tax increases, and then – surprise – they brought along a carbon tax, a tax on everything. They're not here to help businesses; they're here to shut down businesses. That's why we lost 183,000 jobs in their four years of government. That's why we saw net migration numbers flee Alberta. That's not happening under this government. In the last 14 months: over 100,000 new jobs, net migration at record numbers. We're not going to take any lessons on how to govern this economy from them.

2:00

Ms Renaud: Storytime is over. Now for fact. Ray Gibbon Drive was actually funded by an NDP government because we recognized what it would open, the corridors and opportunities that it would open. And you know what? Investment in the Lakeview business district is critical for this community. The best part is the proof of concept. It's already there in St. Albert. Three light industrial and commercial business districts have been a roaring success, and we need to get to work on the next one. If we already know this project will create jobs and St. Albert has been asking for it, instead of the rhetoric and storytime, why didn't you simply fund it?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, it's so refreshing to hear the NDP talk about creating jobs, but I don't know what they thought they were doing when they added \$51 billion in debt. That's what they did in their four years. Our Finance minister just put forward a budget to pay off \$13 billion after \$51 billion from them. I can't imagine a better way to go for businesses than to reduce their taxes and reduce their obstructions.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to work with St. Albert. We're going to work with any jurisdiction that comes forward with a good plan. And you know what? It is a good plan, and we're going to help them with their regulatory approval and anything else we can help, because after four years of NDP rule they need something different, that's for sure.

Digital Media Tax Credit Policy

Mr. Carson: Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Leader of the Official Opposition promised that, if elected, an Alberta NDP government will reinstate the interactive digital media tax credit, that was cancelled by this UCP government. At the announcement Scott Nye from Digital Alberta said that jobs in the sector doubled in just a short period of time when we had the right incentives in place in Alberta, which included an interactive digital media tax credit. But the UCP continues to drag their feet and break their promises. Why has the Premier abandoned this sector?

Mr. Glubish: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that under our leadership the Alberta tech sector is on fire. We are seeing exponential growth in investment in Alberta's tech sector, no thanks to the NDP. Last year alone we had \$729 million invested into Alberta tech companies. It was an absolute record-smashing

year, and that is because of the actions that we have taken as a government to make Alberta the most competitive jurisdiction in the country and one of the most competitive in North America. Businesses and investors and innovators are choosing in record numbers to come and make Alberta their home, and we are proud of our track record.

Mr. Carson: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that Mr. Nye also said that Quebec, Ontario, and B.C. dominate the sector – they do so by aggressively courting companies, emboldened through tax policy choices that attract companies and talent to their tech ecosystem. He went on to say that without a digital media tax incentive, we are simply not competitive enough, and in fact without these incentives, jobs are leaving Alberta. The industry is saying that we aren't competitive in this sector under the UCP and we are losing jobs. Why is the Premier okay with this?

Mr. Glubish: Mr. Speaker, apparently Quebec, Ontario, and B.C. don't know how to create jobs without subsidizing them, but in Alberta we do things different. We create conditions that make Alberta the most attractive place to put your capital to work, to grow your business, to hire people, and to attract people from all around the world to come and call Alberta home. We're proud of that track record. That's why we're seeing record levels of investment in every sector in the economy, including the technology sector.

By contrast, let's look at the year 2017. Under the NDP there was only \$37 million invested in technology; under our leadership \$729 million last year alone. I wonder which plan . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Carson: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps saying that he needs to conduct an analysis of the tax credit, but just a few days before the budget the Premier said on her radio show that it's good for jobs and would support downtown Calgary. She broke that promise only 72 hours later, when the budget came out. Even the minister has talked about the importance of the digital media tax credit when they endorsed the Premier in her leadership campaign. But without action, it's just words, and the UCP has failed to act: four years of empty talk. Why has the Premier repeatedly broken her promises to this sector?

Mr. Glubish: Mr. Speaker, talk about a failure: let's look at the four years under the NDP, where 183,000 Albertans lost their jobs because of their disastrous policies, taxing everything that moved, bringing in a carbon tax on everything, that made life more expensive for everything. Our track record is clear. Hundreds of thousands of jobs are being created because of our policies and because of our responsible management of Alberta's economy. Hundreds of millions and, actually, billions of dollars across the entire economy are being invested right here in Alberta because of our leadership. The choice for Albertans in the next election is clear. If they want growth, vote . . .

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain has the call.

Affordable Housing

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today our government announced a whopping \$54 million in affordable housing projects across the province, 17 projects that will benefit low-income families, seniors, women fleeing violence, and many more Albertans in need of support. Now, given that I represent a constituency with a large, growing population, can the Minister of

Seniors, Community and Social Services talk about this investment in affordable housing and what type of impact it will have on the constituents of Spruce Grove and Stony Plain?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to that member for the question as well as his advocacy. This announcement today of \$54 million means that 600 new units of housing are going to be built across Alberta. That means 600 more families, individuals, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and many more are going to be able to unlock their door for the first time. These are shovel-ready projects, which means that people are going to be in their new home very, very soon. This means for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain, with this \$14.7 million investment, that more people in Spruce Grove-Stony Plain are going to be able to stay in their communities where they've built their lives and their families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain.

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and a big thank you to the minister. Given that under the NDP we received nothing but empty promises when it came to affordable housing and given that our government has taken real action to address the needs for communities large and small in Alberta and given that my constituents would like to hear about how our plan to build affordable housing today is different from the NDP's plan when they were in government, to the minister: why is your plan effective in providing affordable housing options for Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think probably the best word to describe why this plan is working is "partnerships." We're working with the federal government, municipal governments, but we're also working with the not-for-profit sector and many other community partners to get more housing built. These partners have been successful, and that's why it's working. Under the previous government housing needs went up by 76 per cent. It's going down under this government. Our plan is working.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for his answer. Given that we're seeing a critical demand for affordable housing across the whole province, especially as a result of the 76 per cent wait-list increase under the NDP, as mentioned, and given the number of individuals and families still waiting for housing, could the same minister please tell the Chamber about the progress being made and what we're spending for Albertans in need of housing supports?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are investing in housing. Not only have we built housing, but we're building housing. There are more units to come. Our budget represents a billion dollars over the next three years to address this need, to increase the supply. Our stronger foundations program announces 25,000 affordable housing units and supports for people across this province so that those who can't afford a house will have a home, a

place that they can call home and be safe in and have dignity and respect. This is great news for Albertans.

Red Deer Regional Hospital

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, for the past week Albertans have watched this Infrastructure minister make all kinds of excuses for his failure to get anything built. But yesterday Red Deer doctors reported that the situation at their hospital has deteriorated. A transition plan is needed to protect patient care. Now, the Alberta NDP has committed to delivering the Red Deer hospital, but the UCP's failure to get any progress on this project is taking its toll. So I have a simple question for the Infrastructure minister, and the people of Red Deer would appreciate it if he could answer rather than making excuses. Will construction of the Red Deer regional hospital begin this year? Yes or no?

Mr. Neudorf: Very happy to report to this House that, yes, construction will begin this year. The RFP for design is going to be complete by the end of March. Design is the first step in construction. That is coming together with a functional plan to be designed and built to meet the needs of the people in Red Deer and central Alberta. I'm very glad that we've put this capital project back on the plan after the NDP removed it, and we are going to get this hospital built. We've got the money in the budget. We've got the plan in progress. We're looking forward to that design.

2:10

Mr. Shepherd: Given, Mr. Speaker, that construction will start when there's a shovel in the ground and given that surgical facilities are sitting unused due to staffing shortages and central Albertans are being sent elsewhere for surgeries because of critical shortages in local OR support staff and given that these shortages are the direct result of the UCP's war on front-line health workers and given that this government seems obsessed with pillaging public hospitals for the staff to work in private, for-profit clinics, will the Health minister stop spinning and simply tell the people of Red Deer: will their hospital be fully staffed this year? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. As we've chatted numerous times in this House, there is a challenge in terms of recruiting health care workers across Alberta and, quite frankly, across the country and much of the First World, but we are having success. I indicated earlier that we have 254 more doctors in Alberta in Q4 last year compared to Q4 the year previous. We have a health action plan to be able to attract and retain doctors and nurses and health care professionals across the entire province, and we're working on that.

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, given that the Health minister admitted yesterday that there's been no progress in increasing anaesthesiologists in this province and given that after four years of failures and driving the system into a crisis that we are still in the midst of, Albertans know they simply can't trust this government with their health care and given that there are no family doctors accepting new patients in Red Deer, not enough staff in their hospital – and apparently we're not sure if we're going to see actual shovels in the ground on the hospital this year – who is willing to take responsibility for the UCP's utter failure to provide the health care needed for families in Red Deer and across central Alberta?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of our government's record in terms of investing in health care and increasing the

resources for health care: in Budget 2022 an additional \$600 million in that year, with \$1.8 billion over three years; an additional \$1 billion in Budget 2023 to expand health care. We have more staff than ever: we have more doctors, we have more nurses, we have more paramedics. Now, I recognize that we still need more staff and the system is still under strain, but we're working with Dr. John Cowell as part of our health care action plan. We're getting results, times are coming down, and we'll keep working at that.

Misericordia Community Hospital CT Scanner

Mr. Dach: Imagine being rushed to a hospital in the middle of the night in critical condition and, when you get there, the CT scanner is out of service. Well, this is a recurring reality at the Misericordia hospital in my riding of Edmonton-McClung. Since February 25 it's been out of service again. The hospital had a stroke patient who had to wait more than eight hours for a CT scan that would have been available if that CT scanner was not out of service again, only to be transferred to a different site. Another patient waited more than eight hours to be transferred to a different site for a CT scan for a bowel obstruction. How can the minister justify this lack of critical, essential equipment?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, our government understands that we need infrastructure and health infrastructure to be able to provide services for Albertans. That's why I'm very pleased that as part of Budget 2023 over three years we are investing \$4.2 billion for health care related infrastructure to replace, expand, modernize health care facilities and equipment across the entire province. There's an increase of \$120 million in new funding for the Alberta surgical initiative capital program for additional surgical capacity in AHS facilities. That includes an additional \$105 million in new funding for the continuing care capital program. And we continue to invest.

Mr. Dach: Given that the medical staff are feeling hopeless, day by day watching patients sit in a waiting room chair or even lying on the floor for hours before being comprehensively checked because the equipment is not working, and given that things are as bad as they've ever been, not getting better, as the Premier would like to boast, can the minister confirm when the CT scanner at the Misericordia will be replaced, and can he guarantee that they won't be forced in this situation again? Look right in the camera, Minister. The ER doctors over at the Misericordia are watching right now.

Mr. Copping: Again I thank the hon. member for the question. I know our government is expending record amounts in terms of capital for the health infrastructure. In regard to the specific question about the scanner in the Misericordia I'll have to actually get back to the hon. member, which I'm pleased to do. I know that, you know, we are investing additional dollars to make sure that the capital and the tools are there for our fantastic health care workers to provide the services that they need to Albertans. On the question on the Misericordia I will get back to you. But we do have funding for the budget, and we expect that as we give the funding back to AHS, they'll make the investments they need to keep the system running.

Mr. Dach: I'll take the minister at his word, Mr. Speaker.

Now, given that Albertans at the Mis are seeing shortages of specialists, surgical backlogs, and ambulance crews stretched so thin that they might have to leave patients in the waiting room to respond to another life-saving call and given that the least this government can do is ensure that hospitals like the Misericordia have equipment that works and stays working, can the minister

explain to Albertans how he can claim with a straight face that there is no crisis in health care? Will he apologize to these patients who are being impacted by these ongoing UCP failures and immediately order a new CT scanner for the Misericordia? Twenty billion bucks to oil companies; we need a couple million for a CT scanner.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said to the hon. member, my office will get back to him directly in terms of the capital plan for the Misericordia because I don't have that on me right now, but I am very pleased at the progress that we're making on our health care action plan. As you know, we appointed Dr. John Cowell as our official administrator to focus on EMS wait times, reducing the surgery list, and reducing emergency department wait times. Our 90-day report, which we released a couple of weeks ago, is showing progress. We've had a decrease in EMS wait times, for example, from 21.8 minutes in November 2022 down to 17 minutes in January 2023, and we're continuing to make . . .

WCB Cancer Coverage for Firefighters

Ms Gray: Last year in this House the minister learned about the Fort McMurray firefighter who fought the catastrophic Horse River wildfire and was then denied WCB coverage when he developed kidney cancer. He has since passed, and the family is still appealing to the WCB four years later. The minister also heard about a Leduc firefighter who fought the Fort McMurray wildfire and who had to go through the appeals process after being denied coverage for their cancer. Since we know the minister is aware of these cases, can he explain why presumptive coverage is only on a go-forward basis in Bill 9 and won't apply to these heroes and their families?

Mr. Jean: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the firefighters and other emergency services personnel that continue to help us every day and did fight the Fort McMurray fire. We are the first province in Canada to offer event-specific presumptive coverage. We were the leader in Canada, and – it's true – other provinces have tried to catch up. We are again going to be the leader, and there's more good news to come. We have just recently announced that we have done away with and, first of all, accelerated the WCB, the Workers' Compensation Board, application process for all of the firefighters in Fort McMurray. Firefighters don't need to prove the cancer was job related to apply.

Ms Gray: Not all of them, Mr. Speaker. Given that presumptive WCB coverage proposed in Bill 9 will only apply to the current list of cancers in the firefighters' primary site cancer regulation and given that this regulation was last updated when I was the labour minister, and we made sure that Alberta had the most up-to-date and comprehensive coverage in Canada, and given that Yukon, B.C., Manitoba, Ontario, and Newfoundland are now covering several cancers that Alberta does not, why hasn't this minister listened to firefighters, listened to the latest science, listened to the Official Opposition, who have made this commitment, and ensured that Alberta firefighters have the coverage they deserve?

Mr. Jean: It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP were in power during this fire and subsequent years and they did nothing on it. We are doing something, but what we're doing is on an ongoing basis. We have to make sure the science backs up all of the applications and make sure that WCB is going to cover those applications that are necessary. Nothing is more important than those emergency services personnel that continue to serve us. This is an ongoing file,

and as I mentioned in the previous answer, there will be some more good news coming forward in the near weeks.

Ms Gray: Given that cancer is the number one cause of firefighter line-of-duty deaths and given that some firefighters who fought the catastrophic Horse River wildfire in Fort McMurray were exposed to a career's worth of toxins in a single week and given that firefighters are proud to serve and protect their fellow citizens and deserve not to have to fight the WCB for support while they're fighting cancer, will the minister commit, like the Official Opposition has, to expanding presumptive cancer coverage for firefighters and ensuring all firefighters who have been diagnosed with cancer since the Fort McMurray wildfire are covered?

2:20

Mr. Jean: As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, there's more good news to come in the near future. The member is going to have to be patient. Frankly, they never got it done during their tenure in government. We are getting it done, but we're getting it done on a couple of bases. We're making sure, first of all, that firefighters are going to be covered when and if they need to be covered by WCB, and we're making sure that we have the scientific evidence to back it up. Finally, we're going to be the number one jurisdiction in Canada again. That is my word on that file.

Budget 2023 and Calgary

Mr. Sabir: Mr. Speaker, the UCP is only funding the construction of one new school in Calgary. This is an insult to students and parents across the city but also to the people of northeast Calgary, who badly needed this investment. As a direct result of this failure to invest, parents from northeast Calgary will be sending their children on longer bus rides to schools far outside of their communities. Why did this UCP government abandon families in Calgary and, in particular, in northeast Calgary?

Mr. Nicolaides: Mr. Speaker, I can't understand the concern of the member opposite. You know, under the work being done by the Minister of Education, we are providing more schools in Calgary than the members opposite did when they were in government, okay? Those are the clear, objective pieces of information. In addition to that, we are also providing more funding to education than the members opposite did and, in fact, at any other time in Alberta history. Over \$8 billion in funding to education priorities.

Mr. Sabir: Given that my constituents have also been hammered with the high cost of living and especially the high cost of groceries, insurance, and utilities – and it's really taking its toll on family budgets – and given that this government has ignored the Official Opposition's call to investigate high grocery prices, insurance, and utility costs and given that Alberta is leading the country in food insecurity right now, can the government explain why they're ignoring this cost-of-living crisis and my constituents?

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 2:22.

The hon. the Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are proud to come forward to support Albertans at this time of great inflation, increased cost of living, with the largest, broad-based, and targeted support program in Canada, and that includes supports in all the areas that the member opposite highlighted. Utilities: we came forward with over a billion dollars in electricity rebates, providing up to \$500 per household, to 2 million homes, farms, and small businesses. We

suspended the fuel tax, saving drivers 13.6 cents per litre, including GST, on every litre of gas and diesel until June. We've done even more for our seniors, parents with children, and the most vulnerable: \$100 a month for six months to off-set inflation.

Mr. Sabir: Given that the UCP's affordability program is clearly focused on a looming election and is going to expire in June, meaning that the UCP is planning to abandon these Albertans right after the election, and given that despite inflation and the cost of living remaining far too high, the budget did not lay out any new support measures or a real plan to address it, will the minister explain to Albertans why this government is comfortable abandoning these families right after the election?

Mr. Jones: Despite fearmongering from the members opposite, the affordability initiatives continue well past June. Our fuel tax relief: Albertans will continue to save up to 13.6 cents per litre on gasoline and diesel whenever oil prices are high. Natural gas price protection has become permanent. Whenever gas exceeds \$6.50 per gigajoule, they'll get a dollar-for-dollar credit on their natural gas. AISH, income support, the Alberta seniors' benefit, the Alberta child and family benefit have been indexed annually. They will increase with the cost of living. Personal income taxes have been indexed. That'll continue, rising with the cost of living. Alberta parents will continue to benefit from affordable child care.

Thank you.

Energy Company Liability

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, this UCP government is refusing to tell the truth about the full details of the Premier's plan to dole out \$20 billion to her friends and insiders. The Premier is desperate to push this \$20 billion giveaway despite criticism from Scotiabank, Rural Municipalities of Alberta, landowners, health care workers, and, well, Albertans across this province. Will the environment minister, who opposed R-star, do what the Premier is afraid to do and tell Albertans why this \$20 billion gift to her friends and insiders is a horrible plan?

The Speaker: The hon. the minister of the environment.

Mrs. Savage: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is out for consultation a proposed program which is very different from the former R-star program. I'm not involved in those consultations. They're under development. In the meantime nothing is in the budget to spend any money – not a single cent of money – on that program or any others related to an R-star program. It's under development. They're making something out of absolutely nothing.

Mr. Nielsen: Twenty billion is hardly nothing.

Given that the environment minister expressed opposition to the Premier's flagrant abuse of power with her desire to give her friends and insiders \$20 billion and given that the Premier is planning to take public money, hand it over to the oil companies to do the work they're already legally obligated to do, and she's doing it at a time of high oil prices, and given that Mark Dorin, director of Polluter Pay Federation, views the Premier's R-star program as being, and I quote, against the law, does the environment minister believe that R-star violates the polluter-pay principle?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Affordability and Utilities has risen.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta energy companies are required to meet annual mandatory closure spends, and it's working.

Police report that 15,000 wells were cleaned up last year alone. This year \$700 million is earmarked for this important work, a 60 per cent increase over last year, and it's on its way to \$1 billion in industry-wide targets for 2027. We will continue to support our world-class and responsible energy sector while also ensuring that they continue to fulfill their reclamation obligations.

Mr. Nielsen: Given that there are 170,000 unreclaimed sites throughout Alberta that need to be cleaned up and Daryl Bennett of Action Surface Rights said, "It's . . . regrettable that the taxpayer is left to fund these programs and that royalties . . . be reduced," and given that the Premier's R-star program violates the polluter-pay principle, will do damage to the reputation of Alberta's energy sector, and will see her friends and insiders pocket \$20 billion, will the former Energy minister tell the Premier to do the right and honourable thing and abandon this scam?

The Speaker: The hon. member will know that the use of such language with respect to a scam or otherwise implying that somebody may be breaking the law is unparliamentary, and I would expect him to govern himself accordingly in the future.

The hon. the Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the members opposite are in unfamiliar territory; it's called a surplus. On one side they say that the only reason we're in surplus is because of our world-class energy sector, but the problem for them is they've also made it clear that they want to shut that sector down. You can't have it both ways. You can't say that Alberta thrives and provides world-class health care and education because of our energy sector and then want to shut that same sector down.

In terms of \$20 billion, perhaps that's the \$20 billion of investment they chased out of our province in a couple of years, or it's the \$20 billion of debt they added to our balance sheet in a couple of years. That's actually in budgets. The \$20 billion you're talking about doesn't exist. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. the Member for Calgary-Falconridge.

Affordability Plan

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Making life affordable for Albertans continues to be a top priority for our government. We will continue to aid Albertans in achieving financial security by a variety of means. Our affordability action plan has already provided support to seniors, AISH recipients, and families who are struggling with inflation and affordability. To the minister: please provide an update on the progress of the implementation of this plan.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The affordability action plan supports all Albertans, especially those with low and middle incomes, through a suite of measures designed to provide both targeted and broad-based relief. Low- and middle-income households are eligible for an estimated \$900 in broad-based relief, with additional targeted supports of \$600 over six months for low-income families, seniors, and vulnerable Albertans. For Albertans with the lowest incomes we've also recently provided increased support to food banks and low-income transit programs, and our plan is working. According to economists inflation in Alberta is easing more than elsewhere as a result of our affordability measures, including the suspension of the fuel tax and our electricity rebates.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that the affordability action plan includes measures to support Alberta homes, farms, and small businesses, can the minister elaborate more on how these measures are going to have a positive impact on small businesses, which have been particularly hard hit by the inflation and related economic challenges?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Small businesses are receiving support through the affordability action plan. Many small or home-based businesses and farms are receiving up to \$500 in electricity rebates. Businesses and their staff continue to save 13.6 cents per litre, including GST, through our fuel tax relief, and their suppliers are also benefiting from this relief, which helps literally drive costs down. Many small and home-based businesses and farms are also benefiting from natural gas price protection. Small-business owners and entrepreneurs are also eligible personally for up to \$900 in broad-based supports for their household and up to \$600 or more over six months in affordability payments if they qualify.

The Speaker: The hon. the member.

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that the action plan also includes initiatives aimed at improving access to affordable housing and supporting vulnerable populations, including Indigenous communities, can the minister provide an update on the progress of these initiatives, including any plan or ongoing collaboration with local governments and community organizations?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Today is a good day for Albertans as we just announced 600 new units of affordable housing here in Alberta. That was a \$54 million investment. It's great news for Albertans. We've also recently announced \$14 million in regard to Indigenous housing and partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations to improve access for Indigenous Albertans to affordable housing. We are investing in housing. We have built housing, we are building housing, and we will continue to build housing going into the future. That's demonstrated by a billion-dollar investment in affordable housing over the next three years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

South Edmonton Hospital Construction Project

Member Loyola: The most recent budget tabled by the UCP did the same as every single budget by this government has done: it failed communities desperately in need of a hospital. The south Edmonton hospital is critical to the health and well-being of families in my community. Unfortunately, when asked about the project, all we heard from this Minister of Infrastructure is excuse after excuse after excuse. To the minister: why does this government refuse to support families in south Edmonton and build a hospital? What's the excuse this time, Minister?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Infrastructure and the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question. We are committed to building a hospital in south Edmonton. We've got \$630 million in the budget to do just that. We're going back and doing all the work that the NDP failed to do. We're doing the planning. We're doing the functional plan. We're delivering what they failed to do in their years in office. We're committed to Edmonton. We're committed to building this hospital.

Member Loyola: Given that yesterday the minister started blaming a pipeline that he apparently had no idea existed four years into this government's mandate and given that there are pipelines criss-crossing the entire province and we build over them all the time and given that this pipeline has been there for decades, for as long as this hospital has been planned, how is it that this minister is only just now discovering this? Did he only look at the plans for the first time yesterday?

Mr. Neudorf: It's hilarious coming from the NDP, that they're the ones who picked a site to build a hospital on top of a pipeline. Anybody who knows anything about pipelines, which obviously the NDP don't, knows you can't build on top of that. You're required to do a right of way. You're required to do a negotiation, work that they failed to do. We are now doing that work. We're committed to building a hospital for Edmonton, and we're doing it right by going through all the steps, doing the plan, and delivering for Edmonton and all of Alberta.

Member Loyola: Given that the Minister of Infrastructure was unable to answer when construction would begin before the budget and given that weeks later he still is unable to provide a straight answer on what day construction will begin, dismissing concerns and making more excuses, and given that the site of the south Edmonton hospital is a completely bare, snow-covered field, with absolutely no visible movement on actual construction, will the minister admit to families in south Edmonton what they can see with their own eyes, that this government has failed to build the south Edmonton hospital?

Mr. Neudorf: Construction will begin as soon we're done fixing all the messes left behind by the NDP. Again, failure to plan, failure to do any design, failure to do any work . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. The hon. member had his opportunity to ask the question. The hon. minister has an opportunity to answer it.

The Minister of . . . [interjections] Order. [interjections] No, no, no. It's not funny. I'm so tired of some members on this side of the House immediately after my direction responding in such a manner. You might not like me, but don't be disrespectful of the chair.

Mr. Neudorf: Mr. Speaker, again, we will do the work that the NDP failed to do. We will build a plan, we will get a design, and we are committed to building this hospital for all the people of Edmonton and Alberta.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: I will provide additional comments as well because I understand that there are members who are upset when some members of the government side heckle. I have been keeping a tally today of the total amount of heckles from both sides, and I can assure you it is not on the side of the government that is providing the heckling.

An Hon. Member: What? No.

The Speaker: I cannot even begin to understand why you would provide your encouragement immediately following a reprimand of the members opposite.

We are staring down the pipe of a very long pre-election month. I hope that as members go home to their families, they will consider that later this week.

Arts and Culture Funding

Ms Goehring: Since taking office, this government has failed Alberta artists and cultural sectors. From day one there have been cuts, artists have been ignored and belittled, with the Premier's office even finding it laughable to consider having an artist's voice on a committee discussing the economic future of this province. It's clear that this attitude remains as the only metric that this minister has for artists in this budget is talking about connecting arts and philanthropy. Will the minister apologize for the UCP legacy of cuts and insults to the creative sector?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Forestry, Parks and Tourism.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much for the question. I appreciate that. Budget 2023 invests in the arts, culture, and heritage, in nonprofit and sport sectors to ensure continued economic growth. Budget '23 provides \$307 million to the Ministry of Culture. There is \$136.3 million in capital grants and \$170.8 million in general operating. This government continues to invest in the arts – we're proud of our arts programs here in Alberta – and we will continue to do so.

Ms Goehring: Given that when asked about supporting Alberta's cultural sectors, the minister and the UCP talk a big game but given a choice to step up and really support arts and culture in downtown Calgary, who were hoping this province would support their efforts to revitalize the downtown of our largest city – zero dollars, Mr. Speaker – and given that artists and workers in the sector can't live on the boastful words of the minister, especially when he continues to leave them out to dry, can the minister explain why he failed to stand up for artists in Calgary?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Forestry, Parks and Tourism.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for the question. We had an overall increase in spending of \$38.6 million; that's a 14 per cent increase from Budget 2022. We continue to invest in the arts. We are concerned about Calgary and our investments there. We have invested in downtown Calgary, and we will continue to. The members opposite, I think, need to remember the failures that they've had when it comes to what they've done to support the arts in Alberta.

Thank you.

Ms Goehring: Given that despite the boasts of the UCP, artists are still struggling and feeling unsupported by this government, who time and time again delivered cuts, insults, and neglect even through the most difficult periods of the pandemic, and given that an Alberta NDP government will recognize, celebrate, and support the creative industries in our province, can the minister explain why this government refuses to do so?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Finance and the President of Treasury Board has risen.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Look, the last few years have been hard on all small businesses, including those in the arts. That's why this government provided more business support and

support for the arts than virtually any other province during that time. But let me explain what it takes to continue to provide support. Our government has positioned this economy for competitiveness, investment attraction, job creation, and opportunity. Ninety-two thousand new jobs in 2022, 25 per cent of all the jobs in Canada: that's progress.

2:40

Rural Health Care

Mr. Long: Mr. Speaker, rural Albertans are facing issues in health care. Shortages of doctors and nurses have left communities unable to provide the health services that our cities generally take for granted. Expecting mothers in rural communities can face hours of travel to get to the obstetrical care they need. I have young children, and I understand the stress and anxiety families experience when their child or elderly relatives get seriously ill or injured and the local hospital is either closed or they have to wait hours upon hours just to consult a physician. Can the Minister of Health tell the Assembly how the government will address the shortage of . . .

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health has the call.

Mr. Copping: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. We know there are challenges, particularly in rural Alberta, in regard to health care workers. This shortage is not only here in Alberta, but it's across the entire country. Even though we have more doctors, more nurses, more health care professionals than we've ever had before in this province, we still don't have enough and they're not all in the right places. That is one of the reasons why we formed MAPS – it's modernizing Alberta's primary care system – with a particular focus on: how do we provide services in rural Alberta? This, combined with our health worker action plan, will provide the services that . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Mr. Long: Mr. Speaker, given that many rural physicians, primarily due to burnout, are now only working part-time hours, leaving other physicians to work 70 to 80 hours per week to serve their communities, and given that most of the full-time rural physicians are not taking new patients into care and given that these circumstances are causing wait times hours long in the emergency rooms at the hospitals and outside walk-in clinics before they are even opening their doors, to the minister: what initiatives is the government taking to ensure our rural communities have the staff needed to meet the demand for patient care and enough physicians so people can get in to see . . .

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, our government has already taken a number of steps in this regard. I was very pleased that we reached an agreement with the Alberta Medical Association with a focus on general practitioners, particularly family practitioners, and with a particular focus in rural areas. We are continuing to invest \$120 million for rural, remote, and building recruitment and attraction of physicians outside of the major cities, and that's part of Budget 2023. Also, we're expanding our medical schools with a particular focus on rural areas, and I'll talk about that in a moment.

Mr. Long: Mr. Speaker, given that rural Alberta is experiencing a growing need for quality health care, especially specialized care, and given that for many rural residents a trip to the city to get specialized care will further exacerbate the condition and stress they

are already dealing with and given that this situation causes additional strain on the doctors and nurses in city hospitals, who are not necessarily built to meet the needs of the neighbouring communities, can the minister tell the House what this government is doing to shorten wait times for critical procedures and to support patients in rural Alberta so they don't have to continue to leave our province or the country for medical care?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Once again, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for his interest and his passion in representing his constituents on this item. You know, having health care workers is the first step, and part of the Alberta health care strategy is to be able to do that, and we're starting to have success in that. Also, I want to talk a little bit about the Alberta surgical initiative program. Part of that program is investing \$237 million over three years in the capital initiative, which includes \$120 million in new funding to support projects in 14 communities across the province. This means that we can provide the surgeries closer to people at home so people have to travel less.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that concludes the time allotted for Oral Question Period. In 30 seconds or less we will continue to the remainder of the daily Routine.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board has an introduction.

Bill 10 Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2023

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 10, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2023. This being a money bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move first reading of Bill 10, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2023.

[Motion carried; Bill 10 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: Are there tablings? The hon. the Member for Edmonton-Decore, followed by Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Speaker. I have tablings, two of them, documents I referenced in estimates yesterday, the first one being the case for an Alberta highway trust company. That is a document produced by the Alberta Roadbuilders & Heavy Construction Association to talk about creating a permanent procurement agency, that would require a realignment of roles within the ministry.

Secondly, a map from the 511 public bus service website, produced by the transportation ministry, showing bus routes in Alberta in 2018, five years out of date, many of which don't operate anymore.

The Speaker: My apologies and for the benefit of *Hansard*, I called Edmonton-Decore, but I meant Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Getson: Just one tabling here with the requisite copies. It's for post-SARS-CoV infection, so the SARS virus and how it has a systematic review and meta-analysis.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk: on behalf of hon. Mr. Toews, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, pursuant to the Insurance Act the Automobile Insurance Rate Board annual report for the year ended December 31, 2022.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we are at points of order, and I'm pleased to announce to the House that the point of order has been withdrawn.

Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Government Motions

Evening Sitzings

22. Mr. Schow moved:

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 4(1), commencing on March 20, 2023, and for the duration of the 2023 spring sitting of the Fourth Session of the 30th Legislature, the Assembly shall meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings for consideration of government business unless the Government House Leader notifies the Assembly that there shall be no evening sitting that day by providing notice under Notices of Motions in the daily Routine or at any time prior to 6 p.m.

The Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) Government Motion 22 is not debatable.

[Government Motion 22 carried]

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

Bill 8

Alberta Firearms Act

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader on behalf of the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise today on behalf of the Minister of Justice to move second reading of Bill 8, the Alberta Firearms Act.

If passed, this act would clarify the Alberta government's role in regulating firearms. We're doing this in a way that puts Albertans first. We're looking at regulatory powers to provide additional tools to stand up for Alberta and protect provincial jurisdiction when it comes to firearms.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of confusion from Albertans about how firearms are regulated in the province and indeed in the country. This is why Alberta needs its own firearms legislation. It needs to empower Alberta to advocate more strongly for the rights of law-abiding firearms owners. The act would define the Alberta Chief Firearms Officer's role in administering the federal Firearms Act. It would also make the Chief Firearms Officer responsible for engaging with and advocating on behalf of law-abiding firearms owners in the province.

[Mr. Reid in the chair]

I'm happy to say that Alberta's Chief Firearms Officer already has strong relationships with Alberta's lawful firearms community and has been a tireless advocate on their behalf. Defining this part of the role in the act will strengthen this relationship building even

further, and it will give the Chief Firearms Officer an official mandate to advocate to the federal government.

2:50

With the chief firearms office still in relative infancy, this role can be further defined in regulations if needed. To increase the Alberta chief firearms office's visibility and accountability to the public, the act includes a requirement for the office to produce an annual report. This legislation is focused on defining and strengthening the role of the Alberta chief firearms office. It contains tools that would enable Alberta to leverage its jurisdiction over firearms, to enhance public safety, and preserve public confidence in firearms control. Specifically, Alberta could create regulations regarding who can be involved in the seizure and confiscation of firearms.

Also, through regulations, Mr. Speaker, Alberta could establish expectations that firearms owners are fairly compensated for seized firearms or that seized firearms undergo forensic and ballistic testing, when deemed necessary, to ensure evidence is not destroyed if it appears to have been used in a crime. Regulations could also be developed, if needed, to prevent municipalities and municipal police forces from entering into funding agreements with the federal government. I would like to emphasize that none of these measures are fully developed in the act. What I'm pointing out is that a provincial firearms act gives us the flexibility to quickly develop responses to federal government intrusion.

This legislation would allow Alberta to clarify and protect our role in regulating firearms and better advocating for lawful firearms owners. It would reduce confusion and increase accountability for the Chief Firearms Officer's role while providing the flexibility to further define the role if needed, and it would create tools that enable Alberta to protect its areas of jurisdiction over firearms.

Mr. Speaker, the activities of our law-abiding firearms communities are essential to the economic vibrancy and cultural heritage of the province. Firearms owners are hunters or those who lead a traditional way of life. They are sport shooters and collectors of items of Alberta and Canadian cultural significance. They are cowboy mounted shooters. They are ranchers. They are farmers. And there are more than 680 firearms-related businesses in Alberta and more than 127 approved shooting ranges. These individuals and businesses deserve clarity, accountability, and advocacy to protect their property rights, and this government is doing that. That is why this legislation is so important, and that is what this legislation aims to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Other members wishing to speak to second reading? I see the hon. Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege to rise yet again to help support lawful firearms owners not only in Alberta but in Canada. Bill 8 is the Alberta Firearms Act. I really appreciate the minister bringing this forward.

I'm just going to give the folks at home here a little bit of a preamble just to understand what's going on here. Here's literally the act that's going to define what we can do in the province with our chief firearms office and also give us the framework to allow for realistic regulations to take place to help protect firearms owners' rights.

Whereas the Government of Alberta is committed to advancing public safety while respecting the property and civil rights of law-abiding Albertans;

Whereas the Government of Alberta recognizes the need for an evidence-based firearms program in Alberta that respects the values of Alberta's lawful firearms owners;

Whereas the federal and provincial governments share jurisdiction over the regulation of firearms in Canada.

Let's sort that one out. It's similar to everything else in our Constitution. It's kind of like calling that pop fly in centre field when it goes up. We actually share the responsibility, so we are saying that again:

Whereas the federal and provincial governments share jurisdiction over the regulation of firearms in Canada;

Whereas federal jurisdiction over firearms is governed by the Firearms Act (Canada) and the Criminal Code (Canada), and the Government of Canada operates the Canadian Firearms Program to oversee its regulatory framework relating to firearms;

Whereas a province may opt in to administering the Canadian Firearms Program by designating a chief firearms officer;

Whereas the Firearms Act (Canada) gives a province that designates a chief firearms officer the flexibility to administer the Canadian Firearms Program in accordance with the specific needs and circumstances of [that] province.

So that's pretty key, Mr. Speaker, right there. Once we've established the CFO, the CFO then can manage the act.

Whereas in 2021, the Government of Alberta, following the recommendations of the Fair Deal Panel, designated a chief firearms officer for Alberta to administer the Canadian Firearms Program in Alberta in a manner that respects the values and priorities of Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, this is a key element here: understanding how Albertans use those firearms, respecting our culture, our rights, and our freedoms out here in the west, and how we deal with that out here.

Therefore His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, enacts as follows.

So that's where we get into the act itself.

Now, how did we get here? I'm not going to go through since 1960 and talk about all the other things that took place, but I do want to do a little bit of the wayback machine here simply in our time in this House.

Firearms have been – I've said it in here a number of times before – the canary in the coal mine when it comes to rights and freedoms and overreach by the federal government. When we first got here, we went and did the Fair Deal Panel. We engaged Albertans right across the province in all different areas, both rural and urban and everything in between. It was time and time again that folks said: the firearms rules aren't making sense; we've got a bunch of things that simply don't make sense. I had colleagues that didn't understand why some of us were pushing back on this until we took them to a firearms shop, a gun shop, and explained to them and had the owners of that firearms shop sit down with a bunch of different firearms and explain what was allowed, what wasn't allowed, and the rationale for it. It didn't make sense.

At that moment in time those individuals went out and got their PAL licence. They became lawfully administered firearms owners. There was an order in council that took place – well, actually, prior to that, there was this order in council that fired up after the Fair Deal Panel which overnight, all of a sudden, banned 1,500 firearms, including some coffee out there as well and airsoft rifles, which basically shoot pellets. Paintball guns: I think everyone has gone and done these things with these air markers or paint markers at some events. Those things all started becoming illegal. We really started paying attention to that.

With that, then we fired up a firearms task force. I was very honoured and privileged to be part of that as well. We engaged Albertans. I think we had over 70,000 engagements, people that were on calls. Seventy per cent of the participants there were firearms owners, 30 per cent not, and of those 30 per cent, more

than 90 per cent wanted us to do something. They understood those values and beliefs.

Anecdotally, with this last pass on Bill C-21 when it came out, Bill C-21 in its title – it's a federally regulated item. The order in council was kind of the shot across the bow. It showed that, quite frankly, whoever was administering this was more concerned about getting votes in the greater Toronto area, wherever there were high crime locations, and that folks didn't understand the difference between the firearms and how they're used, not to mention our actually very fulsome process to be given the honour and the privilege simply to own firearms. Like, anyone in here who has a PAL licence in their pocket: you're getting screened by the RCMP every single day. That's a fact. When you go out and buy these, you have to have all of these licences, administration in place to start off with.

Bill C-21 – and here's the interesting part of this. Allegedly – I shouldn't say "allegedly." But, tongue-in-cheek, here's what their bill says. "A comprehensive strategy to address gun violence and strengthen gun laws in Canada: Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)."

So the certain consequential firearms – and this is directly from their thing: a national freeze on handguns. That was it. All of a sudden they were verboten. New red and yellow flag laws: well, that's always interesting. Combating firearms smuggling and addressing trafficking, which none of their legislation really does, because again, if they were taking care of that, already they would have empowered Canadian borders and customs and flowed money over there. Prohibiting mid-velocity replica air guns. Mid-velocity air guns: these are the things that your kid would learn how to shoot. My nine-year-old daughter at the time in the backyard: all of a sudden she can't have her pellet gun, the things that you use for safety and training. So, yeah, coming into force.

Now here's the bait and switch that they did. This was an evergreening thing. They kept throwing on more and more firearms that no one could make sense of. And here was the best blunder of all recently. They go out and they put in an amendment just before it goes to the Senate and essentially said in such, Mr. Speaker – and I know you're writing down notes here, so you can take this home to your constituents as well – that they essentially banned every centrefire rifle out there.

3:00

The way that they did that – for folks that don't understand at home, it wasn't about the calibre at this point. It was literally anything that had a box magazine that was detachable. Any box magazine that was ever made that was detachable that could fit into the magazine well of a firearm that had anything more than five rounds: all of a sudden the entire rifle became illegal. Then they made an exception, because a lot of our Indigenous, First Nations people have rifles that have an attached magazine. Then they said, "Well, those are exempt except for," and then they specifically listed the most common rifles out there that people use for sustenance hunting. They tried to ban everything, getting past the House, went back to the Senate, and that's when everyone started really paying attention to this.

Now, interestingly enough, I met a Member of Parliament that was from the Bloc Québécois on a conference. We're casually talking about this, and I asked him: "Why in the heck are you guys propping up this Liberal government? Like, why are you guys doing this?" He said, "Well, it's only assault rifles." I asked him what that was. Well, he couldn't tell me what it was because, again, he keeps going back to a soldier's rifle, and that's not the case, so all of a sudden they have this construct.

I said, "You're a rural Member of Parliament that represents the Bloc Québécois." He goes: "Well, actually, I'm from Montreal. I ran an election out there and then, you know, a paratroop candidate." I said, "Well, let me help you out, partner," and I opened up my phone, showed him a picture of three different rifles. I said: "Tell me which one that you're not allowing my daughter to go shoot tin cans with in the backyard. Tell me which one I'm not allowed to go shoot predators that are coming onto my property that are coming after my livestock. Tell me which one I can't go out anymore and hunt my moose or my deer with in the fall." Well, obviously, he couldn't tell me.

I gave him some really salient advice, I think. I said: "Partner, you're representing rural Quebec. I know tons of folks from rural Quebec. We get along with Quebecers like peanut butter and jelly, believe it or not. Knock all the political conjecture away. We talk about rural things, and we talk about that environment. We get along like peanut butter and jelly. These folks are going to string you up by your toenails because you're going to be taking out of their gun cabinets things that they use for recreation, everyday usage, going out and doing their hunting, their way of life. So you'd better think about this, why you're propping up this guy to buy some votes in Montreal." It was sobering to him. He thanked me for that.

These were the folks that were going out and trying to support something because – well, bait and switch – they were fed a pile of BS that wasn't making sense at all, and that's where they went on the Firearms Act. With us putting this Bill 8 in place, it's kind of like that pop fly, Mr. Speaker. We're saying: hey, this is ours. It's written into the act already. We have the ability to do this. We're going to put our CFO in place, which we did, and then allow that CFO that framework. That CFO can do the reporting back to us on an annual basis. They can tell us what's happening in that area. They can help the safety, and moreover they can also advocate for proper firearms use.

When we talk about culture out in Alberta here, we're disproportionate in a number of things. We're disproportionate in how much we earn. We're disproportionate in how much we pay and we send down east. We're disproportionate in a number of things. Lo and behold, we are also disproportionate in the number of firearms that we use, that Albertans own from all walks of life, whether it's handguns or air rifles or shotguns or anything else.

We've been blessed with an amazing province where we can bounce back and forth, whether it's in Calgary, as an example, and your shooting community down there – and the firearms manufacturing industry: second to none. We have some amazing rifles here, some amazing builds that take place. People can literally go from Calgary and, within a few minutes outside their back door, be out in some beautiful, pristine country. They can go to a skeet range or go to a gun range, or they can go out in the fall and stumble around like most of us out there for an excuse to get out in the country, and maybe we don't even let off a round to shoot that duck to bring home, that, you know, we'll have. This is a way of life. We've been brought up with that.

Albertans own the second-highest number of firearms classified as restricted or prohibited by the federal government. Again, these things keep changing all the time. A lot of lawful firearms owners bought these, and they've been changed. The federal firearms ban targets an estimated 30,000 firearms for confiscation in Alberta. Those are the ones they know about, and therein lies the other challenge. If their own act itself is talking about public safety, instilling this act and these orders in council have quite the contrary effect. The national statistics show that these violent acts and gun crimes and everything else in the big cities are going up. They

haven't gone down. Nothing has changed. In fact, if you're looking at stats, we'd be making it worse.

Over 341,988 who have possession and acquisition licences, holders in Alberta – there are a couple of million of us across this country. Again, Alberta hitting way above its weight class: 127 approved shooting ranges, more than 680 firearms-related businesses.

I had testimony in here a number of times and did some videos as well. People that are diversified, diversified economies, taking their different skill sets – Alberta Tactical is one of them. I remember the gentleman down there, speaking to him a couple of years ago. Very innovative designs, beautiful, beautiful stuff that they produce, high accuracy, beautiful rifles. I mean, if you're walking into the store there and you're leaving, you know, anything less than \$3,000 or \$4,000 on the table, you probably haven't picked up anything. It's beautiful, beautiful stuff. People work very hard to be able to take their hard-earned money and buy something that they can recreate with and enjoy.

They came up with some new designs to get around some of the silly, bonkers gun rules because people wanted to use these. This guy, his background: he was actually in law enforcement, and then he got into fabricating and machining, and he had issues with welding fumes, and he ended up having a gun shop and – I don't know – selling these things all over the world but all over the province, for sure, and employed a bunch of people.

I've got EM Precision Rifles. They're just right outside of Leduc and Nisku, and they also have another shop over in Spruce Grove, over there. Again, they're having to change what they're doing again. Some folks that bought their firearms: now they're having to resurface and reface and retool them to make them fit within these parameters. They're not just going after, again, anymore the black firearms. They're not going against the black rifles. They've taken everything with these last, sweeping changes.

I made a promise to some folks out in Cardiff when that incident took place, and I've spoken here about it before. When that incident took place down in Nova Scotia, when that individual went out and caused harm, I made a promise to the folks – and we were planting an oak tree in memory of her sister that passed away during that – that our government would actually do something to help promote safety, that we would do something to get to the root cause. She didn't want a ban on firearms; she wanted governments to actually do something for public safety. That's what we're trying to do here, address the real issues, not the window dressing for elections, not this BS of pulling on heartstrings on folks that don't understand.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. member, I would just maybe caution you a little bit about parliamentary language in the House. I know we like acronyms and abbreviations in government, but maybe just choose your words a little more cautiously.

Mr. Getson: Oh, I apologize, Mr. Speaker. First day back on the job here getting up and talking again. I apologize. It was the one that started with "b"? Okay. Just to make sure I don't do it again.

Obviously, you can tell that I've been out in the constituency, out with the farmers again, too, and the truckers and all the fellows there. Actually, that's pretty toned down compared to some of the language we had. They were pretty concerned about what was taking place with the federal government and how this is going to work.

Over at the gun show in Spruce Grove or, actually, Stony Plain that took place this weekend – and I'm, I think, the only elected official that shows up there at these things. God bless the folks that go to gun shows: you've got everything from arts and crafts, you've got the memorabilia that takes place, and you've got the little

granny there. There was one lady: she was showing me her scrollwork – and it was on a scroll saw – you know, whether it's a deer and using some antler horns, and then she had some flowers and other things. I'd asked her about some of the pieces at her booth, and she said: "Well, my husband did those. He's one of the scroll sawmen that worked on these." I said, "Well, where's he today?" She goes, "Well, he passed a couple of years ago, but I still have his artwork, and I still have his firearms."

That's part of the legacy that folks don't remember here again as well, and I spoke to that. You know, there's an old deer rifle that my grandpa used way back when. According to these new laws my grandfather's rifle will now have to be destroyed. It's no longer allowed. Some of the characters that I've met over the years, too – I have a few pistols that are the same thing. They've got a family legacy and a history.

It was a gentleman by the name of Wayne Huddleston: he passed. Some of the most fun times that we had together were going out in the backyard and sighting in our rifles and getting ready to go for that deer season. So his BAR rifle that he had, that .306: no longer. Folks making these decisions for simple political rhetoric somewhere else that are going under the auspices, rather than that b-word, of actually changing something: they're not. They're not doing a lick. I would break my promise to that lady about her sister if I didn't stand up here and support that.

3:10

Now, we had a couple of motions as well, and I'm hoping that members opposite support us on this today. I really do. I honestly, genuinely do. We had a couple of motions. It was prior to Bill C-21, and everyone stood up here and regaled with stories. I remember the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview talking about his own experiences in going out and shooting as well, and everyone supported it. We were all unanimous. Once that bill came out from the feds, we had a second motion on it. The opposition members all voted against it. I'm hoping that we can drop it. Again to the Speaker's comments earlier today, we're going into an election cycle, and we all know that. We can drop the gloves and a bunch of things.

But I honestly, genuinely hope that you stand up for the constituents in your communities, the white-collar folks as well. Disproportionately, it's a number of doctors and lawyers that own those pistols. Disproportionately. Anyone that really wants to stand up for rural and talk about rural in here: stand up for the rural folks that have their firearms as well, those legacies, things that they remember from their families, these traditions.

It's a passing of the torch, as it were, that we go do that, that we continue to have and support our Chief Firearms Officer, who has done one heck of a job. When I'm the politician at the booth, the thing that comes up – and if Teri is not there herself, everybody comes up and says: "What a great job that CFO is doing. What a great job to see these folks out here talking about the rules and regulations and applying it and standing up for us. What a great thing to have such a vocal advocate for firearms rights and also education on it."

It was also interesting to see the kids, like, when you're at these firearms shows and you have stuff there, which little guys would come up. I had some inert firearms sitting at the table just for conversation pieces. It was really cute. There were, you know, the cousins coming up, and one cousin was from the city, and the other one is from the country. The city cousin wants to come up and immediately grab it. And the first thing that, you know, the two-year-old, by the height of the two fellows there, would show – his older cousin from the country goes: "Uh-uh-uh, don't touch it. You don't know if it's safe." Number one. Number two, he asked, "Can

we look at this?" I said, "Yeah." And he goes and reaches out to his other cousin and goes: "Never touch the trigger. Always make sure it's safe. Always prove it's safe. And never put the muzzle anywhere that wouldn't be safe." This little fellow is all of about 11 years old.

Those are the things that take place when you have the lower calibre ones, the air rifles and those types of things. That's ingrained in the kids when they're bringing it up. It's kind of like Cinderella and that spinning wheel. If you take these away – that's the other part – then you're going to take away tons of history: you know, the grandpa's story of spending time with the grandson or the granddaughter because Dad is busy working or Mom is busy working, but the grandpa can go and do that, and they can spend time together. Some of the best memories of folks coming up: no different than that lady.

It was all day long like that, folks coming up and thanking us. They were asking what was in Bill 8. At that time I couldn't tell them, but I kind of said: here's conceptually what we're looking at. It was just accolades. I was at a church event last night. Some little old lady comes up – God bless her, just a little spark plug – and she says, "Are you that guy that was at that gun show?" "Yeah." She goes: "Well, my nephew was over there. He said to come and talk to you. I can't believe I'm running into you here." They're good folks. They're from Edmonton. I met them in Edmonton. I didn't meet them out in my backyard.

But these are the things that'll be taken away from us, Mr. Speaker, and why this bill is so important. I hope that what I can convey is that there are opportunities and chances for us to work together regardless of political backgrounds and everything else. I sure wish we can do the right thing for all of us.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall has 15 minutes to speak to second reading.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to Bill 8. I also heard that the member opposite urged us to stand up for our constituents and issues facing them. Certainly, I will try to do that as well as I speak to Bill 8. If I talk to my constituents – I do meet them on a regular basis; I do go out door-knocking; I do go to many events; I'm there especially on weekends – what I do hear from them on a fairly regular basis: they are concerned about the crisis in health care. They're concerned about longer wait times in emergency rooms. They're concerned about rising, skyrocketing grocery prices, which are rising well above the inflation rate of 8 per cent. They're concerned about skyrocketing insurance costs. They're concerned about skyrocketing utility costs. They're concerned about new schools in northeast Calgary. They're concerned about guns and gang violence in their communities. They're concerned about drugs and overdose deaths in their community.

Instead of focusing on those priorities of my constituents, which are also shared by many Albertans across this province, this government and this Premier continue to pick fights with the federal government and are hell bent on pursuing costly and incompetent strategies such as dismantling the RCMP and replacing it with an Alberta police force, such as pulling Alberta out of the Canada pension plan.

Bill 8 does nothing to address the priorities of my constituents. It does nothing to address the challenges that Albertans are facing. It does nothing to address the challenges with gang-based violence, military-style assault weapons, gun violence in this province, in particular in Calgary and northeast Calgary. Last year alone there were 100-plus shootings in Calgary; 40 per cent of them were in the

northeast quadrant of the city and involved illegal guns. People do want this government to focus on public safety, to address the rising gun violence. Instead, they're constantly being consumed in never-ending political games.

The government claims that this bill will establish the most comprehensive provincial firearm framework in the country, but we believe it may overstep since the government doesn't have all the details, all the information of the federal plan. This bill is intending to presuppose the outcome of federal changes we are yet to see.

Part 1 of the bill expands the mandate of the Chief Firearms Officer but leaves all the substantial details relating to this office – their duties, their powers, their mandate – to regulation so they can decide behind closed doors. If they really want this office to have a clear mandate, then all those substantial provisions should be included in this legislation so that we can debate the merits of those powers, the mandate of that office. But, clearly, the government didn't do the homework.

The bill also talks about licensing but again doesn't give any details for us to be able to compare how this regime will be better than the one that was in place or is in place. All the substantial details are left to regulation.

This section also talks about an annual report, and interestingly that section will not be proclaimed till April of 2025. That annual report will be due once the section is proclaimed, meaning that there won't be any report at least until April of 2026. So the UCP cannot be taken seriously when they talk about reporting and transparency, and their legislation also shows that.

3:20

Part 1 does talk about the Chief Firearms Officer, but it doesn't talk about public safety at all. As I mentioned, there were 100-plus shootings in Calgary alone last year, and we don't see anything in this piece of legislation that will address the proliferation of guns in our communities and the gun violence that comes with it in our communities.

Part 2 of the bill is also concerning. It gives this government, the responsible minister broad and sweeping powers to seize firearms beyond what federal legislation or what their regulations are suggesting now. Essentially, government is giving itself power to seize whatever property they like, and if they stand against seizure and overreach of Albertans' property rights, Indigenous hunting rights, why would they need such broad, sweeping powers? Again, there is no substantial provision here for us as the opposition or Albertans to know what that regime will look like. It will be all decided through regulations which we are yet to see. Speaking of Albertans' priorities, I think I would want to know what the other side is telling Albertans about this provision, this new regime, and what they are hearing from them. In short, every aspect of this bill is left to regulations.

Still, the government must know something because they are expanding the office of the Chief Firearms Officer from 30 to 70. They must know something, but they are again hiding their plans from Albertans. Again, someone on the other side needs to explain to us, needs to explain to Albertans why we need such a huge expansion, yet they're unable to share their plans with us and why they see this as a priority as opposed to addressing the crisis in health care, as opposed to addressing the cost-of-living crisis, as opposed to addressing the challenges Albertans are facing under this UCP government.

Also, we didn't hear whether any municipalities or any Indigenous groups were consulted, including those who have direct service agreements with the RCMP. There are 47 of them, municipalities, and 22 First Nations. None of them were consulted. That's what we heard from officials. In the last 18 months no

municipality, no Indigenous groups were consulted. Then they are putting in provisions that will hamstring the municipalities from accessing any federal grants of funding for enforcement, including in this act. Still, they didn't consult any municipalities. That's disrespectful to those municipalities. That's disrespectful to those Indigenous communities.

One more thing is there; that is, a broad immunity clause that gives government, their employees, the minister, the firearms officer, anyone involved in seizure broad immunity. The question I must ask is this: if the UCP are so convinced that their bill is good and it has public backing, why do they have to protect themselves so thoroughly? Why? This clause goes against all the conventions and traditions of government accountability. This is government protecting itself from lawsuits that may follow this government's overreach and actions. They know that. This kind of clause is heavy handed and unjustified.

Again, there were a number of questions with respect to consultations, consultation with Indigenous communities, about any legal analysis, whether there was any legal analysis done. That was the question we asked officials as well. If government has done any legal analysis on that and they want to be transparent, they want to be trusted, they want to be taken seriously, they should share that analysis. If they have done any analysis on section 35 Indigenous rights, they should share that with Indigenous communities. They should share that with all Albertans.

For the reasons I outlined, the bill as it stands now: we cannot support this bill. It is less about firearms and public safety and more about the UCP fund raising off it for the coming election. There are no substantial provisions included in it so that we can analyze the merits of this bill. Every single detail is left to regulations. There are more than 68 provisions that give government reg-making authority. That's not good governance. That doesn't give Albertans any certainty. This is just governing by fiat, and you will do whatever you think is appropriate behind closed doors through regulations. There were no consultations, no legal analysis, no section 35 analysis, how it impacts Indigenous peoples' rights.

Again, this bill may help the UCP to fund raise, but it helps with nothing else. It's not focused on the priorities of my constituents and Albertans across this province who want this government to address the health care crisis, longer wait times, shortages of schools in their communities, drug and gang violence in our communities, and issues of cost of living. That is what we are hearing every single day from our constituents, from Albertans, across this province, and Albertans certainly deserve better than this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Others wishing to speak to second reading? I see the hon. Member for Highwood.

Mr. Sigurdson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it is my great pleasure to actually rise in support of Bill 8, the Alberta Firearms Act. I'd have to say that by engaging in the real property rights tour that went around the province and seeing the abolishment of adverse possession by the Minister of Justice and now this bill, he is definitely rising to be one of my favourite ministers when it comes to legislation being passed in recent months.

Now, this bill is something that should hopefully be of reassurance to all of Alberta's legal firearms owners, including a great many in my riding. I just want to speak to a couple of the comments by the previous member, Calgary-Bhullar-McCall. He talked about what's relatable, standing up for our constituents. He said that this is not a priority and that it does nothing to support the

priorities of the people within our ridings. Now, I would say that's not true at all. I think this really is about standing up for the rights of individuals within our ridings, and that's why it is so incredibly important.

3:30

I'm a proud Albertan who values the unique heritage and culture within Alberta, and I'm willing to speak first-hand of the importance and the tradition of responsible and legal firearm ownership within our province. I really believe, like many in my riding of Highwood and throughout the rest of Alberta, that this is a key component of one of our liberties, that we should be able to enjoy. I'm an avid hunter, and there is nothing, in my mind, that's more Canadian than getting out into the wilderness and being able to hunt and enjoy that. Now, for many I think this holds very true, including those within our Indigenous communities in Alberta. I know the previous Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall talked about that there was no consultation with Indigenous communities. Well, the recent moves from the federal government: not one Indigenous community that I've spoken to that were consulted on that as well either when they started going down this.

Moving on, there is a lot of support within my riding and for other folks, including several thousand members of the Alberta Federation of Shooting Sports. Ownership and responsible use of firearms also provides an opportunity for sport and recreation for many. I think it's important to point that out. Many of the firearms-based organizations also offer the opportunity for youth to learn and interact with firearms in a safe, educational, and engaging environment. I know that with my kids I've made a real focus to be able to take them and educate them on safe firearm use, and I think that's essential. I think a lot of the reasons people push for continued moves on firearms is a lack of knowledge and a fear around them, but this is not based on fact when it really comes to what's happening.

When you talk about, you know, the crime issue, the former member talked about wanting to be able to deal with the violence in their communities and the use of guns and gun-related violence. I think it's really important. This has been one of my positions, and the reason for the push-back against the federal government was that the guns being used in these illegal situations are not coming from legal firearm owners; these are coming across the border. This is misdirected. When you talk to our enforcement, law enforcement, border patrol, the guns are coming across the border, and that's where the focus should be. If we want to drive down gun violence and get guns out of the hands of criminals, we need to focus on exactly that.

Now, we have already extremely strict regulations related to obtaining a firearm, and the basis of the culture around this is responsible and safe use. Now, this is something that's always a core tenet of any form of firearms-based recreation. Just like other Canadians, Albertans are proud, law-abiding, and responsible firearm owners. I think there is a point at which we need to stand up for those responsible firearm owners. Right now there are 340,000 legal permit holders, and I do believe there were over 30,000 additional applying last year, that are qualified in Alberta. With that, they go through one of the most comprehensive mandatory firearms safety courses in order to be able to do that.

Additionally, as a part of pre-existing federal firearms legislation, Alberta firearm owners remain under strict stipulations regarding their criminal status. I know that when I went through my course for my PAL to be able to become a law-abiding firearms owner, there were extensive background checks. I actually am very proud, and I think most firearm owners are, and they support this.

Further yet, our province's strong culture and connection to firearms ownership is something reflected within our own economy. We have more than 127 approved ranges and 680 firearms-based businesses. Legal firearms ownership is clearly of an economic significance as much as it is of cultural significance to Albertans. Now, small-business owners and manufacturers in the firearms industry have identified Alberta as the place they want to come to set up and provide their services from, and that speaks to the new, renewed Alberta advantage that this government is creating, so I do believe this is an important bill to be able to put forward.

The previous member said that there are a lot of priorities. Yes, there are, but he makes it seem as though it's an either/or. We can work on the priorities. We have an excellent affordability package that has been put forward. The Minister of Health is working on an action plan to bring back strong health care and strengthen our health care here in the province. We have the ability to do more than one thing at a time, and I'm glad that this is going forward along with all the other excellent initiatives that this government is bringing forward.

However, you know, when you look at the last two years in relation to this bill and what the Trudeau government has done, it has put this industry under risk, and there are a lot of individuals that run these businesses that are very fearful of what's going on. This is really in relation to a lot of the fearmongering of the NDP-Liberal alliance. I know 2021 saw an order in council rush through that was punishing legal owners and users of handguns. This trend continued into last year, where we saw the real possibility that a large portion of the firearms used by Canadians to hunt would be banned. Now, thankfully, despite this attempt, as many things do with the Trudeau government, it quickly developed into an abysmal failure. That being said, the Trudeau government has made it known that they are going to continue to attempt to disarm and punish legal, law-abiding Canadian gun owners.

Now, this message is something that continues to be a cause of concern among those lawful firearms owners across Canada as well as many that reside here in Alberta. With more than a quarter of a million legal firearms owners in the province and with tens of thousands more licensed here every year, there's no doubt in my mind that Alberta is one of Ottawa's primary targets in its campaign of fearmongering and persecution around firearms. The previous member said that this government is picking a fight. We're not picking the fight. Ottawa picked the fight. We're trying to stand up for Albertans.

Now, misinformation, confusion, incompetence, and blatant ignorance of the Trudeau government surrounding firearms ownership has created a dangerous situation in which the average legal firearm owner finds themselves persecuted while illegal firearms continue to flood into the country and the criminals that use them are allowed to walk free. As I mentioned before, if you want to focus on crime and crime prevention or reducing gun-related violence, then Trudeau should be focused on putting that money towards protecting the borders and stopping the illegal flow of firearms across them. It would seem that the Trudeau government does not care that Alberta gun owners, like the rest of Canadian gun owners, are law abiding, responsible, and they're undeserving of this threat and punishment. Legal gun owners are not the issue in Canada, nor Alberta, and as such should be permitted to continue using and enjoying their firearms in the safe and responsible manner that they do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if passed, Bill 8 would ensure that protections are put in place, pushing back against Ottawa's irrational and misguided persecution of law-abiding gun owners. Under the Firearms Act this government would stand side by side with

Alberta's legal gun owners, and we will be able to say to them that you're not alone in this fight, that we'll be there to support you. The Alberta Firearms Act would achieve this by expanding the role of our province's Chief Firearms Officer from not only administering but advocating for and protecting gun owners within Alberta. Furthermore, Bill 8 would see Alberta's Chief Firearms Officer made accountable to this province's government through the requiring of a yearly report. In addition to improving the role and responsibilities of the CFO, Bill 8 would also enable this government to respond quickly to instances of overreach by the Trudeau government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just want to be clear in saying that I am in strong support of this bill. I look forward to speaking to it again as we continue to push this bill through the House and just want to once again thank the Minister of Justice for putting this forward and finally standing up and standing with legal firearms owners in Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3:40

The Acting Speaker: Others wishing to speak to second reading? The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great privilege today to rise and speak in support of Bill 8, the Alberta Firearms Act. The bill before us today is quite personal to me. When I was a child, myself along with my brother would often accompany our dad on hunting trips. Usually dad hunted for bird game, so we'd spend a fair amount of time in a duck line, dressed in bright-red jackets, oversized rubber boots, freezing as we would wait for the first ducks to land. The first group of ducks would land on the slough, and we would wait, hold our breath, careful not to make a sound lest we be discovered and scare off the birds. A few more ducks would trickle onto the slough, joining the group, and then a few more would land. My dad would then take aim, take his shot and then another, and then my brother would join in. I remember many times when I was watching my brother and I would get excited and anxious to take a shot, begging my dad: just let me fire once. But that wouldn't happen until I became a teenager, at which point I was able to demonstrate to my dad that I was responsible enough to fire my first shot.

In those many years before I shot a real gun, my dad taught me all about gun use and safety by showing me the ins and outs on a pellet gun. I shot the pellet gun at many targets, becoming more accurate and comfortable over time. I remember vividly the day my dad first led me to shoot my real firearms. After years of patience and learning he loaded up the gunny sacks, his guns, shells, our dog, and myself. We drove in his red Dodge truck to the slough at the southern quarter of my grandparents' farm. Before handing me the gun, my dad went over the dos and don'ts of gun use. We then walked into the blind, and I was on top of the world.

Every time my dad and I went hunting or target shooting, he always made me go through the drill for gun safety and proper use. My dad and I were never threats to society. We weren't criminals. We were simply two people who bonded over this great hobby. Though my father is gone, the memories we made together hunting I will always cherish.

Mr. Speaker, this hobby and this story aren't unique to only our family; we're just two of the many Albertans and Canadians, including many of my constituents in Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, who legally own a gun. Today there are over 340,000 licensed gun owners in Alberta with countless stories just like ours. On average 30,000 Albertans complete mandatory firearms safety course training each year as a first step to obtaining their firearms licence, and in 2021 that number jumped to 38,000.

Gun ownership in Alberta won't just go away despite what some might hope. In fact, Alberta is home to 147 approved shooting ranges and more than 680 firearms-related businesses. Gun ownership in Alberta isn't just about the ownership of the possessions; it's truly a way of life. That's why it's so disappointing to see that our federal Liberal government is so intent on scapegoating and punishing the many law-abiding, licensed gun owners in Canada and ultimately taking this hobby away from us.

Mr. Speaker, legal, licensed firearms owners, like my dad, are not the problem. Legal firearms owners contribute so much not just to Alberta's economy but to the cultural heritage of our province, and taking their guns isn't making Alberta any safer. It is time that we stand up for the interests of Alberta's legal gun owners and take a stand on behalf of all Albertans.

This is why I am so proud to be speaking on this bill today. If passed, Bill 8 will provide stronger support for the thousands of law-abiding firearms owners in Alberta. It would legally codify the role of the Alberta chief firearms office in administering the Firearms Act, and, importantly, this bill would expand the scope of the chief firearms office, including engaging with and advocating for Alberta firearms owners.

Additionally, this bill will require the chief firearms office to issue an annual report. Albertans deserve transparency and accountability, and this annual report will provide exactly that while also spreading awareness of the work of the chief firearms office. Of course, perhaps most significantly, Bill 8 will allow Alberta to defend our areas of jurisdiction over firearms.

When the federal government interferes in our province's jurisdiction, we need to have the flexibility to respond to the situation on behalf of Albertans. This bill gives the Alberta

government the tools we need to do that. This includes the ability to prevent municipalities and municipal police services from directly entering into funding agreements with the federal government. This includes possibly the ability to regulate who can participate in the seizure and confiscation of firearms. This includes the ability to codify Alberta's expectations of fair treatment of firearms owners surrounding the confiscation of firearms. It also includes the ability to regulate safety and integrity of any program that involves the handling of a large number of firearms.

Albertans elected us to stand up for their interests. By passing Bill 8, we will have the tools that we need to do exactly that. That's why this is so important, to pass this bill. I encourage all members of the Assembly to support the hundreds of thousands of law-abiding firearms owners in Alberta and to vote in favour of Bill 8, the Alberta Firearms Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Others wishing to speak to second reading of Bill 8?

I'm prepared to call the question. The Government House Leader to close debate.

Mr. Schow: Waive.

[Motion carried; Bill 8 read a second time]

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Assembly be adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday, March 13, 2023.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 3:47 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 30th Legislature - 4th Session (2022-2023)

Activity to Thursday, March 9, 2023

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

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

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

Bill 1* — Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act (Danielle Smith)

First Reading — 4-5 (*Nov. 29, 2022 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 22-31 (*Nov. 30, 2022 aft.*), 43-52 (*Nov. 30, 2022 eve.*), 65-73 (*Dec. 1, 2022 aft.*), 105-36 (*Dec. 5, 2022 eve.*), 172-77 (*Dec. 6, 2022 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 177-96 (*Dec. 6, 2022 eve.*), 231-38 (*Dec. 7, 2022 eve.*), 238-45 (*Dec. 7, 2022 eve., passed with amendments on division*)

Third Reading — 245-50 (*Dec. 7, 2022 eve.*), 251-57 (*Dec. 7, 2022 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — 452 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft.*) [Comes into force on December 15, 2022; SA 2022 cA-33.8]

Bill 2 — Inflation Relief Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 (\$) (Jones)

First Reading — 208 (*Dec. 7, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 270-75 (*Dec. 8, 2022 aft.*), 342-49 (*Dec. 13, 2022 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 361-72 (*Dec. 13, 2022 eve.*), 421-25 (*Dec. 14, 2022 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 430-31 (*Dec. 14, 2022 eve.*), 446-50 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — 452 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft.*) [Comes into force on December 15, 2022, with exceptions; SA 2022 c19]

Bill 3 — Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 (Shandro)

First Reading — 86 (*Dec. 5, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 148-55 (*Dec. 6, 2022 aft.*), 224-30 (*Dec. 7, 2022 aft.*), 276 (*Dec. 8, 2022 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 325-29 (*Dec. 12, 2022 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 375-78 (*Dec. 13, 2022 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — 452 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft.*) [Comes into force on December 15, 2022; SA 2022 c23]

Bill 4 — Alberta Health Care Insurance Amendment Act, 2022 (Copping)

First Reading — 86 (*Dec. 5, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 155-70 (*Dec. 6, 2022 aft.*), 220-24 (*Dec. 7, 2022 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 321-25 (*Dec. 12, 2022 eve.*), 372-75 (*Dec. 13, 2022 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 392 (*Dec. 14, 2022 aft.*), 426-29 (*Dec. 14, 2022 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — 452 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft.*) [Comes into force on December 15, 2022; SA 2022 c17]

Bill 5 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 (No. 2) (Shandro)

First Reading — 147 (*Dec. 6, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 211-20 (*Dec. 7, 2022 aft.*), 314-21 (*Dec. 12, 2022 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 392-99 (*Dec. 14, 2022 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 429-30 (*Dec. 14, 2022 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — 452 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft.*) [Comes into force on December 15, 2022, with exceptions; SA 2022 c20]

Bill 6 — Police Amendment Act, 2022 (Ellis)

First Reading — 270 (*Dec. 8, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 309-14 (*Dec. 12, 2022 eve.*), 349-54 (*Dec. 13, 2022 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 399-408 (*Dec. 14, 2022 aft.*), 409-21 (*Dec. 14, 2022 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 431 (*Dec. 14, 2022 eve.*), 450-51 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — 452 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft.*) [Comes into force on Proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2022 c22]

Bill 7 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 (No.2) (Schow)

First Reading — 329 (*Dec. 12, 2022 eve., passed*)

Second Reading — 378-79 (*Dec. 13, 2022 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 398-99 (*Dec. 14, 2022 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 425-26 (*Dec. 14, 2022 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — 452 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft.*) [Comes into force on December 15, 2022; SA 2022 c21]

Bill 8 — Alberta Firearms Act (Shandro)

First Reading — 503 (*Mar. 7, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 536-43 (*Mar. 9, 2023 aft., passed*)

Bill 9 — Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (Nally)

First Reading — 523 (*Mar. 8, 2023 aft., passed*)

Bill 10 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (\$) (Toews)

First Reading — 536 (*Mar. 9, 2023 aft., passed*)

Bill 201 — Public Health Care Delivery Standards Act (Notley)

First Reading — 64 (*Dec. 1, 2022 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 88-91 (*Dec. 5, 2022 aft.*), 354-60 (*Dec. 13, 2022 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 202 — Alberta Personal Income Tax (Charitable and Other Gifts) Amendment Act, 2022 (Williams)

First Reading — 64 (*Dec. 1, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 91-98 (*Dec. 5, 2022 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 289-97 (*Dec. 12, 2022 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 445-46 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — 452 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft.*) [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2022 c18]

Bill 203 — Traffic Safety (Excessive Speeding Penalties) Amendment Act, 2022 (Toor)

First Reading — 270 (*Dec. 8, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 298-303 (*Dec. 12, 2022 aft., adjourned*), 480-87 (*Mar. 6, 2023 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 204 — Missing Persons (Silver Alert) Amendment Act, 2022 (Mark Smith)

First Reading — 270 (*Dec. 8, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 487-92 (*Mar. 6, 2023 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 205 — Official Sport of Alberta Act (Lovely)

First Reading — 444 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft., passed*)

Bill 206 — Insurance (Private Passenger Vehicle Premium) Amendment Act, 2022 (Sabir)

First Reading — 444 (*Dec. 15, 2022 aft., passed*)

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