



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature  
First Session

# Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, April 18, 2024

Day 41

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

# Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

First Session

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van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UC), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Armstrong-Homeniuk, Hon. Jackie, ECA,  
Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UC)  
Batten, Diana M.B., Calgary-Acadia (NDP)  
Boitchenko, Andrew, Drayton Valley-Devon (UC)  
Boparai, Parmeet Singh, Calgary-Falconridge (NDP)  
Bouchard, Eric, Calgary-Lougheed (UC)  
Brar, Gurinder, Calgary-North East (NDP)  
Calahoo Stonehouse, Jodi, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)  
Ceci, Hon. Joe, ECA, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)  
Chapman, Amanda, Calgary-Beddington (NDP)  
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UC)  
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)  
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Dyck, Nolan B., Grande Prairie (UC)  
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Fir, Hon. Tanya, ECA, Calgary-Peigan (UC)  
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., ECA, Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)  
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UC),  
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Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)  
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Haji, Sharif, Edmonton-Decore (NDP)  
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Jones, Hon. Matt, ECA, Calgary-South East (UC)  
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Kayande, Samir, Calgary-Elbow (NDP),  
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Loewen, Hon. Todd, ECA, Central Peace-Notley (UC)  
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UC)  
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UC)  
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(UC)  
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Phillips, Hon. Shannon, ECA, Lethbridge-West (NDP)  
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Sinclair, Scott, Lesser Slave Lake (UC)  
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UC)  
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Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UC)  
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Wilson, Hon. Rick D., ECA, Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UC)  
Wright, Justin, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UC)  
Wright, Peggy K., Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)  
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC),  
Deputy Government Whip  
Yaseen, Hon. Muhammad, ECA, Calgary-North (UC)

## Party standings:

United Conservative: 28

New Democrat: 38

Independent: 1

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Scott Sinclair	Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous Policing
Tany Yao	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Northern Development

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Bouchard  
Brar  
Hunter  
Kasawski  
Kayande  
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**Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future**

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Ellingson  
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Ip  
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Rowswell  
Sabir  
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Dyck  
Irwin  
Petrovic  
Pitt  
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Stephan  
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**Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

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Boitchenko  
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**Standing Committee on Private Bills**

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Deol  
Dyck  
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**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

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Al-Guneid  
Armstrong-Homeniuk  
Dyck  
Eggen  
Hunter  
McDougall  
Sinclair  
Sweet

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 18, 2024

[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 interest and prejudice, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

### Mr. Mohammed “Moe” Amery September 20, 1954, to October 19, 2023

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I ask that you please remain standing. There has been some time since the passing of former member Moe Amery. However, accommodations were made for his family to be with us today, so we will now pay tribute to the hon. former member Moe Amery.

Today the desk of Mr. Amery’s son, the hon. Minister of Justice, the Member for Calgary-Cross, is draped with the provincial flag that was flown on the day of Mr. Amery’s funeral, a desk that both Mr. Amery and his son have shared in this Assembly.

Mr. Moe Amery was elected as the Progressive Conservative Member for Calgary-East on June 15, 1993, serving six terms totalling nearly 22 years. Mr. Amery was born in Lebanon in 1954 and moved to Canada in 1973. He attended the University of Alberta from 1975 to 1977 and later the University of Calgary for real estate and appraisal courses. Mr. Amery enjoyed a successful career in real estate for 15 years.

Described as a hard-working legislator, Mr. Amery introduced many private members’ bills, including Bill 204 in 2014, which passed unanimously to amend the Traffic Safety Act and increase distracted driving penalties. His commitment to his community and public service was exemplified by his involvement in many groups such as the Forest Lawn business and industrial association, the Calgary East Jaycees, and the Calgary East Rotary Club. Among the honours he received were the Alberta centennial 2005 medal, the Queen Elizabeth II diamond jubilee medal in 2012.

Mr. Amery passed away on October 19, 2023, at the age of 69. In a moment of silent prayer I ask that you remember Mr. Amery, each as you may have known him. Indeed, to Allah, to Him we all belong, and to Him we shall return. Rest eternal grant unto him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him. Amen.

Hon. members, it being the last sitting day of the week, we will now be led in *God Save the King* by Ms Beki Lees.

### 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:** Hon. members, we have a number of introductions. I hope that you’ll bear with me. They are all very important to the Speaker and, I know, to all members of the Assembly.

It is my absolute honour and pleasure to introduce to members of the Assembly dignitaries joining us in the Speaker’s gallery: Her Excellency the ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco. I enjoyed meeting with her and the delegation earlier this afternoon. She is joined by the honorary consul general. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Hon. members, as we all know, we owe a great debt of gratitude to the family members of those that serve this Assembly and, in particular, those who have served the Assembly in the past. A number of members of Mr. Moe Amery’s as well as the Minister of Justice’s family are joining us today in the Speaker’s gallery. I’ll ask you to rise as I call your name, and at the conclusion you’ll receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

In the Speaker’s gallery today is Mr. Amery’s wife, Mariam Amery. She is joined by Mr. Amery’s brothers Ali, Ahmed, and Amir Amery; her father, Fred Elsafadi; Mr. Amery’s sister, Fatima Assaf; and Shahira Amery joins us in spirit. Mr. Amery’s daughters Leyla and Laura Amery and son Malaak Amery join us in the Speaker’s gallery, and of course Mr. Amery’s other son joins us here on the floor of the Assembly, the Member for Calgary-Cross. Mr. Amery’s daughter Leena Amery is also joining us in spirit today. Mr. Amery’s grandchildren Moe Jr., Daniel, and Leyla Amery and Elissa, Noah, and Anna Sleeman are also in the gallery today with Mr. Amery’s nephews Ahmed and Adam. Also in the Speaker’s gallery today is Mr. Amery’s sister-in-law Noha Nashman, son-in-law Abe Sleeman, and daughter-in-law Heather Amery.

I’d also like to make a special mention of all of the countless other nieces, nephews, grandchildren, sons, daughters-in-law, and those who couldn’t be with us today who have joined online for the special tribute to Mr. Amery; as well, if I have missed any of Mr. Amery’s other family, perhaps Hassan Amery, Hiba Amery, Wedad Amery, and Nemaat.

Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.  
[Standing ovation]

## Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, it’s my great pleasure to introduce to the Assembly a young lady who many of you will perhaps not recognize anymore because she’s grown up since the last time that I introduced her, but today my daughter Paxton joins me in the Speaker’s gallery. I invite her to rise – look, she couldn’t be happier – and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The hon. the Minister of Public Safety and Deputy Premier has a school group to introduce.

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, I have two school groups to introduce. First of all, to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the grade 5 students from Webber Academy. They are certainly constituents of Calgary-West. I ask them to please rise and enjoy the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I’d like to also welcome the grade 6 students from Calgary Academy. They are also joining us here at the Legislature, also members of Calgary-West. I’m going to ask them to rise as well and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake has an introduction.

**Mr. Sinclair:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and introduce to you and through you some amazing new friends of mine from the Dene Tha' First Nation: Chief Wilfred HOOKA-NOOZA, councillor Kathleen Barry, and councillor Bernard Beaulieu. They drove eight hours today to meet with us, and I'm honoured to have them here today. Please rise and accept the warm welcome.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-East has an introduction.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very happy to rise today and introduce to you and through you my guests Stephen Achal, Jeff Achal, and Deepak Lodhia. Stephen is a scientist, and he invented a device called EPIC, which can geolocate and report very small wildfires in real time. I ask them to please stand up and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

**1:40**

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-South.

**Member Hoyle:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and introduce to you and through you to the House my loving and supportive family: my dear mother, Fay Phelps; my husband, Ryan Hoyle; and our two children, Kaiden Hoyle and Logan Hoyle. Please rise and receive the warm welcome.

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

**Mr. Getson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to introduce to you and through you today my guests from the Edmonton Tamil Cultural Association: the president, Mr. Ravindran Subramaniam, and his team. I would like to wish them happy Puthandu on the auspicious occasion that signifies the commencement of the Tamil new year. I ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome to this House. Thank you so much.

**Ms Hoffman:** Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to introduce to you and through you two important people today. One celebrated her birthday yesterday, the Leader of the Official Opposition. The other one is you, Mr. Speaker. Happy birthday.

**The Speaker:** I'm very confident in saying that the last half of that was out of order.

Are there other introductions today? The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

**Mr. Stephan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to rise today and introduce to you and through you my three guests from the Edmonton Tamil Cultural Association: Dr. Mallika Karthikeyan, chair; Ms Sasidevi Caster, chair, youth affairs; and Ms Sureka Selvaratnam, vice-president. I ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

### Ministerial Statements

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Justice and the keeper of the Great Seal of Alberta.

#### Former MLA Mohammed "Moe" Amery

**Mr. Amery:** Good afternoon, and thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise with great sorrow to remember a great man, the remarkable life of my father, Moe Amery, MLA for Calgary-East. As we mark the six-month anniversary of his passing here tonight, it is fitting to reflect on the incredible legacy and the indelible impact that he left on his community, on our family, and on this great province.

My father was a dedicated public servant, serving as MLA for the constituency of Calgary-East for more than two decades. His achievements in politics are numerous and significant, from advocating for infrastructure improvements to advancing social issues for vulnerable Albertans to leading policies like the one that you mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, and one on maintenance enforcement initiatives, one which even today has given countless children in this province the stability of ensuring that there is support when and where they need it.

His commitment to public service was unwavering, and he worked tirelessly to make Alberta a better place for his family and for all. But beyond all of his political contributions, he was a loving husband, a father, and a friend. His love for family and for friends was evident in everything that he did, and he cherished the time that he spent with loved ones so much. His kindness, his generosity and warmth touched the lives of everyone he met, leaving a lasting impression that will not be forgotten. Many of the people in this Chamber worked with him and still share with me some of the wonderful stories that they experienced. I am forever grateful to all of you for some of those stories.

My father had a deep love for Alberta, its people, and its values. He was a proud Albertan who immigrated from the small country of Lebanon in the 1970s and shared the struggles of so many immigrant families who come to this great country. Despite these challenges, Mr. Speaker, he believed in this province's potential and was dedicated to its prosperity. He was fiercely proud of his Arab roots and his Muslim faith, and he worked to break down so many barriers for future generations, including many of those for myself. He worked hard, he raised a family, and he became involved in politics, serving his province selflessly for more than 22 years in this very Chamber. His personality was infectious, and he worked endlessly to inspire others in joining him towards a brighter future for Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the last time he came to our province's capital was on June 9, 2023, to attend the swearing-in ceremony at Government House. Although he was in no shape to do so, he came because he knew that it was so important to me that he be there. I insisted that he be there. I think it was just as important for him to be there as well. He was beaming that day.

Today I stand before all of you to remember and to honour him for everything he did for us. I also rise to extend, on behalf of my entire family, our heartfelt gratitude to all of you – my caucus colleagues, my Premier, members of this Chamber, and all of those friends and family across this province – for your patience, your sympathy, support, and understanding during the past year. It's not been easy to navigate any of this.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your support throughout all of this but above all else my entire family, many of whom sit in the gallery here today but also those who couldn't come and join us, for everything that you've done. Your kindness and your compassion have been a source of strength for me, and I am forever grateful to each and every one of you for your outpouring of love and support. I will never be able to repay my family for everything you've done, but I hope that this is a small gesture to show how grateful I truly am.

Far too often, Mr. Speaker, we get hung up on the politics of this Chamber, but the fact of the matter is – and I learned this from my father – that I truly believe every single person in this Chamber truly wants what's best for this great province.

In honouring my father's life and legacy, let us be inspired by his dedication to public service, his love for family and friends, his never-ending laughter, and his passion for Alberta. May we continue to strive for the values he held dear and work together to build a better province for all of us.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [Standing ovation]

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to join the Minister of Justice and all the members in this House and many members of family in paying tribute to the former Member for Calgary-East Moe Amery. Both myself and the Leader of the Official Opposition had the honour of working with Moe Amery right here in this Chamber. We know that he was a man with a great heart who loved Albertans and his constituents and a family person who worked hard to make Alberta a better place for all. He was known for his kindness and his respect for institutions of democracy like this very Legislature, where he served from 1993-2015. During his long and distinguished service to this Assembly Moe Amery focused on improving education and protecting endangered animals. He was a tireless advocate for his constituents even when it meant sometimes disagreeing with his own party and government.

Public service is never easy for those who serve but also for the families. We must always acknowledge the sacrifice that's made by those who step up to represent Albertans in this Chamber.

Moe Amery was a proud Albertan, a Canadian, and a son of Lebanon, too. He showed me on more than one occasion on Google Earth, at his desk right over here, his family home in Lebanon and extended always an invitation for me to join him there someday.

The loss of a family member is devastating and difficult, and the thoughts and condolences of our entire caucus are with his family, including the Minister of Justice, as they continue to mourn the loss of Moe Amery. I join with my colleagues across the aisle in recognizing and celebrating the legacy of Moe Amery through his dedication to public service and who made a significant and lasting impact on this province.

Thank you.

1:50

### Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** The Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition has question 1.

#### Edmonton Public School Board Funding

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, the failure of this government to properly fund our kids' classrooms was highlighted again this week. The UCP's failed funding formula has left Edmonton public up to \$18 million short. Put another way, that's over 4,000 students in that one school board that the province isn't funding. To the Premier: will she commit finally to closing this funding gap and making sure that all of our kids, no matter where they live in this province, have a fully funded education?

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, when the members opposite were in government, we had successive quarters of out-migration, meaning lower and lower enrolment in schools, and we had to bring through a stabilization formula so that as boards saw declining enrolment, they weren't disadvantaged. Now we've turned things around; 200,000 people came here last year, many of them families with children. I've asked our Education minister to make sure that we are funding education appropriately. We are now funding at a level of \$9.3 billion a year, and as we identify additional needs, we will work on making sure that we provide those supports.

**Ms Notley:** You know, Mr. Speaker, here's the problem. The fact is that after years and years of funding cuts to our public education system the children of this province receive less per capita funding than any other province in the country. Not only that; even with the so-called bumps to the funding that the Premier refers to, we are still receiving less funding per capita than anywhere else in the country.

Once again, instead of allowing 4,000 students in Edmonton to go to school without any extra funding, why won't the Premier fix the problem her government has created?

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I don't think that's accurate. I think we have to recall that we had two very difficult years in this province in the COVID years. In fact, the formula worked as it was intended, and school boards got more than they would have under the old funding formula. We are now in a situation where we're seeing an increase in growth. The minister went to Treasury Board, and over the next three years he secured funding of an additional \$1.2 billion to hire teachers and classroom support staff. That funding is expected to support hiring more than 3,100 teachers, EAs, and educational staff. We've also committed more than \$1.5 billion to support specialized learning needs.

**Ms Notley:** Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, the Premier's efforts to dine out on the recent moderate increases to funding are a little bit like someone who tears down a house and then a week later shows up with a tent expecting thanks. The reality is that we have the lowest per capita funding in the country. We did under the UCP, starting in 2019, and we still do. Right now in Edmonton there are over 4,000 kids who are not funded because their funding formula is broken and is not doing what needs to be done. Why won't she fix it?

**Mr. Schow:** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** A point of order is noted at 1:54.

The hon. the Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do recognize that we needed to have an increase in spending to support enrolment growth. Education reached an all-time high spending of \$9.3 billion, a 4.4 per cent increase, which is \$393 million over the last year. We realize we have to do both. We have to make sure we're supporting the growing school jurisdictions, which is why we're investing \$1.2 billion to hire additional teachers and \$1.5 billion to support specialized learning needs, including classroom complexity and the PUF program, as well as supporting those school jurisdictions that are in declining enrolment.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition for her second set of questions.

#### Health Care System Capacity

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, the repeated warnings this government received about the crisis in Alberta's NICUs culminated when doctors wrote directly to the minister warning of staffing shortages and the health and safety risks facing our tiniest patients. A day later the minister rejected their expert opinion, relying instead on a politically appointed bureaucrat who claims that everything is just fine. To the Premier: will she apologize for her minister's failure to accept the accuracy of the warnings coming from the front-line physicians, who are the experts, who are trying to prevent this crisis?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Premier has the call.

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's not an accurate depiction of what occurred. What happened when we received the letter in February is that the minister immediately directed her department and AHS to look into it. An ADM did say that they were very well aware of the concerns, and they were working on identifying a solution. I should just mention for the record that as of April 18 there are 17 NICU beds available in Edmonton zone, 27 in Calgary zone, six in

Red Deer, 13 in south zone, and five in Grande Prairie. We are going to be able to take care of every child who needs it.

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, both the Premier and the minister need to admit that they know less about the front lines of health care than the people who work on the front lines of health care.

Meanwhile even as the minister and the Premier have been claiming there are enough beds, they're ignoring that there are not enough staff to provide the quality of care that each tiny little bed occupant requires. The first step to solving a problem is admitting you have one. To the Premier. This is an emergency. When will she start treating it as such?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognized there was an emergency the moment I got elected, which is why we began the process of disaggregating Alberta Health Services. Alberta Health Services should be focused on delivering the very best hospital care. What we've discovered is that there are over 1,500 patients who are in those acute-care beds at any given time who should be in alternative levels of care. If we can make sure that we have those beds free, then it means that we will have the staff available for what they should be doing, which is the acute care, the emergent care, the NICU care, the surgical care, and that's what we're focused on.

**Ms Notley:** Well, actually, right after she got elected, she cancelled the south Edmonton hospital and 20 extra NICU beds.

Now, when it comes to Alberta's NICUs, I trust the word of the assistant head nurse for the NICU at the Misericordia over that of the Premier. Today, in addition to calling out the UCP decision to ditch the south Edmonton hospital, Michelle Gurin said, quote: the hospitals have physical bed space, but we just don't have enough nurse positions or nurses to take care of them. To the Premier: when will she start taking this issue seriously and dealing with the incredible staff crisis that her policies have created?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll explain to the member opposite how this is going to work. Fifteen hundred patients who should be in alternative levels of care are going to be moved to continuing care, assisted living, home care, mental health and addiction treatment, and then we will have 1,500 additional acute-care beds that are going to be available to have the staff support patients who are there for emergent purposes, for surgical purposes. This is part of the refocusing of Alberta Health Services. It's absolutely essential so that we always have enough high-qualified staff to take care of all patients.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

### Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Capacity

**Dr. Metz:** Babies in crisis require swift action; if there are not enough equipment, staff, and beds to care for them, it puts them at risk. These are the words of Dr. Manpreet Gill, the president of the Edmonton Zone Medical Staff Association about the nightmare in Alberta's neonatal intensive care units caused by lack of staffing. Since 2022 two Health ministers have been warned about the looming crisis, but nothing has been done. What is being done today?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Infrastructure has risen.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to reassure families that there continues to be space within NICUs and that care of infants remains available and a priority. As the minister

stated yesterday, she has discussed space with both AHS and Covenant, and both have capacity within their units. There's a total of 133 beds in Edmonton, 126 in Calgary, 17 in Red Deer, and 10 in Grande Prairie, and of these, 68 are currently available, with 27 in Calgary and 17 in Edmonton.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Dr. Metz:** Amber Reichert, an Edmonton neonatologist, stated that nurses are often caring for three or four high-risk babies at a time rather than one or two. She is extremely worried about the situation as the number of infants needing care is rising while staffing shortages worsen. She's worried that because of these staffing shortages something will get missed, which could impact extremely vulnerable babies. Can the minister explain what this government has done today to get more staff into Alberta's NICUs? [interjections]

2:00

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Guthrie:** You know, Mr. Speaker, the false narrative being put forward by the NDP is just deplorable. The minister has been active on this issue from the moment that she became aware. You can rest assured that the minister's priority is to provide infants and their families with the highest level of care available. We have excellent doctors and nurses in Alberta, who take pride in providing high-quality care to every Albertan, especially vulnerable children. Now, this situation reaffirms the need to expand capacity, and we're doing that through the construction of the Stollery children's hospital.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order.

**Dr. Metz:** Michelle Gurin, an Edmonton NICU nurse, stated that the staffing situation in Alberta's NICUs borders on a safety issue. Quote: it weighs on you when you can't help everyone you want to. The minister is asking for a full briefing, but this wouldn't be necessary if she had listened to the briefing she was offered in February or if the UCP had listened to the warnings in 2022-2023. Will the minister tell us how many other warnings from front-line workers this government is ignoring?

**Mr. Guthrie:** Mr. Speaker, you know, having a sick child is incredibly stressful. For the opposition to continue to create fear with families with vulnerable children: it's just reprehensible. As mentioned, there are currently 68 available NICU beds throughout the province, with 27 in Calgary and 17 in Edmonton.

**Mr. Eggen:** We're doing our job. You should do your job.

**Mr. Schow:** Point of order.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Alberta families can be assured that the first priority of the minister as well as the doctors and nurses working throughout the province is to ensure that all vulnerable children get the care and attention that they need.

**The Speaker:** A point of order is noted at 2:02.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

### Bill 18

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The UCP talk a big game about red tape reduction, but Bill 18 proves what we have been saying all along: it was all just smoke and mirrors. Bill 18 is a red tape bill. Universities are at a complete loss as to why this government would create an administrative barrier to funding access. The work of



universities contributes billions to Alberta's economy. To the minister: what prospective academic or researcher does this government think would choose to research in a province that requires more paperwork, more red tape, and could block the federal funding they need?

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Mr. Speaker, first, let me start off by saying that I support Bill 18.

**An Hon. Member:** Wow.

**An Hon. Member:** Nobody else does.

**An Hon. Member:** Did you talk to anybody?

**Mrs. Sawhney:** We know that there is federal encroachment into provincial jurisdiction, and we do know that this information on research grants is publicly available, but it's scattered. It's piecemeal. We don't have all the information . . .

**An Hon. Member:** It's on the Internet. Google. Google.ca.

**An Hon. Member:** On social media.

**An Hon. Member:** If you didn't know what was being provided . . .

**Mrs. Sawhney:** . . . so we are going to work with the postsecondary institutions to make sure that the approvals process is in alignment with their priorities, and we have a proven track record of making sure that red tape is reduced . . .

**Mr. Schow:** Point of order.

**Mrs. Sawhney:** . . . in the interactions that we have with the postsecondaries, and we're going to make sure that they're at the table with us.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, a point of order is noted at both 2:02 and 2:03.

**Mr. Sabir:** The president of the Association of Academic Staff of the University of Alberta says that his inbox has been flooded with concerns from colleagues who rely on federal funding for their research. They also say that this bill puts the principles and practices of academic freedom under threat. Academic freedom was something the Premier used to value until power went to her head. Can the minister explain how the provincial government . . .

**Mr. Williams:** Point of order.

**Mr. Sabir:** . . . blocking world-leading research when it doesn't match their ideological views is an appropriate use of power? How does this protect academic freedom and research autonomy?

**The Speaker:** A point of order is noted at 2:04 p.m.

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Mr. Speaker, as I had mentioned, we are going to work with the postsecondary institutions to make sure that we understand their priorities, but it is important to collect this data in a way that we can analyze to make sure that all of these grants do align with provincial priorities. Again, I am going to be working with the postsecondary institutions, and in fact I will be meeting with all of the presidents later on this afternoon to hear their concerns and also to talk about the next steps as we move forward in this engagement.

**Mr. Sabir:** The University of Alberta received \$223 million of federal funding for research last year. The University of Calgary received \$190 million. And we know the funding is competitive; it's

not promised. So I find it hard to believe that Alberta researchers being forced to navigate a UCP sea of red tape, just to be allowed to submit a federal funding proposal, will have no impact on Alberta universities, researchers, and academics. Millions of vital funding dollars are at risk, so will the minister table the risk-benefit analysis that I can only assume they did before introducing Bill 18?

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Mr. Speaker, again, I have to reiterate that we're going to work with the postsecondaries. There is no desire to impede these federal grants from coming into our world-class postsecondary institutions. But, again, we're going to work with them to better understand what these grants are, and this might also provide some opportunities to more appropriately partner with the postsecondaries, and we can leverage those dollars as well. Again, the engagement is going to begin today. We've had some robust conversations with the PSI presidents and board chairs, and they are very happy to work with us to uncover this information and to talk more about the . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is next today.

### Life Lease Regulation

**Ms Pancholi:** Today the Premier finally met with some of the members of the Alberta Life Lease Protection Society, who represent the seniors and families owed millions of dollars in loans from Christenson Developments through fraudulent life leases. Bill 12, as it is currently drafted, excludes these seniors and will not bring relief to these families, something the minister of service Alberta has already acknowledged. My question to the Premier: after meeting with these Albertans, will she agree to support amendments the Official Opposition will bring forward to include these families in Bill 12?

**Mr. Nally:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier and I met with the life lease association today, and let me just reiterate that this is a terrible situation. When we have seniors, vulnerable Albertans that can't get their deposits back, this is just deplorable, and our hearts go out to those victims. We had a great conversation. We talked to them about how we have two priorities. One is to make sure we have legislation that ensures this never happens again. The second thing is that we will continue to put pressure on the developer to make sure that everybody is made whole.

**Ms Pancholi:** Given that it sounds like the government will not be supporting amendments to actually include these families in Bill 12 and given that the minister of service Alberta has claimed he has met with Greg Christenson nine times and, quote, he will keep the pressure on to make these seniors whole, but given that Christenson hasn't repaid even one of these loans since all of those meetings began months ago, calling into question how effective the minister of service Alberta actually is at delivering for Albertans, can the Premier commit today that she will directly apply pressure herself on Greg Christenson, a big UCP donor, to repay these seniors and their families immediately?

**Mr. Nally:** Mr. Speaker, this is a heartbreaking situation. It's come to my attention that all of this could have been avoided. In 2017 27 Albertans, life lease holders, wrote to the minister of service Alberta in the then NDP government and asked them to take action on life leases. And do you know how they responded? Do you know what they did? Nothing. The heartbreaking thing is that they could have prevented 180 Albertans from having their deposits withheld from them. They failed to take action.

**Ms Pancholi:** Well, Mr. Speaker, given that I've had massages with more pressure than the UCP is currently applying to Greg

Christenson and given that Greg Christenson is clearly not worried that he's in the government's bad books since he happily attended the Premier's swanky fundraiser in Edmonton earlier this week and given that multiple friendly meetings and \$350-per-plate dinners sure don't sound like pressure to average Albertans, will the Premier commit today that she will return any donations made to the UCP by Greg Christenson since he refuses to return the life savings of Alberta seniors?

**Mr. Nally:** Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to know is: where was all that pressure in 2017, when 27 life lease holders wrote to the NDP and asked them to take action? Where was the pressure then? Had they done what we're doing now, this all could have been prevented. This legislation is going to bring in requirements that are going to ensure that there are penalties, prescribed time frames, disclosure. My commitment is to do everything to make sure that this doesn't happen again. I wish they had done that in 2017.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

### Regulated Rate Option Changes

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning our government announced changes to our province's default electricity rate. What was known as the regulated rate option will now be known as the rate of last resort. The RRO over the past year has seen a degree of volatility that has seen some ratepayers' bills fluctuate drastically. To the Minister of Affordability and Utilities: can you please tell the House how changing the name of the RRO to the rate of last resort will work towards getting Albertans off this volatile electricity rate and onto fixed-rate contracts?

2:10

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for their question. The regulated rate option, to many consumers, is a misleading name. It does not describe its true nature. By changing the name to the rate of last resort, the ratepayers will be better informed about the volatility of this rate and more inclined to get on a stable, competitive contract. Furthermore, retailers will be required to inform their customers about what rate they are on, how it works, and what other options they have.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for his response. Given the plan to adjust this default electricity rate to a two-year fixed price instead of the previous system, which saw large fluctuations month to month, and given that some Albertans will continue to rely on this rate of last resort, to the same minister: how will making the rate of last resort a two-year fixed price option work towards ensuring reliability and affordability of Albertans' electricity?

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not everyone on the rate of last resort can immediately switch to a competitive contract. Some have no other option or have financial constraints preventing them from choosing another option. To protect these ratepayers, we are stabilizing the rate over a longer period to protect these more vulnerable consumers from the potential large spikes on their bills. By helping Albertans on the rate of last resort get in touch with our Utilities Consumer Advocate and be more informed about their

options, we are helping Albertans find the best rate to suit their specific needs.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and thank you as well to the minister for that answer. Given that this name change will work towards informing Albertans of the disadvantages of being on the rate of last resort and given this government's commitment to ensuring our grid's reliability and affordability, I ask the same minister to please tell the House what other methods this government is pursuing to keep electricity affordable in Alberta.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are working hard to ensure Alberta's electricity market remains affordable. By introducing temporary measures that limit economic withholding and encouraging investment that will see more dispatchable natural gas supply come online in these coming months, our government is continuing to make sure Albertans have an affordable and reliable electricity supply. This is just the start of several significant changes that will benefit Albertans for decades.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis.

### Coal Development Policies

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government says that it values transparency for Albertans, yet it hides behind a veil of secrets when it comes to coal mining. In 2019, over six months before the coal policy was rescinded, the Member for Calgary-Peigan and the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre sent Valory Resources letters proclaiming their enthusiasm for proposed coal development on category 2 lands. Alberta had no idea these meetings were happening. Now they want more information, and the government is stalling. Why is the government so hesitant to share with Albertans what really went on in the months before the coal policy was rescinded?

**Mr. Jean:** Mr. Speaker, we are transparent, and we will continue to be transparent. Now, I know that members opposite don't believe that because they themselves were under a veil of secrecy during the period of time they were in government. They continue to do that, so they think everybody else reacts the same way. We do not. We stand up for Albertans, and we always will.

Mr. Speaker, after doing some more research as a result of the NDP, I brought out a smoking gun yesterday in relation to a letter from the then NDP energy minister from 2016 telling companies to come into Alberta and dig, baby, dig. That's all that can be said. Unacceptable. We're going to make sure that we protect Albertans going forward, not just their friends.

**Dr. Elmeligi:** All right. Well, wait till my tabling later for another smoking gun.

**Mr. Schow:** Point of order.

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Given that even after a moratorium was placed on coal development, the AER approved the Grassy Mountain mine exploration proposal to go to public hearing, given that this violated the government's own legal moratorium and commitments to Albertans, given that the MD of Ranchland has recently taken legal action against the AER for this decision, given that the answer to a coal mine on Grassy Mountain has already been no, as stated by Albertans and the joint federal-provincial review panel, can the

minister again please explain to Albertans why it's acceptable for the AER to violate the . . .

**The Speaker:** A point of order is noted at 2:14.

**Mr. Jean:** Mr. Speaker, I want to let this member know and all Albertans know that I continue to get to the bottom of the issue. I found one smoking gun, and now we have another smoking gun. You're not going to believe this, but the Member for Lethbridge-West, when she was the environment minister for the NDP . . .

**An Hon. Member:** No.

**Mr. Jean:** Yes. Yes, indeed.

She published a report calling for the end of all the coal categories. We're not going to let that happen. It was not just in category 2 or 3 lands but category 1 lands. I don't know what they're thinking over there, but they're not protecting Albertans. That's why Albertans have to refuse any opportunity . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis.

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Well, given that Albertans are growing increasingly tired of a government who hides behind half-truths and makes exceptions to the rules whenever it suits their coal company friends and given that Albertans want answers and have had to submit and follow up on FOIP requests to get them and given that this government continues to stall on releasing that information and has now been ordered by a judge to do so and given that I asked the minister yesterday and I didn't get an answer, I will ask again today: can the minister apologize to these honest, hard-working Albertans and get them the 6,000 remaining pages of the FOIP request by the end of the month?

**The Speaker:** Just prior to the hon. Minister of Energy and Minerals rising to his feet, it sounds a lot to me like the question was about a matter that's before a Provincial Court or there is an appeal period under way on a matter that could be sub judice. I would ask the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General if that's the case. If it is the case, then we will move on. If it isn't the case, then the hon. minister of energy is welcome to answer the question.

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that we move on given the fact that this matter may appear before the courts again, and subject to Standing Order 23(g)(i) I would ask that we move forward.

### Health System Administration

**Mr. Haji:** Mr. Speaker, while communities across Alberta grapple with a shortage of doctors and health care workers, this government is doubling the senior management in the ministry. Using a ratio of 1 to 3, it follows that the newly created six assistant deputy ministers will have 18 executive directors plus 54 directors and – wait – 162 managers. Can the minister explain why the department has created 240 management positions in the department but only recruited 215 family physicians for Albertans, fewer than the senior management positions?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Infrastructure has risen.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure the minister would be happy to discuss that issue, and I would advise the member to speak with her.

I'd like to highlight an announcement the minister made yesterday to strengthen Alberta's primary care system. Following

extensive consultation the minister announced the new physician compensation framework. This model will recognize the unique work of family and rural physicians in supporting patients by increasing access to care for our growing province. The minister worked tirelessly with the AMA for the last six months to structure this deal, and she looks forward to continuing that relationship.

**Mr. Haji:** Given that the government has shifted the burden of inflation and rising cost of living on to front-line workers like increased parking costs for health care workers, essential for them to fulfill their duties, and given that the minister could alleviate this strain but instead chooses to prioritize senior management positions in the department, can the minister explain why the department has recruited fewer family physicians than managers in the past 12 months?

**Mr. Guthrie:** I'm glad the member asked more about that compensation model, and I'll continue on. We will make Alberta a national leader in recruiting and retaining family rural physicians. Mr. Speaker, our government is committing \$200 million over the next two years to support primary health with \$2.3 billion as a base compensation for physicians in this fiscal year. Our commitment to Albertans is clear, and our minister is relentless in her pursuit of continued improvement. Kudos to the minister and her department and her entire team on a job well done.

**Mr. Haji:** Given that while the government brags about their accomplishments, let's not lose sight of the glaring reality, Mr. Speaker, that Albertans need more family physicians than senior management in the ministry, and given that the shortage of doctors and nurses is bleak in communities, it's time for action, not administrative bloating, can the minister assure Albertans that the ministry cares more about addressing these shortages than expanding the managerial ranks?

2:20

**Mr. Guthrie:** Mr. Speaker, you know, the position of Health minister is one of the most difficult, and the workload is immense. It comes with a heavy burden, but what it certainly does not come with is a lot of gratitude, so I'd like to give the minister some props for taking the unenviable task but absolutely necessary task of reorganizing Alberta's health care system. This entire caucus knows the magnitude of her work, and we appreciate the exceptional effort that she exhibits daily in tackling it head-on.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

### Youth Justice Diversion Programs

**Mrs. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act allows for measures and sanctions to deal with less serious youth crime. Alternatives include counselling, youth justice committees, and rehab placement. Generally upon successful completion of such sanctions, charges are withdrawn, offering youth a second chance. Given the interest in streamlining the judicial process and the high cost of administering the youth justice system and the Calgary and Edmonton young offenders detention centres, to the minister: what is Alberta doing to expand options available through Alberta's extrajudicial sanctions program?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Justice.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Justice today means approaching justice-related issues in a holistic way. Improving mental health awareness is a top priority for this government, for

my ministry, and, in fact, for the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction. Budget 2024 commits more money to mental health issues than any other in history. I am proud of the work that the Indigenous justice strategy, the restorative justice programs, and many alternative dispute resolution and alternative diversion programs are doing to help Albertans achieve a second lease in life.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that in neighbouring Saskatchewan courts have fully embraced restorative justice, in some cases giving youth the choice of participating in voluntary, faith-based rehabilitation programs and given one such program, Rock Solid Refuge, RSR, is located near Shaunavon and was founded as a nonprofit charity in 2005 and given that RSR offers a 12-month program for youth ages 13 to 18 providing on-site counselling, a provincially approved education curriculum, and high school athletics, to the same minister: how many youth-focused alternative rehabilitation programs is Alberta currently working with?

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, our restorative justice system has proven to be very effective in providing alternative and effective ways to deal with matters beyond the formal court processes in a more holistic and inclusive approach. It's why Budget 2024 commits \$3.3 million towards the development of a new restorative justice strategy and program. Restorative justice is a transformative approach to justice that aims to repair harm by bringing together the victims and the offenders in the community to deal through things in a holistic way.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and, through you, to the minister for that answer. Given that voluntary, faith-based rehabilitation programs work, given over the years RSR has helped 130 youths overcome their challenges with drugs, alcohol, crime, and anger while helping them achieve a strong academic average, and given that programs like RSR keep kids out of the youth court system with their 80 per cent rehabilitation success rate, to the same minister: will the government consider funding options for voluntary, youth-based rehabilitation programs to help streamline our justice system and give these kids a second chance?

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, thank you to the hon. member. Everything is on the table when it comes to good outcomes for Albertans. Alberta Justice has approved the development of a provincial restorative justice program and strategy. Work is under way to shore up our alternative measures programs, our mental health diversion programs, additional funding and supports to mental health and awareness throughout the province. We're increasing restorative justice funding by \$3.3 million, and all of that funding will be used to achieve positive and favourable outcomes for people in this province.

Thank you.

### Funding for CKUA Radio

**Member Ceci:** Mr. Speaker, CKUA Radio has been on the air for nearly a hundred years. It was Canada's first educational public broadcaster and continues to be enjoyed by Albertans and people around the world. In 1997 Ralph Klein decommissioned CKUA, effectively defunding them, forcing them to substantially rely on community support to continue to operate. Because of the perfect financial storm they're in right now, CKUA has said that they'll have to shut down if they don't raise \$3 million before the end of

September. Can the Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women outline what actions she's taken to date to help save CKUA?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the minister of arts and culture.

**Ms Fir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. CKUA is an important institution that has helped preserve and promote Alberta's unique cultural heritage. However, the funds CKUA needs would go primarily towards debt-servicing. We need to be responsible with the province's finances. As the member opposite should know, significant portions of CKUA's challenges relate to their debt obligations. Capital grants are intended to build new assets or enhance the productivity of Albertans; requests for debt repayments or endowments, which CKUA requested funds for, do not match that.

**Member Ceci:** Given that CKUA has not received any funding from this UCP government or the previous one and given that CKUA is a staple in Alberta's arts and cultural scene, with more than 475,000 listeners across the province each month, and given that despite providing a free public service – once again, the government does not fund any part of the operations of CKUA – why did this UCP government leave them out of the budget again and pass up the opportunity, in CKUA's own words, to be the hero of this story? End quote.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Fir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite made mention of a previous Conservative Premier in government. Let's take a walk down memory lane. In 2012 it was a Conservative government of Alberta that provided CKUA with \$5 million for the purchase and renovation of the Alberta Hotel, and since 2019 our government has provided CKUA with over \$450,000. The Member for Calgary-Buffalo should join us in standing up to Ottawa to demand fair federal arts funding. Or is the member opposite too afraid to stand up to their kingpins in Ottawa?

**Member Ceci:** Given that CKUA is a vital part of Alberta's culture and gives a platform to numerous talented beginning, mid-career, and long-loved Alberta artists like Jann Arden, Corb Lund, Cadence Weapon, k.d. lang, and Tom Phillips and the DTs and given that they are beginning their annual spring fundraiser tomorrow, April 19, in attempts to save the station and donations can be made on the web at ckua.com or on your preferred social media platform, how does the minister plan to continue to listen to CKUA and promote them in the province?

**Ms Fir:** Mr. Speaker, let's talk a little bit more about funding. In Budget 2024 the federal Liberals provided zero dollars for public broadcaster CKUA but were able to allocate \$42 million for their public broadcaster friends at the CBC. The Liberals also committed \$58 million to help promote local journalism, which includes funds for radio stations but nothing for CKUA. The Trudeau-Singh coalition has founded organizations similar to CKUA in eastern Canada but, once again, has left Alberta with nothing. Perhaps if the members opposite would stand up to their NDP-Liberal bosses in Ottawa, CKUA can secure federal funding.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

### Provincial RCMP Staffing

**Mr. Wiebe:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my community of Grande Prairie-Wapiti calls for the RCMP sometimes take hours, and in many other rural communities there's no 24-hour coverage. There have been renewed calls for the province to properly fund the

RCMP as social disorder and crime is visible in many communities, including First Nations communities. Can the minister tell the province what he's doing to address these public safety concerns?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services and the Deputy Premier.

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Look, the RCMP authorized strength here in Alberta is 1,911 officers. We are short. We have a shortfall of 413. That's 21.6 per cent that we have a shortfall of right here in Alberta, and that's at a cost of \$16 million of service that we are not getting. We need to get those officers on the street. This Premier and this government has committed to get officers on the street. That's precisely what we're going to do. We're going to get boots on the ground, officers on the street, and we're going to make sure that rural Alberta is taken care of in this province.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and, through you, to the minister. Well, given that crime seems to be prevalent in every community and given that all across this province communities are struggling with repeat violent offenders and social disorder and the lack of RCMP officers in their communities, can the same minister share if the vacancy rate is a signal check from Public Safety Canada that they may move away from contract policing?

2:30

**Mr. Ellis:** Mr. Speaker, I've been saying for quite some time that the federal government has been signal checking that they may be looking at moving away from contract policing. That is no secret. I'd like to let this House know about a briefing note to the federal public safety minister from 2019, so let me just make a few comments here. "It has been the Government of Canada's objective since the 1960s to decrease contract policing financial liability." There is a growing dissatisfaction from contract jurisdictions related to costs, officer vacancies, and the results that impact community safety. It is very clear we are prepared on this side of the House to support . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that there are certain areas in Alberta where there's not 24-hour coverage and given that criminals are learning the shift changes of the RCMP, when there are no officers available for service because of the lack of officers, what is the minister of public safety doing to address the issue and get boots on the ground so that people can feel protected?

**Mr. Ellis:** Mr. Speaker, we're going to do whatever it takes, right? I've said time and time again that officer presence matters. That's why we funded 50 police officers in Calgary, 50 police officers in Edmonton. That is why we need to have 24-hour coverage. It is unacceptable in rural Alberta that there is not 24-hour coverage in this province, and we're going to support the members on this side of the House who have rural constituents, because officer safety matters. If that side of the House doesn't want to support rural Alberta, I would suggest they check their urban privilege cards, because they're expired.

### Bill 18 (continued)

**Mr. Ip:** Mr. Speaker, Alberta has one of the fastest growing tech and innovation sectors in North America, creating thousands of jobs, thanks in part to the work of economic development organizations. These municipal agencies and not-for-profits have helped create

economic growth by directly supporting entrepreneurs and local economies. And guess what? Many of them receive federal funding to do this work. Bill 18 puts all of this in jeopardy by putting more obstacles in the way. To the Premier: why is she willing to jeopardize investment and economic growth to settle political scores?

**Mr. Glubish:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier and all of our ministers have given plenty of reasons why Bill 18 is necessary to protect Alberta's constitutionally protected jurisdiction. The federal government wades into our lane all the time, and that's unacceptable. We will not apologize for standing up for Alberta's priorities and interests against an overly intrusive federal government.

But, Mr. Speaker, our economic growth is bucking the trends of the nation. Our technology sector is bucking the trends of the nation. Alberta is the place to be. Hundreds of thousands of people are choosing Alberta because what we've got here is something special. We're going to keep it that way.

**Mr. Ip:** Given that in 2023 the federal government gave millions of dollars to economic development agencies and entrepreneurs across Alberta – for example, \$3 million to Edmonton Unlimited, \$4 million for an aerospace centre in Calgary, \$9 million to support economic growth across northwest Alberta, \$25 million to help businesses scale up and create high-quality jobs – given that Bill 18 will put more administrative burden on entrepreneurs looking to access capital, potentially blocking their funding altogether, why is the Premier putting more obstacles in the way of Alberta's innovators and entrepreneurs?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Trade.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to work with our small businesses, our entrepreneurs, our industries, and the federal government because we know that a win for our small businesses, our entrepreneurs, and our businesses is both a win for Canada and Alberta. So nothing is going to change there. We're going to ensure that provincial priorities are reflected in these collaborative agreements, we're going to ensure that the money isn't duplicative or wasted, and we're also going to continue to fund our programming to support our small business.

**Mr. Ip:** Given that entrepreneurs, particularly start-ups, need access to resources in a timely way, wherever it comes from, and given that Bill 18 will add more red tape and will have a chilling effect on innovators everywhere and given that Bill 18 is part of a pattern, like with the renewables ban or the sovereignty act, where the Premier stokes old ideological grievances at the expense of investment certainty, why does the Premier not realize that investment uncertainty and red tape kill investments and jobs?

**Mr. Glubish:** Mr. Speaker, if anybody introduced uncertainty into the Alberta marketplace, it was the NDP when they were in government. We're not making those same mistakes. What I can tell you is that we are seeing enormous investment into Alberta start-ups and tech companies, and as a government we are doing a ton of work to help accelerate that. That's why we've invested millions and millions of dollars through Alberta Innovates into establishing our scale up accelerator programs. This is why we are investing enormous amounts of money into partnering with our postsecondary institutions to fund exciting research projects and to commercialize those into real companies, and that's why investors are voting with their wallet and investing in Alberta companies when the rest of the country is falling behind.

### School Construction in Lac La Biche

**Ms Chapman:** Vera M. Welsh is a pre-K to grade 3 school located in the lovely hamlet of Lac La Biche. Seventeen teachers and 37 support staff work hard to educate and care for their 300 students. Vera M. Welsh is yet another school that received design funding in the 2023 budget but is absent from 2024's construction funding list. Can the minister please inform the House how long Vera M. Welsh has been on the capital plan list for Northern Lights school division?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, every year our school divisions submit to us their capital priorities, and we take all of those capital priorities as critically important. We evaluate them all. We look at the needs of all of our communities across the province, all the while making sure that we're being fiscally responsible with taxpayer money, and we determine how we can proceed with various projects. I understand the project that the member is referring to. It's an important project. I'm confident we'll be able to work in moving that project forward at the appropriate time.

**Ms Chapman:** Given that Vera M. Welsh has been on the school division's capital plan for over 20 years, given that deferred maintenance on the building is estimated at \$12 million – half the cost of a replacement – given that the school is located 30 metres from a railroad line moving dangerous chemicals, given that an underground spring runs right through the mechanical room, when can families in Lac La Biche expect construction to start on a desperately needed new school facility?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I just explained the evaluation, of course, that occurs, and we know that there are various needs for new schools, upgrades, modernizations, and replacements in every corner of the province, and we will ensure that our work is done to make sure that every student in Alberta has appropriate learning spaces. I am proud of the fact that Alberta is booming again and that thousands and thousands of people are choosing and flocking to our incredible province. Of course, that creates pressures on schools in every corner of the province, but we will get the job done.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Beddington.

**Ms Chapman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Northern Lights board chair, Karen Packard, said that she would be requesting a meeting with the Minister of Education to urge him to move this project forward, given that she said: "Families in Lac La Biche have been waiting patiently for many years for this project to be approved. We don't want them to wait any longer for a safe, modern facility where their children can thrive," given that on this side of the House we think that two decades is a long enough wait, has the minister met with the Northern Lights board? How much longer will he keep them waiting?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not keeping anybody waiting. I'm happy to set up a meeting with them at the appropriate time. I don't think a request has come in, but as soon as a request comes in, we'll schedule it. I'm happy to meet with them and listen to their concerns. Unlike the members opposite, we take great pride in meeting with all of our communities, every corner of the province to hear their concerns. I know when the NDP was in power, as one of my colleagues mentioned the other day, they couldn't find rural Alberta on a map, but we know the location of our communities

very well and understand their needs and priorities, and, as I mentioned, we will make sure we get the job done. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-East has a question to ask.

### Affordability Measures

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cost of living across Canada continues to increase. Albertan families, seniors, and our most vulnerable groups have been put under strain as utilities, gas, electricity, food, and rent prices rise. There is no question that Albertans are faced with the difficulties associated with pricing increases. Can the Minister of Affordability and Utilities provide an update on how the government is addressing the affordability challenges Albertans are experiencing?

**The Speaker:** The honourable the Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for this extremely important question. Affordability is top of mind for our government. My colleagues and I are working tirelessly to ensure Albertans' lives remain affordable. From food prices to electricity all the way to housing, our whole government is taking action to protect Albertans from the rising cost of living caused predominantly by the federal government's taxes and debt, both of which just increased again. We stand with Albertans against the punishing taxes and financial mismanagement in Ottawa supported by the members opposite.

2:40

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

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. Given that the most recent consumer index from Statistics Canada shows that although Alberta's inflation rate decreased to 3.5 per cent in March 2024 from February's 4.2 rate, Albertans continue to experience the impact of inflation, to the minister: what long-term measures are being taken to ensure that financial burden and inflation do not affect the daily lives of Albertans?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member. Trudeau's high-tax, high-spending policies continue to increase inflation. Alberta's low taxes and balanced budgets reduce it. Our affordability action plan has measurably lowered the impact of inflation on all Albertans despite the carbon tax increasing the cost on everything. Our UCP government is pushing back against these federal policies while the members opposite continue to endorse their actions and terrible fiscal policies. Maybe the new leadership candidates campaigning on conservative values will help change that approach. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. Given that among major Canadian cities Calgary's inflation rate was sitting at 4.1 per cent in January of this year and given that high utility prices is one of the main factors contributing to the rise of inflation, can the same minister share with the House: what are the government's ongoing plans to ensure the cost of utilities stay affordable in Alberta? [interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order.

The minister.

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member. We're making sure Alberta's utilities continue to be affordable. We are fixing the Alberta default electricity rate by protecting Albertans from price spikes, increasing competition, limiting economic withholding, and continuing to attract more investment in baseload power. Our government is doing all of this and more to lower Albertans' power bills, unlike the members opposite who did everything they could to sabotage the electricity market, from killing competition and stranding assets to pricey lawsuits and their carbon tax. Even Nenshi agrees that they made major mistakes and got it way wrong when they were in office. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

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

## Members' Statements

### Neonatal Intensive Care Capacity

**Member Batten:** Caffeine and sugar. Mr. Speaker, did you know that in hospital we give caffeine to babies? Yup. Sugar, too. The caffeine keeps their heart rate elevated and sugar provides comfort. These very premature babies require a lot of support and constant monitoring. One interesting thing that these little premature babies do is drop their heart rate in response to a dirty diaper, to some noises, stress, or pain. Even though these tiny little babies get their morning caffeine, they continue to do this heart rate drop until they grow up. But until then these tiny premature babies require intervention to return their heart rates to one that is compatible with life.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

So what happens when a unit is over 100 per cent capacity and the staff caring for these incredibly vulnerable babies are spread dangerously thin across several patients? Nothing good, Mr. Speaker. Nothing good. Yet we hear the alarms ringing, doctors warning about the impact the lack of staffing would have on these babies in the NICU, warning that babies could lose their lives because of this lack of staffing. The Health minister was warned time and time again about the looming crisis, warnings that apparently have fallen on deaf ears. She claims that we have beds when what we critically need are staff. Year after year requests for help from the NICU fell on deaf ears, and here we are.

I applaud the heroes on the front line working so hard to keep these babies safe and cared for. I only wish the government would respect them enough to listen to their concerns and address the crisis they face every day when they go to work rather than claiming there is no crisis.

The premature babies in the NICU will eventually outgrow dropping their heart rate, but this government needs to properly fund health care so that many more babies have the same opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Member for Calgary-East has a statement to make.

### Former MLA Mohammed "Moe" Amery

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in recognition of the life of an amazing human, an Albertan hero, a former MLA, and a man who served Alberta humbly and faithfully. His name was Mohammed Amery. We fondly called him Moe. Born in Lebanon in 1954, he moved to Canada in 1974, working as a realtor until he

was first elected in 1993 with Alberta's Progressive Conservative Party. He served until May 4, 2015. During his years of service he represented the constituency of Calgary-East in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for 22 years, a constituency that I now represent. On behalf of my constituents we thank Mr. Moe Amery for being an exceptional MLA who dedicated his life to serving not only our constituency but Albertans at large.

Mr. Amery was a pioneer in so many ways. He introduced several private members' bills and served on 15 provincial government committees that have formulated policies that have affected Albertans positively. In 1996 he sponsored the Wildlife Amendment Act, 1996, a government bill that, among other things, saw the creation of a committee to make recommendations on the designation of endangered and threatened species.

He passed away on October 19, 2023, at the age of 69 years, leaving behind his wife, Mary, and five great children, including our current Minister of Justice. He was well loved, and Alberta is sad to lose a gem like him. We are better because of his 7,996 days of service. He will never be forgotten. We thank you for the impact you have made on all Albertans and for generations to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Bill 18

**Mr. Shepherd:** Mr. Speaker, last week the Premier introduced the Provincial Priorities Act, the bill to stop anyone in or outside of Alberta from getting in the way of her personal priorities. Whether it's federal funding or local research, if she doesn't like it, she won't let it happen. So the question is: just what are her priorities? I mean, there's what she sold to Albertans when she wanted their vote – lower taxes, a lower cost, a moderate government – and then there's what she's actually pursued: seizing pensions, banning renewables, a provincial police force, municipal political parties, new taxes and fees, things Albertans don't want that she promised she wouldn't do. But she's determined to seize more power and control to stamp every aspect of our province in her own ideological image.

Mr. Speaker, that's frightening. A Premier who embraced crackpot COVID conspiracists, who said that everything up to stage 4 cancer is under your control, who claimed smoking cigarettes could reduce the risk of disease thinks she should decide funding for medical research. A Premier who repeatedly shared misinformation about Russia's invasion of Ukraine wants to vet funding for experts in geopolitics. A government who won't give up on trying to force coal mining in the Rockies wants to vet every proposal for environmental research. After five years and millions of dollars spent, they can't prove any success with their Alberta model of treating addictions, but they want to control every dollar of funding into research on treatment for substance use.

Bill 18 isn't about provincial priorities; it's about the Premier's, and she is clearly out of touch. Classrooms are overcrowded, Albertans can't pay rent, doctors have to beg for help to save the lives of newborn babies, and this government is focused on grabbing more power for themselves. It's clear that this Premier and government can't be trusted, not to vet research, not to spend tax dollars, not even to manage the most basic aspects of governing. Albertans know better what their priorities are than the UCP. Maybe it's time this government stopped dictating and started listening.

2:50

**Mr. Schow:** I'd like to call a point of order at the end of that member's statement.

**The Acting Speaker:** A point of order is called at 2:50.

### Education Week

**Mr. McDougall:** Mr. Speaker, April 15 to 19 is Education Week here in Alberta. I am reminded not only of the profound impact teachers have had on my own life but also of the deep connection to education within my own family. My wife, my mother, and my mother-in-law all dedicated their lives to the noble profession of teaching, leaving a lasting impact on countless students and communities. Growing up in a household where education was not just a profession but a calling, I witnessed first-hand the unwavering commitment and passion that my family members brought to the classrooms each day. From late nights spent grading papers to weekends devoted to lesson planning, their dedication to the students knew no bounds.

[The Speaker in the chair]

This week we celebrate and give thanks to the many teachers, staff, administrators, volunteers, and other educational leaders for their tireless work of ensuring Alberta students have the knowledge and support they need to learn and grow. This year's theme, Learning Uplifts All, speaks to our collective goal of ensuring students receive a world-class education that sets them on a lifelong path of success.

Alberta's Education budget will reach an all-time high of almost \$9.3 billion in '24-25, a year-over-year increase of 4.4 per cent. Through Budget '24 Alberta's government is prioritizing building state-of-the-art learning spaces, introducing a cutting-edge curriculum, and providing the diverse learning supports that meet the needs of the modern classroom. I am confident that we're building the world-class education system that will see our brilliant students achieve their individual goals.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the incredible work of our education partners in shaping our future business owners, community leaders, trades workers, and professionals. The opportunities are endless. I encourage all Albertans to take a moment to recognize the amazing work being done in your local schools and across the province. To my wife, my mother, my mother-in-law, and to all the educators who tirelessly dedicate or have dedicated themselves to the education of future generations: thank you.

### South Edmonton Hospital Construction Project

**Member Hoyle:** Mr. Speaker, after years of planning, committing hundreds of millions of dollars, and regular assurances from this government, residents and medical leaders are shocked that the UCP pulled funding on the south Edmonton hospital. The Minister of Health continues to say that there was no business plan in place when our NDP government announced this project. This couldn't be further from the truth.

A 125-page clinical service plan was approved in March 2019, prior to the UCP getting elected. This plan called for a 436-bed hospital designed to meet the same demand as a 600-bed facility, with a more integrated, efficient model of care. This included 180 beds for patients with illnesses such as heart disease, strokes, pneumonia, along with specialized tuberculosis beds; 120 beds for surgical patients; 38 labour and delivery suites to support 4,400 annual births and 20 neonatal ICU beds; 50 mental health beds with programs for eating disorders, specialized care for recent immigrants, and a psychiatric day hospital; and 24 critical care beds.

The government is saying that costs are projected to reach \$5 billion, but we wouldn't be in this mess if the hospital hadn't been delayed for years by this UCP government. Further delays only keep the clock ticking, and it's an expensive clock. Things will get worse for patients and taxpayers the longer the UCP drags its feet.

Albertans deserve better. They deserve access to quality health care when they need it, close to home.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie has a statement.

### Youth Drug Use Prevention

**Member Eremenko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My member's statement today is a public service announcement of sorts, because it struck me that the government has yet to send a message to Albertans, especially to youth, that in 2024 taking illegal, unregulated drugs is just not worth the risk. Today the illegal drug supply is really fatal. It doesn't matter if you get drugs from a friend, a dealer, or the Internet; they are unpredictable and incredibly dangerous. And they're not just dangerous if you're addicted. All it takes is one time, one time to take a drug that you think is one thing, but it's actually something else, or it's mixed with other drugs that you don't expect, ending in tragic consequences. I don't want to lose any more lives, and I don't think anyone in these Chambers does.

For all the heated debate about harm reduction and safe supply, recovery, and everything in between, it would be wise to focus more attention on helping people, especially youth, avoid drug use and possible addiction in the first place. Investing in prevention and early intervention would include early childhood wraparounds, family programming, trauma-informed care, quality and accessible mental health supports, and reduced stigma.

There will always be some teens who cannot or choose not to heed the warnings. To protect these kids, it takes caring adults around them to try and understand why they want to use in the first place and to find alternative ways to meet their needs. If you're a parent, don't wait. To be effective in your conversations, be truthful. Evidence shows that teens are more likely to listen when they recognize they are given accurate information about genuine dangers. Tell your kids that these days most drugs are not what they seem and that in 2024 the danger associated with trying drugs is greater than ever. If you're not comfortable as a parent having that conversation, I bet you know someone who is: a coach, an auntie, a teacher, heck, maybe even your local MLA. Just like naloxone training, it's a skill we should all be prepared to use.

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise the Assembly that pursuant to Standing Order 7(8) the daily Routine may continue beyond 3 p.m.

### Notices of Motions

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. I rise to provide oral notice of Bill 19, the Utilities Affordability Statutes Amendment Act, 2024, sponsored by the Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

### Introduction of Bills

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-South.

#### Bill 207

#### Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education (Valuing Skilled Workers) Amendment Act, 2024

**Member Hoyle:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise and request leave to introduce Bill 207, the Skilled Trades and



Apprenticeship Education (Valuing Skilled Workers) Amendment Act, 2024.

If passed, this bill would provide workers in the compulsory trades confidence that their trades are protected in statute and no longer at risk of change or elimination with the stroke of a ministerial pen. The bill will also require a formalized consultation process if the Board of Skilled Trades is considering altering the designation, standards, activities, or requirements of a trade. Finally, Bill 207 will also clarify that apprenticeship education programs and industry training programs include trade unions and their facilities, that are already training union and non-union members and should be supported by this government.

I hope that all members in the Assembly will support it and allow for a full debate in the House as a priority for all Albertans.

[Motion carried; Bill 207 read a first time]

### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** Are there tablings? The hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis.

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite copies of a slide from a Valory Resources' PowerPoint presentation showing two letters of support for coal development on category 2 lands written by the former minister of economic development, trade, and tourism and the former minister of environment and parks.

**The Speaker:** Are there other tablings? The hon. Member for Edmonton-South, followed by Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

**Member Hoyle:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table multiple articles about the south Edmonton hospital showing proof of what the NDP had planned, the plans they had in place in 2019, also of health care professionals saying how financially senseless and devastating not building the south Edmonton hospital is due to population increase and growth.

Thank you.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the minister of public safety, who referenced a briefing note, I would like to table the five requisite copies of a document from Public Safety Canada from the briefing book of the federal government's Minister of Public Safety Canada from November 20, 2019, concerning contract policing in Canada.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Beddington.

**Ms Chapman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite number of copies of the *Edmonton Examiner* article Edmonton Public Schools Faces Financial Shortfall from Inflation and Provincial Funding Formula. Just so everyone knows, the lowest funding per student in the country.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

**Member Irwin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the requisite number of copies of Tenant Experiences, which is part of a document from ACORN Canada that talks about rent gouging and retrofits and experiences, particularly with Avenue Living, where tenants outline massive rent increases that they've experienced.

3:00

### 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. Ellis, Deputy Premier, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services, responses to questions raised by Mr. Long, hon. Member for West Yellowhead, Mr. Boitchenko, hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon, and hon. Mr. Sabir, hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, March 14, 2024, Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services 2024-25 main estimates debate.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, that brings us to points of order. At 1:54 the Government House Leader rose on a point of order which he subsequently withdrew. Again at 2:02 the hon. Government House Leader rose on a point of order.

### Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the time noted, I called a point of order, citing 23(h), (i), and (j). At the time the hon. minister was speaking, the Member for Edmonton-North West clearly stated in the background: they are doing their job; you should do yours. We have a Speaker in this Chamber for a number of reasons, not the least of which that we direct all comments through the chair to avoid personal attacks. This would be a point of order based on precedents as ruled that we don't directly address other members. We also don't say things like: do your job. It certainly would create disorder in this Chamber.

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

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and respond. I think the Government House Leader would be surprised to know that if you search *Hansard* for "Do your job," you get more than 2,000 responses. Asking people to do their job is something that happens quite frequently and has throughout the amount of time that *Hansard* has been used.

Certainly, I do want to just reference the context here, Mr. Speaker, because it is my belief that the minister was using language very likely to create disorder in this House, and it may be your opinion here that disorder was caused because the minister, through his remarks, was quite literally suggesting that by bringing the concerns of doctors and nurses about some of our province's most vulnerable, the babies in NICU units, the Official Opposition was engaging in something shameful, fearmongering, and that we should not continue in our line of questioning.

The reason that I think that this is potentially its own point of order is because of its likelihood to create disorder, which I believe that it did. The Official Opposition is defending the right of families to receive medical treatment here in their home cities, highlighting issues that front-line medical workers have put forward, and to have a minister essentially shame us for asking these questions certainly causes ire to rise in this Chamber.

In this particular case the Member for Edmonton-North West stating something – and I do not have the benefit of the Blues. As it was a heckle – at this point I am taking the Government House Leader's word on what was said because I do not have that information: we are doing our job, and you should do your job. I believe it is a continuation of the debate, talking about the fundamentals of what we are doing here in this Chamber, and in this case the Official Opposition is fighting for the babies in the NICU.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, are there others?

I do have the benefit of the Blues, and I am prepared to rule if there are none. I do concur that the statements that have been made here in the Assembly with respect to what the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West did say are correct: “We’re doing our job. You should do your[s].” I do provide caution with respect to members directing their comments through the chair. However, I’m not convinced that this comment rises to the level of a point of order. I encourage members to direct all of their comments through the chair when they’re on their feet and not in a sedentary position. This matter is not a point of order. I consider the matter dealt with and concluded.

At 2:02 the hon. Government House Leader rose on an additional point of order; 2:03, 2:04 is the point of time, I believe.

### **Point of Order Decorum**

**Mr. Schow:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. At 2:03 I rose on a point of order. I believe that at the time the Leader of the Opposition was saying off the record to the minister speaking: just because you didn’t know what’s going on doesn’t mean they don’t know what’s going on. We know what’s going on in this Chamber. We obviously understand very well the roles that we play here.

I’d also cite the last point of order from the member opposite, the Opposition House Leader, about not calling a point of order though she’s responded within a point of order. You can’t point of order a point of order. That’s like trying to triple stamp a double stamp. You can’t triple stamp a double stamp, Mr. Speaker.

What I would say is that while you may not find this a point of order, there is a continual heckling that is directed at individuals on the government side from the Leader of the Opposition. I find that most points of order begin to cease at a very specific, particular time every day during question period. I’m not making any assumptions or insinuations, only to suggest that there is a level of decorum that resumes at around that time. I also find that most points of order I’ve been calling lately are on the Opposition House Leader. So I think this is really more speaking specifically about – sorry; opposition leader. I apologize to the hon. Opposition House Leader, who I have a tremendous level of respect for in this Chamber and outside of it, Mr. Speaker.

Decorum: it’s why we’re here, Mr. Speaker, to maintain decorum and do the people’s business. I would ask that the Leader of the Opposition maintain a level of decorum and respect for this Chamber.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Official Opposition House Leader.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I hear my colleagues warning me not to get a point of order during the point of order, which is a good caution. Can’t triple stamp a double stamp, as per the Government House Leader.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Based on the Government House Leader’s submission and what I recall from that moment, if I recall correctly, in response to a question around Bill 18 and the government adding themselves in between funding between federal entities and universities, the minister’s answer was that the government of Alberta needs to make sure that the funding aligns “with their priorities”, speaking about the universities. I don’t believe that universities have asked for that kind of help. It certainly sounded very paternalistic, and I believe that that is what led to the comment around: this information is publicly available. We know that through a variety of funding agreements. It is available on the Internet. I don’t believe that it was intended to be an unparliamentary heckle; rather, continuation of debate that was happening in this place. Certainly, I can appreciate

that we should all be directing comments through the chair, and I’m happy to provide that caution. But please do let me know if you feel that this was unparliamentary today.

**The Speaker:** Are there others?

I do have the benefit of the Blues. I am prepared to rule if there are no other submissions. With the benefit of the Blues I do have a variety of comments that are made: wow; nobody else does; did you talk to anybody?; Google it. Google it; on social media; if you didn’t know what it was, you need a briefing note. Anyways, there was a significant amount of heckling at that time, so I am sympathetic to the hon. the Government House Leader’s position on the verbose nature of that heckling. While no individual heckle, I would say, is unparliamentary, I think it’s a good reminder that when there are multiple members who continue to heckle, we’ve seen a continual decline in decorum. This is not a point of order, but I do provide a level of caution to members of the Official Opposition. I consider the matter dealt with and concluded.

At 2:04 the hon. the Deputy Government House Leader rose on a point of order that I believe was encapsulated. If it hasn’t been – and I’m not sure if you are intending to argue or the minister.

### **Point of Order Allegations against a Member**

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Speaker, at 2:04 I rose on a point of order as the Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall was speaking, asking a question, at which point the member said, “Power went to her head” in reference to the Premier. Now, I rise on 23(h). As we know, on page 618 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, this entire Chamber’s proceedings are “based on a long-standing tradition of respect for the integrity of all Members.” Accusing another member – I believe the Premier is a member of this Chamber – questioning her integrity, that she is motivated by power rather than the good of all Albertans, especially given the member and the ministerial statement we heard today, I think is unparliamentary and inappropriate, and I ask the member to withdraw.

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

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I don’t believe that this is a point of order. I believe that the members opposite are reading into it something that was certainly not intended. The language that was used is not an insult. In fact, the language that was used is referring to an incredibly common phenomenon, quite literally a risk for new leaders. If you type “power going to your head” into Google, you get so many different articles, including ones titled [How to not] Let Power Go to Your Head as a New Leader, talking about some of the pitfalls that can come from new leadership. None of us are immune to the blinding effects of power. I don’t believe this was intended as an insult; rather, talking about our observations of what we are seeing and the potential negative impacts of new leadership. I don’t believe that this is a point of order. I think it’s a colloquial phrase, one that we should be able to talk about in this place.

I look forward to your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

**3:10**

**The Speaker:** I do have the benefit of the Blues. I am prepared to rule. However, if there are others who would like to provide additional submissions to the Assembly, I’m more than happy to hear those.

Seeing none, I do have the benefit of the Blues. The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall said the following: “Academic freedom was something the Premier used to value until power went to her head. Can the minister explain how the provincial government.” And

he proceeded. I do believe that we can make a submission that power going to someone's head would certainly not be a point of order. The problem here, of course, is the very personal nature of the statement. While I don't think that I will find a point of order in this particular instance, I will provide a very strong caution to the hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall. It would have been just as easy to say that the power went to the Premier's head and depersonalized this debate, but he didn't choose to do so, so it gets close to a point of order. I won't consider it a point of order today. I consider the matter dealt with and concluded, but a strong caution to the member.

The hon. Government House Leader rose on a point of order at 2:14.

### Point of Order

#### Preambles to Supplementary Questions

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did rise on a point of order at 2:14. Before I begin my remarks, I would like to note the time that we are chewing into debate for the sole reason that this Thursday and last Thursday countless points of order were called because of the lack of decorum from members on the opposite side. This particular point of order I would not – usually on members' statements I would withhold points of order because it is something that we usually don't do, but at the time noted, 23(h), (i), and (j) . . .

**The Speaker:** Sorry. Just let me interrupt. The point of order that I believe we are talking about took place at 2:14.

**Mr. Schow:** Oh, I apologize. Yeah. That's right.

**The Speaker:** No. It's okay. I'm not sure if you want to withdraw this point of order or you want to argue it.

**Mr. Schow:** No. This was the use of a preamble by the Member for Banff-Kananaskis. Simple.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Official Opposition House Leader.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I really would like to point out that the Government House Leader on one point of order is bemoaning the waste of the Chamber's time, and on the other he is calling a point of order for something that has been ruled not a point of order in the past. On November 2, 2021, *Hansard* page 5920, Mr. Speaker, I respectfully quote you to you. "I'm not sure a preamble is an apology-required type of offence. I'm sure that the Opposition House Leader will provide some feedback to the Member." In this case I believe the Government House Leader may be correct that there was a preamble although I do not have the benefit of the Blues, and I would be happy to caution my caucus. I don't believe it's a point of order, and that is my submission to you. I look forward to your ruling.

**The Speaker:** I am prepared to rule, and I do have the benefit of the Blues. The very distinct preamble was: "All right. Well, wait till my tabling . . . for another smoking gun." And a point of order was called. One of the challenges that the Speaker faces when making a ruling, and as so eloquently noted by the Official Opposition House Leader, is that members will on occasion take that as the total ability to disregard whatever was to happen in the future. As we've seen, you said that a preamble is not an offence for which you would have to apologize. Well, the Speaker was certainly correct on that day. My concern here is that if the members of the Official Opposition feel as though there is no requirement on the preamble rule, one will continually be used, and as such we will just head down a road of only ever more and more preambles. In this case I do think that

there was no attempt at anything other than a preamble, which it's very clear was used. This is a point of order, and the hon. member can apologize for the use of a preamble.

**Dr. Elmeligi:** I apologize for the use of a preamble, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I consider the matter dealt with and concluded.

Finally, at some later point, during Members' Statements, the Government House Leader rose on a point of order.

### Point of Order

#### Language Creating Disorder

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is my job in this Chamber if not to try to help maintain order? Hence, the points of order that I do call on a regular basis on the opposition side, but this one in particular I find egregious. While the Member for Edmonton-City Centre was speaking, giving a member statement, I waited to the end so as not to interrupt him, but he used the terminology, something to the effect of the Premier espousing or supporting crackpot ideologies. Then there was a whole list of other things that were, I think, offensive or borderline offensive that the member used in his member's statement.

While I recognize that he may not agree with things that the Premier believes in, to suggest that she is espousing crackpot ideologies, Mr. Speaker – he's talking about Albertans. He's talking about Albertans who voted in members of the government. There is a reason why they're on that side and we're on this side.

Now, I would never assume or call the 74 per cent of voters who voted for the Member for Edmonton-City Centre crackpots. That would be disrespectful in the same way as if he referred to the 74 per cent of voters that voted for me, Mr. Speaker, as crackpots, so I think that this is language that clearly creates disorder in this Chamber. I would suggest we show a little more respect to the voters of Alberta and not use such language going forward. I believe it's a point of order under 23(h), (i), and (j).

**The Speaker:** The Official Opposition House Leader.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Edmonton-City Centre did not refer to any Albertan as a crackpot, and I think that the Government House Leader should show a little bit more respect to the important work that he is doing, because he would not do that and has not done that.

The language that was used was: "a Premier who embraced crackpot COVID conspiracists." The language was speaking specifically to a former Trump administration adviser who pushed for a herd immunity approach during the COVID-19 pandemic, someone the Premier invited to provide advice, someone who has referred to the pandemic vaccine in interviews and on online posts as a bioweapon. That person was the identified crackpot in this question, not any Albertan, and certainly not someone that the Premier should have invited to provide expert advice.

I would also note, Mr. Speaker, that, if you check *Hansard*, the language "crackpot" itself is not unparliamentary or has not been ruled unparliamentary in the past. I realize that these things can change and shift on us. In fact, that language can be found as far back as 1972, used in multiple cases, used specifically in this case to talk about someone who is espousing very dangerous ideology.

I do not believe that this is a point of order. I think given how widely documented this visit was, including the Official Opposition officially calling for the cancellation of this invitation for advice, that this is a matter of debate, as are all of the other statements that were in the excellent member's statement of the Member for Edmonton-City Centre. I submit to you that it's not a point of order.

**The Speaker:** I do have the benefit of the Blues. I am prepared to rule. However, I'm happy to hear from other members of the Assembly should they choose to provide any additional comments.

Hon. members, the hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre said the following:

a Premier who embraced crackpot COVID conspiracists, [and] said that everything up to stage 4 cancer is under your control, who claimed that smoking cigarettes could reduce the risk of disease, [and] thinks [that] she should decide funding for medical research. A Premier who repeatedly shared misinformation about Russia . . .

Hon. members on November 24, 2020, the Speaker referenced a ruling with respect to members' statements, and I, at least once a session or more, like to point to Speaker Kowalski's ruling about members' statements where he spoke broadly on the benefit of members' statements with the widest possible swath to allow members to communicate about their constituents. He also said the following, and this is the important part for all members here today. "Members [should] speak on policy . . . and with the highest civility and the highest decorum and not bring in personalities and personal attacks on other members."

3:20

The challenge, of course, for the hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre is that just earlier this week the hon. Minister of Education was required to apologize for making a statement that the hon. Member for Calgary-Beddington, I believe, was spreading misinformation. Unfortunately, the member makes the claim: "a Premier who repeatedly [spread] misinformation." He continued. While the discussion around COVID crackpots or otherwise may be a matter of debate, it certainly isn't in the keeping of the ruling that Speaker Kowalski made around personal attacks and the highest level of decorum. I won't find that a point of order, but I will ask the hon. member to apologize and withdraw his statements with respect to "the Premier who repeatedly spread misinformation," as the Minister of Education did earlier this week.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Certainly, Mr. Speaker. For implying the spreading of misinformation on behalf of the Premier I apologize and withdraw.

**The Speaker:** I consider this matter dealt with and concluded.

Prior to moving to Orders of the Day and with some small level of agreement from hon. members, earlier today, during introductions, I had the absolute pleasure and honour of introducing one of my children to the Assembly. Unfortunately, my other daughter was unable to attend at that very moment, but she now joins us in the Speaker's gallery. It's my great pleasure and honour to introduce to members of the Assembly my daughter Peyton Cooper. I ask that she rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

We are at Ordres du jour.

## Orders of the Day

### Government Motions

#### Duty on Vaping Substances

31. Mr. Horner moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta approve the arrangement between the government of Alberta and the government of Canada outlined on page 126 of the 2024-27 fiscal plan presented by the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta on February 29, 2024, Sessional Paper 211/2023-24, with respect to the implementation by the government of

Canada of a duty on vaping substances to be imposed under the Excise Act, 2001, Canada, in respect of Alberta.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 18 this is a debatable motion. Is there anyone wishing to join in the debate? Seeing none, I am prepared to call the question.

[Government Motion 31 carried]

## Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

### Bill 17

#### Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction.

**Mr. Williams:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to rise today to move second reading of Bill 17, the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

With the time I have today, I wish to share with you how the Canadian centre of recovery excellence, or CORE, will benefit our province along with others on the national and international level seeking improvements in the mental health and addiction system in the information that informs our policies. To do this, I want to first highlight the work that we have done to improve services right here in Alberta, making us a national and, yes, Madam Speaker, an international leader when it comes to our compassionate response focused on the health and well-being of all Albertans in mental health and addiction through the Alberta recovery model. As you know, we have changed the way that we respond to mental health and addiction challenges in Alberta, which have been on the rise not only in Alberta, but these challenges have been on the rise across Canada and all of North America.

The truth is that no jurisdiction is immune to these paired crises that we face in front of our societies. Families have been torn apart by addiction, leaving children without their mothers and their fathers. Tragically, parents have lost their kids to this illness as well. Of course, Madam Speaker, mental health is a growing concern over the past decade we see manifest at increasingly younger ages in more and more of our communities. We recognize the need to prioritize mental health and wellness of our children and youth as we seek to increase the solutions that we have not just in Alberta but across Canada.

Thankfully, Madam Speaker, in all cases we know that recovery is possible, and this message is one that we're proud to move forward and put on the floor of our Chamber and that we communicate as a government for all Albertans and Canadians to hear. We believe as leaders on this side of the House that every single individual across the province, no matter who they are or where they come from, their background, or their income level, deserves the opportunity to pursue recovery.

Now, Madam Speaker, some ask about recovery and how it applies not just to addiction but also to mental health. Now, recovery in mental health is defined as a process of achieving and maintaining remission. If we quote the Mental Health Commission of Canada, we know that it refers to "living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life, even when there are ongoing limitations caused by mental health problems and illnesses." It's this idea of continuing to live a fulfilled life in spite of any challenges one faces. That is how recovery applies to mental health.

When it comes to addiction, recovery is more than just a question of abstinence, Madam Speaker; it's defined as a process of continuing

growth that addresses the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual disturbances inherent in addiction. I remember speaking to one recovered addict in Vancouver, in New Westminster, recovered for over 40 years, living recovery every day. I asked him what recovery is, and he told me that it's being a good grandfather. That, I think, spoke more than any of the definitions I'd read, the idea of recovery as renewing the ability for a citizen of our beautiful province to have a fulfilled life, to be a mother, brother, a grandfather in this case and able to contribute. This is true no matter what the differences are between individuals.

I will say that I recognize as the minister that recovery will be different for every individual. It will take a different path and a different journey, and it will not look the same from one individual to the next, often not from one day to the next. We also know that based on different illnesses, diseases, or challenges, whether it be mental health or addiction, each of those will also have different manifestations of what that recovery looks like.

But in all cases, Madam Speaker, recovery aims to improve the quality of life, to enhance wellness of an individual's consistent pursuit of abstinence or remission of symptoms, including behavioural control and emotional self-regulation, relief to those symptoms, and the enrichment of interpersonal skills, relationships, social contentment. It's being a full human again, not captured by a disease or an illness or a challenge but instead captured by the beauty of life. These definitions and these examples: we know very clearly that recovery can apply to those facing all challenges in their life, whether it be addiction or mental health. Where our focus has been is on improving the well-being of Albertans facing these challenges throughout their journey and recovery.

Now, with your indulgence, Madam Speaker, I'd like to address the Alberta recovery model as the pretext for what lays the ground before we see the introduction of this bill and what this province has done when it comes to addiction and mental health recovery policy. First and foremost, our government does not believe that someone's personal situation should ever be a barrier to their recovery. The truth is, whether it be an addiction or a mental health challenge, that that illness, that disease does not know that person's personal situation either and will not be limited by that personal situation. So we took action to remove user fees for treatment, increase access province-wide no matter where you live, whether that be through the VODP program or we look at the reduction of fees or we talk about 211 and Counselling Alberta.

I hear on the daily, Madam Speaker, of families sending their children to treatment being forced to empty their savings accounts to help their family and their children, to save a life. That is beyond the pale. So let me briefly outline some of the concrete steps we have taken in this light to make sure that no one's personal situation is prohibiting life-saving access to recovery.

**3:30**

Previously, under the previous government, treatment cost \$1,240 a month in order to get it, making it very difficult, near impossible, for those without outside support who suffer from addiction to get access to those funds. The truth is, Madam Speaker, we don't know where the government expected individuals suffering from a crippling and deadly disease of addiction would find over \$1,000 a month to get access to life-saving treatment. We added more than 10,000 treatment spaces per annum across our province. That's detox, that's pretreatment, and that's treatment spaces, long- and short-term. This means 10,000 individuals accessing services like detox, residential treatment, recovery each and every single year, and each and every one of those individuals gets access, potentially turning their life into one of recovery and fulfillment and hope. It's an increase of approximately 55 per cent since 2019.

One of the most exciting parts of the work we've been doing in our recovery system is building the 11 recovery communities across our province. These long-term residential treatment centres are capable of supporting, when all told, approximately 2,000 treatment spaces a year. Two of these are already open, one in Red Deer and one in Lethbridge, both of which have been operating in this last year. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that I try to visit them any time I'm in the area of Red Deer or Lethbridge. I'm very anxious and excited to see the lion's share of these come on by this time next year, of those remaining nine.

When I visit these treatment spaces and I meet individuals, I have absolutely heart-wrenching and heartwarming stories that I hear, speaking to those young men and women who are battling for their lives in the most traumatic, epic challenge they have ever faced. Madam Speaker, I spoke to three individuals about two months ago when I was in Red Deer, and they were gracious enough to appear in an interview with CBC *The National's* Ian Hanomansing, who came out to see this pioneering work that Alberta and this government and this Chamber has allowed to happen. In the process I asked them: where would they be if they did not get treatment today? And without missing a beat, all three of them immediately, into the camera, and very plainly, said that they believed they'd be dead. This is the challenge they face. There is no language too epic or too grand for the fight that they are in for their lives.

That was a heart-wrenching moment to think of all those individuals that haven't made it into treatment because we only started building these treatment centres with the advent of our Alberta recovery model in 2019. But the heartwarming one is: I returned just last month, and one of those individuals had graduated, now working, reunited with his family. His seven-year-old son was there along with his mother, three generations together, celebrating recovery of one son and one father. That's possible because of the decisions we've made today. It's difficult for us not to reduce it to 10,000 spaces a year. It's difficult for us not to see simply stats but to see each of them as a life. The only way, Madam Speaker, out of addiction, other than death, is recovery, which is why we are focusing so heavily on making sure we have that capacity.

We have also established the virtual opioid dependency program which is pioneering international programming that no jurisdiction has, save for Alberta, and is the envy of every other jurisdiction that struggles with this opioid crisis that's being faced. Now, this provides same-day immediate access to evidence-based opioid agonist therapy for relief from withdrawal symptoms, for those who seek it if they have an opioid addiction, but also prevents in a very important way the possibility of serious overdose if that individual does seek out a high from an opioid. Now, this program serves over 8,000 individuals on their programming every day, and that programming is saving lives as well, Madam Speaker. I couldn't be more proud of the work that this province and government have done to get us to that space.

Of course, we also partnered with five of those recovery communities with Indigenous partners, four of which we have announced are on-reserve. I want to thank the First Nation leadership in Siksika, Tsuut'ina, the Blood Tribe, and Enoch for their absolute leadership and vision around recovery so that we can lead the way. Madam Speaker, if you're looking for leadership on this file, not just in Alberta, not just in Canada but internationally, I suggest you look to the First Nations of Alberta. They understand the crisis of what addiction is on the reserve. They understand it in the saddest possible terms. As I spoke to one of those First Nation chiefs just this week, we had to change a meeting time because of a funeral he had to go to. But in that conversation I also heard that one of the family members of that First Nation chief has got on to Sublocade, provided through our opioid dependency program. That chief told me that it saved the life of the family member and that it's a game changer. Quote, unquote.

Madam Speaker, the decisions we make in this Chamber and what we pass as legislation and how we spend our dollars in recovery matters. I'm also proud of the partnership we have with the Kids Help Phone, with Alberta 211 giving Albertans an immediate connection to support they need where and when they need it, no matter where they are in the province of Alberta. We've taken steps to expand counselling services across the province for same-day immediate access on a sliding pay scale for those, no matter where they are financially, to get access to Counselling Alberta services. In partnership with CASA Mental Health we are building mental health treatment capacity for youth and bringing professional services directly into schools across the province.

Now, that's a synopsis of only some of the work that we have done, Madam Speaker, when it comes to building out that Alberta model, but it's important to understand how we got there, what has informed us, what is bringing us to the point where we can now bring forward this piece of legislation. Well, it starts with the evidence and the data. The system has been carefully built, the recommendations made by leading mental health and addiction experts, including those who sat on the mental health and addiction advisory panel, along with the Recovery Expert Advisory Panel.

One such expert I wish to highlight is the work that I've done and that my predecessors have set up before me in this file, with Dr. Keith Humphreys, professor at Stanford University, the author of the *Stanford-Lancet* Commission, universally accepted as the international expert on the opioid pandemic and addiction crisis across North America. *The Lancet*, as we all know, is the world's pre-eminent medical and scientific journal, and Stanford, of California fame, a research university of the highest calibre. Now, Dr. Humphreys not only does that work, but he also, for the third time in his career, is working for the U.S. President in the White House, having previously served presidents Bush and Obama, now serving President Biden.

Madam Speaker, when it comes to this, the evidence doesn't see political boundaries, and the nature of what recovery is for mental health or addiction does not see your personal circumstances or how you vote in that voting booth. The evidence needs to be rock solid, and the experts that we have relied upon have allowed our jurisdiction to be the leader across Canada and North America in exactly this light.

This is ultimately what has brought us down the path that we're on today with the legislation in Bill 17, the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act. I look forward to continuing partnerships with professionals, experts, and researchers in this field through the establishment of this body. CORE will provide an opportunity to partner with world-leading institutions such as the U of A and U of C right here at home in our province and also with research institutes around recovery at Harvard, with Stanford – as previously mentioned – and to continue developing an evidence-based research policy for recommending government on the path forward to make sure we are well informed.

CORE is going to have a number of different functions. First amongst them is going to be to evaluate the delivery of services, metrics, evidence-based, of what we are doing in the province when it comes to mental health and addiction, what policies we need to tweak or refine, what services are doing well, which ones we need to double down on, and which ones need reforming. We need to do that through an evidence-based approach, through this Crown corporation being established.

As everyone knows, we've announced the establishment of this organization, and it's parallel to the Health Quality Council of Alberta, already in existence with a similar function to health. We also know that this body, CORE, is going to provide an important service when it comes to aggregating and synthesizing systemic

reviews of data and research across the globe, when it comes to mental health and addiction, to inform our policies. Madam Speaker, when it comes to mental health and addiction, it's a relatively new area of research by comparison to other health research and there is a lot of very exciting work being done. For us to understand that, to understand its scientific implications and its policy applications, we need to be able to evaluate that at a systemic level and bring it in to Alberta so that we can be informed by evidence and the best possible research.

Of course, the partnership with individual institutions for research will be essential for us understanding, creating Alberta-specific solutions to the crisis that we face today. Alberta will not just follow other jurisdictions like B.C. because they're doing it and we see activists and radicals advising; we will be based in the evidence and the appropriate information to make sure that we move forward with the best possible solutions to Albertan crises.

3:40

Now, over the last few weeks I've spent hours engaging sessions of hundreds of front-line health care workers who are deeply dedicated to work and the support of their patients. I'm optimistic with the direction we're moving in with both recovery Alberta, if and when it is established, pending any future legislation, and CORE with the legislation in front of us today, and it will be an important contributor for us moving forward.

Now, similar to the Health Quality Council of Alberta, we are going to do our best to make sure that we have the best information in the right hands of the right people at the right time. Now, for us to be able to do that, we have to make sure that we look at what is the most complex policy space, I believe, facing western democracies today. When it comes to the addiction and opioid crisis that we face in our streets and the public addiction overflowing not just on Jasper Avenue and Stephen Avenue but into our secondary and tertiary cities, importantly into all of our families and into our homes, and when it comes to the mental health crisis that we know increasingly is affecting our youth today, especially in a postpandemic world where connections and societal relationships have been even more fractured, these incredibly complex policy problems need to have evidence-based research informing us.

In order to do that, we need to make sure that we are partnering, not siloing in one ministry or in one health agency or in one way of thinking. There are many common individuals between Mental Health and Addiction, in my file; the Ministry of Health; Seniors, Community and Social Services; public safety; and, of course, Justice; Children and Family Services. Madam Speaker, it would be hard pressed to find Albertans that aren't overlapped between these four or five ministries. In order to build a strong and effective system of care, we need to take an entire government-wide and society-wide approach.

In order to solve these absolutely complex problems, similar to HQCA, the organization will be using the data at their disposal to make sure that we solve these crises in our families and our homes and our streets, and we have a responsibility to uphold the strictest standards of protection of personal health data. This is an absolute priority for me personally and a priority for our government, to protect the privacy and personal information of Albertans that we are responsible for as custodians in this province. CORE will adhere to privacy legislation, including the Health Information Act, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and to the appropriate and very substantive high bar around privacy impact assessments. This, along with other protections: the CORE act will allow us to make sure that we have the highest and strictest enforcement of the most important information that we hold today so that we can solve these incredibly challenging problems in our province.

Now, before I close, Madam Speaker, I want to reinforce the work we're doing with the Alberta recovery model and what relies upon us getting it right. The opportunity we have today in CORE is to make sure that going forward we are not only a leader internationally, but also we are serving Albertans through evaluation of our programs and also making sure we're partnering with the highest possible standards of protection for privacy, with institutions and looking at the research available so that we can serve Albertans the absolute best way possible for those struggling with mental health and addiction. I encourage all members to support and vote for Bill 17.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there other members to join the debate? The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

**Member Eremenko:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to be able to stand today as we commence debate on the second reading of Bill 17, the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act. I'll start by giving you a quick definition. A quick search of the phenomenon of confirmation bias results in the following definition from *Britannica*:

Confirmation bias [is] people's tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with their existing beliefs. This biased approach to decision making is largely unintentional, and it results in a person ignoring information that is inconsistent with their beliefs. These beliefs can include a person's expectations in a given situation and their predictions about a particular outcome. People are especially likely to process information to support their own beliefs when an issue is highly important.

The minister just spoke eloquently in the Chamber today about just how critical this issue is, and on that front I certainly do agree. But where it is so incredibly important, confirmation bias does creep in, and this Bill 17 is thick with it, in my opinion.

I'm very pleased to be able to speak about CORE, an abbreviation we'll use throughout the next little while. The only way a centre of recovery excellence could be effective in its mandate is if there is an assurance of objectivity. That is a fundamental principle of research, of science, that we must be able to trust the outcomes and the research and the reports and the results and the evaluation of work that comes out of a body with such a significant budget and with such a significant mandate, but I don't see any indication of why we should believe that that objectivity will in fact be applied in this case. This is very much at the heart of my comments today as we begin the second reading of Bill 17.

This government has made it clear that they have chosen recovery as the path forward, and I want to start right off the top by saying that what is so critically important is that it is not a question of recovery versus harm reduction. It's a question of recovery and – and – all of those options to deal with an issue that is immensely complex. I think it was Albert Einstein who said: if I have 20 hours or 20 days – I forget exactly which one it was – to solve a problem, I'm going to take 19 of them to understand the problem and one to actually create the solution. I feel time and time again that this is a government who has made its mind up about the solution without fully understanding and seeking to establish the problem.

Recovery is the path. We've got that established and the associated therapies for mental health, addiction, and for Albertans who use drugs. Look at just all of the incredible investments that have been made in recovery and how kind of pernicious this term is though the definition remains vague. Is it abstinence? Is it not? What does it mean in the context of mental health? What does it mean in the context of youth? We have recovery-oriented systems of care. We have recovery Alberta, we have the centre of recovery excellence, we have My Recovery Plan, we have the Recovery Capital Index, we have the Alberta recovery model, and then, of course, we have the \$650-per-ticket annual Recovery Capital Conference. Recovery is

steeped in this government's current approach to drug policy and to mental health and addiction.

Does this genuinely sound like a government who is interested in any research or in any outcomes that are not associated with capital R recovery? Not with these kinds of investments, Madam Speaker. Not with the messaging Albertans have been hearing since the UCP came to power. This is not, in my mind, a government nor a mandate that is, in fact, meant to do anything but confirm what this government has already decided to be true.

And don't take my word for it, Madam Speaker. The messaging I'm happy to reiterate here in terms of just how vehemently ideological some of the government's approaches have been thus far. For example, in response to an important question from my colleague from Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview a couple of weeks ago in regard to the lack of engagement of health care workers, in regard to the transition to recovery Alberta from AHS, the Premier replied:

I am going to guarantee the United Nurses of Alberta that we will not implement . . . policy like we're seeing in British Columbia. Do you want to know what's happening there under their harm reduction policies? Nurses at the hospital are expected to provide a multitude of harm reduction services, [like] pouring alcohol for patients.

Yesterday, during the debate on Bill 18 – just yesterday – the Premier once again voiced her bias in the response to mental health and addiction, saying:

It . . .

It being harm reduction.

. . . is creating a horrible environment for our hard-working nurses on the front line in British Columbia and is one of the things we absolutely will not see . . . in Alberta. We welcome any nurses from other jurisdictions, who want to have a safe environment to operate in, to come to Alberta, knowing that we are not going to allow the federal government to dictate to us how we manage that vitally important issue of public health and addiction treatment.

To repeat, harm reduction "is creating a horrible environment for our hard-working nurses" in B.C. "and is one of the things we absolutely will not see happen in Alberta." Is this once more a government who is keeping an open mind about the research and the results that are coming out of the centre of recovery excellence? I don't think so. These are not statements that speak to objectivity. These are statements that speak to a mind that is made up.

3:50

Bill 17, the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act, section 3(1), provides the mandate for the entity:

to support an improved approach to mental health and addiction issues by

- (a) conducting and supporting research, evaluations and innovations . . .
- (b) providing advice, information, reports and the results of research and evaluations to the Minister . . .

To the minister, I should add, and then it is up to the minister to exercise his own discretion about whether or not those findings will in fact be shared and made public.

- (c) supporting the provision of services to individuals . . .
- (d) providing provincial, national and international leadership on
  - (i) addressing . . . issues, and
  - (ii) recovery-oriented systems.

As we've said, mental health and addictions is a massively complex issue. It is not unique to Alberta. To position a centre of recovery excellence and suggest that it will in fact be providing objective information about how to support mental health and addiction issues: I'm just not seeing it here, Madam Speaker. A

reasonable mandate indeed if it could actually be done objectively; however, this government has made its mind up. CORE is not interested in researching what works and what doesn't work. It's been created to confirm, as I mentioned, what this government has already decided to be true. It is legislated confirmation bias.

Let's debunk a few items that I've cited in quotation from the Premier, and, you know, I don't need a \$5 million-a-year budget to do it. Firstly, what the Premier referenced yesterday and a few weeks ago with such dismay about what's happening in B.C. sounds a lot to me like a managed alcohol program. The Premier may not know that withdrawal for someone with alcohol abuse disorder can be fatal, Madam Speaker. It can be fatal. I understand that it may offend this government's sensibilities, but sometimes providing alcohol in a managed and monitored way is the best way to offer a person some stability within and without a health care environment. We have managed alcohol programs here in Alberta, and they are quite successful. I'm sure that they would take a call from the Premier to tell them a little bit more about this well-established, proven therapy.

Secondly, the Premier referenced nurses being asked to provide clean pipes. I urge the Premier to see first-hand what the alternative is. Used glass pipes can have sharp edges that can cut a person who uses drugs, increasing the risk of infection, and when shared, these used pipes can increase the likelihood of spreading blood-borne diseases like hepatitis C and HIV. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, Madam Speaker. I understand that these health services might make the members opposite uncomfortable. But it's not up to them. It's up to the professionals, those incredibly hard-working men and women who go to work every day doing immensely emotional work to simply save lives. That is their job. It's not up to me as a politician, it's not up to any of us as politicians to turn our backs on proven therapies when the evidence shows that they work even if it makes us uncomfortable.

The centre of recovery excellence does not have a mandate to make government more comfortable. In fact, CORE should challenge the government in its decisions, but with the level of interference this legislation grants the minister, I don't think that's going to be the case. The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour, Madam Speaker, in which case this government has made it crystal clear that ideology, not science, will guide CORE.

May I remind the members in this Chamber that this government allocated \$35.7 million in budget '24-25 to initiatives that reduce harm. The Premier just said that harm reduction has no place in Alberta, yet close to \$36 million is being invested in harm reduction. This is still a quarter of what was allocated to treatment and recovery and, sadly, \$5 million more than what was designated to prevention and early intervention. So in allusion to my member's statement from earlier today, Madam Speaker: what are we doing to stop people from going down that path of drug use and possible addiction in the first place? It is a fifth of the budget allocation to treatment and recovery.

May I also remind the members in the Chamber of comments made by the Premier just earlier this month. In response to a question from the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Premier said, and I quote: we do harm reduction; we do have safe consumption sites; we do have pain medication clinics to make sure that people who have opioid addictions are able to receive a safe supply of the drugs that they need. That's a direct quote from the Premier in this Chamber. People here might be confused. Some days I'm a bit confused, too. Either this government is unsure about what safe supply and harm reduction actually mean, or they're happy to flip-flop between ideology and science depending on which direction the electoral winds are blowing on any given day.

Whatever the case may be, Madam Speaker, this is not a government who should be trusted with a research initiative related to mental health and addiction funded with a \$5 million-a-year budget of taxpayers' money. This legislation allows for political interference at every single juncture of CORE's operations, strategy, appointments, and decision-making. On this file, this is not a government who has earned the trust to run a centre of excellence for much of anything.

I'd like to spend the rest of my time discussing the structure of CORE. We heard some of the equivalencies that have been drawn between the Health Quality Council of Alberta and CORE. You know, the HQCA has done an abundance of very important work in terms of representing Albertans and their access to quality health care. Unfortunately, that reputation, I think, has tarnished a little bit as a result of amendments and reforms that had been implemented back in 2020, that brought HQCA further under the influence of government.

I suppose in that case the similarities between the two agencies are quite pronounced because the minister has the opportunity to step in at, frankly, every single turn. I'd like to just list some of those out. The minister will have full power to create the board and approve the budget. The minister will set timelines for the research plan, ask for other plans, and amend plans. Bylaws must be approved by the minister, and the minister can amend or make bylaws. The minister will consider recommendations from the board to appoint the CEO and CSO. Interestingly, the minister has already appointed a CEO and CSO to CORE without actually selecting the board first. Typically the board would precede, I would expect, and have something to say about what the leadership and the executive is going to look like.

The minister can require CORE to conduct specific research, create a report, and submit information specified by the minister that includes identifying health information. The minister can require records and reports be produced for ministerial examination, and they can access electronic data. The minister can make inquiries about any person. The minister can make inquiries about any person or use and disclose personal information or individually identifying health information. For reference, that's in section 16 and section 17 of the legislation. Other ministers can also use and disclose personal data if information is under this administration. That should be a significant red flag to everybody in these Chambers.

Why would we grant and be okay with that level of interference? Would the members opposite feel okay with that level of interference if the tables were turned? UCP, NDP, a party of any stripe: an entity such as CORE must have arm's-length independence from government. The thought of the minister being able to access anybody's information within this particular agency should be cause for great concern.

A question I have for government is: what was it about the HQCA that was inadequate to evaluate mental health and addiction programs? What was it that was inadequate about the office of the Auditor General? What was it that was inadequate about postsecondary institutions with their proven track records, with their independence, with their research ethics boards? What was it that was inadequate about those entities that couldn't research and evaluate and analyze the effectiveness of mental health and addiction programs? Well, I think the biggest difference – the proof is in the pudding. The biggest difference is that the minister can't control those agencies and entities. That level of interference would not be afforded under any other capacity, but if they created something to serve – and this certainly does have the opportunity to serve the ideology, the mandate, the interests of a recovery model.



With that, Madam Speaker, I know that there are many others who would like to be able to speak to this Bill 17. Thank you for the opportunity.

4:00

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there others to join the debate? The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

**Mrs. Petrovic:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an unfortunate truth that in recent years Canada has seen a rise in individuals suffering from mental health challenges and those battling the disease of addiction. This is why, now more than ever, I'm proud to rise today and support Bill 17, the Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act. If passed, Bill 17 will take an important step forward to ensure Alberta can continue offering some of the world's best services to support people in their pursuit of recovery.

Mental health challenges and struggles with addiction have the potential to affect anyone, from all walks of life, and can present themselves at any time. This is precisely why Alberta cannot take a back-seat approach to mental health and addiction and why we need to continue to develop the most dignified and compassionate approach possible to help Albertans overcome the challenges they are facing. Bill 17 would do just that.

With Alberta's compassionate system of care, that is focused on recovery, Bill 17 would establish the Canadian centre of recovery excellence as a Crown corporation to inform best practices in mental health and addiction, conduct research and program evaluations, and support the development of evidence-based policies for mental health and addiction. Budget 2024 also allocates an initial investment of \$5 million for the establishment of the Canadian centre of recovery excellence. If this bill is passed, we can expect the centre to be fully operational by the end of the year to ensure Albertans have access to the help they need as soon as possible.

While the opposition likes to only associate recovery with addiction, I want to be clear and emphasize that recovery is possible in both mental illness and addiction, and our government will be there to support those pursuing recovery every step of the way. Despite the attacks the NDP opposition has been lobbying at our recovery-orientated model, their track record on recovery is abysmal. In fact, when they were in government, they were charging Albertans a daily fee to access treatment, to the tune of more than \$1,200 per month. That is the opposition's legacy on mental health and addiction. Our government meanwhile is stepping up to the challenge and doing the real work necessary to help those in Alberta who are suffering from addiction and mental health challenges.

We are working tirelessly to keep families together and protect our communities. In fact, it was our UCP government that removed the treatment fee and fully funded addiction treatment across the province. It was our UCP government that took steps to fund more than 10,000 additional treatment spaces across the province and gave 10,000 more people access to services every year. It was our UCP government that announced a partnership with First Nations to build recovery communities on-reserve and provide the long-term, life-saving treatments they needed. Once again, it was our UCP government that has taken steps to increase access to same-day counselling across the province and has doubled the funding to Alberta 211 to help people connect to mental health services in their own community. And, of course, Madam Speaker, it was our UCP government that built the virtual opioid dependency program to support same-day, immediate access to life-saving treatment medication, with no cost and no wait-list.

This is the kind of real progress our government has already made and continues to make as we follow the evidence to support and care for Albertans, with support from world-leading experts. Bill 17

is another piece of legislation that, if passed, would make real progress on this front and further show that recovery is really possible. This means that no matter what mental health challenges you face, no matter what addiction you suffer from, there is the possibility and hope that you can get better and move towards a more healthy, happy, and fulfilling life.

The Canadian centre of recovery excellence would be the first of its kind in Canada, the first research centre dedicated to advancing research and recovery-orientated care for addiction and mental health challenges. It's initiatives like this that have gained the Alberta recovery model significant recognition and acclaim across Canada and around the world from other jurisdictions looking to follow Alberta's approach. I am proud to vote in favour of this bill, and it is my hope that Bill 17 can pass unanimously as we seek to support every Albertan suffering from addiction and mental health challenges.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. With that, I move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

### Bill 13 Real Property Governance Act

[Adjourned debate April 17: Mr. Dach]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'm seeking speakers to the bill. The hon. Member for Calgary-Beddington.

**Ms Chapman:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak in opposition to Bill 13, Real Property Governance Act. I'm going to spend some time talking about the intention of this bill, the history behind some of the changes that are being made with this legislation, and then I'm going to speak a bit about the issues that are raised with the introduction of this legislation. Spoiler alert: no, the government didn't bother to consult with affected organizations before introducing this bill.

This is a bill that does two things. The first is to create a centralized system to collect and report real property that is owned or leased by departments, agencies, boards, commissions. This includes entities like school boards and postsecondary institutions. The second is that this legislation gives the Minister of Infrastructure the authority to sell or repurpose any surplus properties. Then the third piece of this puzzle is not a part of this legislation, but the government did announce that some regulation will be changed along with the legislative changes. So that changes it; on a go-forward basis, all land will now be leased to agencies, boards, commissions rather than having the land asset transferred to them.

What is the problem the government is trying to solve with this legislation? We know that this idea came from the 2020 MacKinnon panel report recommendation. That recommendation was that the government of Alberta should

redefine [its] inventory of land assets to include the broader public sector and create a definitive policy to clearly define surplus assets and a process for disposal of surplus assets. Providing an increased ability to core government and the broader public sector to dispose of surplus assets can act as an offset to the capital cost of new investments or provide revenue for the province.

One thing I will point out here is that when announcing this legislation, while the minister did reference this report specifically as the impetus for the legislation, at no point did the minister choose to elaborate on that last piece of the recommendation. His comments were pretty carefully crafted, actually, to imply that what might happen with, say, surplus school board land is that it could be turned over to the

Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services to be used for housing projects.

Sure, it is actually possible that the government could take aging or underutilized land parcels designated for schools and turn those into affordable housing projects. It is equally possible that what could happen is that the government will take surplus school lands and sell them to provide revenue for the province. That would be allowed as a part of this legislation. Given that this government was barely able to balance their budget as presented for this fiscal year – and that’s on the back of oil prices forecasted to be around \$74 a barrel.

**4:10**

A quick sidebar here. As much as the enthusiastic members opposite love to criticize the NDP government 2015 to 2019, I will always take the opportunity to remind them that the price of oil was as low as \$20 a barrel in 2016. In fact, if you look at the average price of oil over those four years, it was around \$50 a barrel. Personally, I would love to see this government attempt to present a balanced budget with only \$3 billion in resource revenues rather than the \$18 billion they had this last year and are projecting for the upcoming year. I think they would find themselves about \$15 billion in the hole if that were the case.

Back to the MacKinnon report . . . [interjections]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order. Hon. members, if you’d like to have a conversation, I think you might want to take it outside of this Chamber so that I can hear the only member who has the floor right now, which is the hon. Member for Calgary-Beddington.

**Ms Chapman:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yeah. I think the members opposite don’t like it when we point out that they are only able to balance a budget off the back of the very robust resource revenues that we’re experiencing right now.

Let’s go back to the MacKinnon report. The report points out really clearly that “Alberta Infrastructure . . . sells between \$3 million and \$30 million of real estate per year.” It goes on to say that “the sale of surplus properties provides . . . revenue to the province.” I think that if we apply, you know, just a little bit of critical thinking to this, though, we can see how selling off surplus land really would just be another quick fix.

Sure, you know, it would help cover the costs of some of this government’s really expensive blunders, right? That \$100 million we lost for a failed experiment in privatizing labs, \$80 million for that off-brand Tylenol that is just going to end up in the garbage . . . [interjection] Tylenol-not. That’s right. And I think we’re still paying, like, \$40 million a year for a war room attacking kids’ movies or something. I don’t know what’s going on there.

Clearly, selling surplus land – and I am certain that there are some developers out there that are just salivating at the thought of cozying up to their Conservative buddies to get some choice pieces to build market-rate housing. Selling surplus land isn’t a long-term fix, but then maybe we’re not looking for a long-term fix. It could be just like when they moved those AISH payments around by a month, right? Like, sometimes the government needs to cook the books a little bit to paint a fiscal picture that is rosier than reality.

Let’s take a look at how this will impact school boards. There is existing regulation around the disposal of property when it relates to school sites, and you can find that in the disposition of property regulation. Fortunately, this new bill, Bill 13, doesn’t make any changes to how we determine what is or is not a surplus site. The school boards are still required to have policy for the criteria and process used to determine whether the board has use for a school building that’s been closed.

That’s based on criteria much like you would expect – demographic factors, you know, the length of time, maybe, that a school building has been closed – and the same applies to surplus land. School boards have to have a policy that looks at things like enrolment trends, transportation issues, and the length of time the land reserve has existed and not been needed by the board. That criteria does remain the same.

What is changing is what happens once the building or land has been determined to be surplus. What used to happen, as I understand, is that a school board would determine a building or a piece of land was surplus. They would go to the Education minister to seek approval for that land to be declared surplus, and the Education minister would then make a decision based on a judgment of whether the land should be used for public educational purposes.

Bill 13 overrides this process. What will happen now is that once a building or parcel of land has been determined to be surplus, it’s the Minister of Infrastructure who’s notified. It sounds to me like the Education ministry is completely removed from that process. Instead of the minister focused on the needs of education in Alberta, looking at these school sites and determining whether or not this land should be used for public educational purposes, instead of that, it goes to the Minister of Infrastructure, and it is to that minister’s judgment. As soon as the surplus site is identified, the land transfer offer must occur and occur according to the terms, conditions, and manner specified by the Minister of Infrastructure.

Prior to Bill 13 – and this is included in the disposition of property regulation – these parcels of land for schools could be, you know, kind of offered around to different groups. That could be something like a school board, potentially a municipality could have a shot at it, maybe a community association. I think charitable or nonprofit organizations would be included in that as well. Will that still be the case if Bill 13 passes? That’s an unknown. So I think we still have a lot of questions about that.

When I watched the minister’s announcement on this bill, I mean, the thing that really struck me was just how big a serving of word salad it was. The minister commented on how centralizing the function of real property would, quote, support priority investments, increase transparency, and save taxpayer dollars. The minister then went on to elaborate on none of those things. In fact, when he was asked to elaborate on how this will save taxpayers money, he commented that he didn’t have details on how much money it might actually save. So, actually, we don’t know if it will save any money, or maybe the minister knows and he just has not chosen to share that with any of us. What he told reporters who asked that question was that the Ministry of Infrastructure currently holds \$12 billion in assets while the agencies, boards, and commissions currently hold \$83 billion in assets. The value of the assets as mentioned are, like, completely meaningless in this discussion, of course. So I wonder, like, will this legislation actually save taxpayers any money at all, or you know is that just the sort of topping this government’s ministers add to all of their word salads: save taxpayers money?

I think the government news release also mentioned that this act would reduce red tape. That’s another really common ingredient in the word salad. Apparently, creating rules across government for the disposal of property would reduce red tape. There wasn’t an explanation provided for how swapping out one system of property disposal for another system of property disposal does anything to reduce red tape. It’s one of those things that just ends up leaving me wondering about any of the pronouncements this government makes on reducing red tape. Just because you say something doesn’t actually make it a true thing.

I think I have a minute or two left here. I just want to kind of lean in briefly on the issue of consultation, and the issue here, really, is that there was no consultation. That’s a trend that I think

we're seeing across pieces of legislation that have been introduced by this government, this idea that they introduce a piece of legislation in here and tell us: oh, you know, we'll do the consultation with the affected groups after. Again, I think that if we put on our critical thinking caps here, it would make a lot more sense to do that consultation in advance of introducing the legislation, to talk to the affected parties to see how they feel about this, and to probably, likely, I would hope, get a better understanding of what the impact of any given piece of legislation will be on its stakeholder groups.

**4:20**

The issue here is that there wasn't any consultation. You know, like, it's important that publicly owned buildings and lands are managed in a transparent manner. It's equally important that the government be transparent about changes in the process of that land management. Organizations like school boards, these affected organizations: what I'm hearing is that they just don't know what to think. They feel that the government has chosen to leave them in the dark, and like them,

I'm not convinced that we can just trust that everything will be all right here.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there any other members that wish to join this debate?

Seeing none, I will ask if the hon. minister would like to close debate.

**Mr. Guthrie:** Waive.

[Motion carried; Bill 13 read a second time]

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

**Mr. Williams:** Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise. I believe there's been substantive debate and progress made and all of us are anxious to return to our constituencies and see our families. In that light, I move that we adjourn the Assembly until Monday at 1:30.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:22 p.m.]



## **Bill Status Report for the 31th Legislature - 1st Session (2023-2024)**

**Activity to Thursday, April 18, 2024**

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 Taxpayer Protection Amendment Act, 2023 (Smith)**

First Reading — 10 (*Oct. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 57-58 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft.*), 96-97 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 145-47 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 147-54 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c6 ]

### **Bill 2 — Alberta Pension Protection Act (Horner)**

First Reading — 89-90 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 154-55 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 274-85 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft.*), 336-43 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft.*), 394-400 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 424-30 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 522-30 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft.*), 552-59 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 565 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 583-90 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 cA-29.5 ]

### **Bill 3 — Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Amendment Act, 2023 (Williams)**

First Reading — 22 (*Oct. 31, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 90-93 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft.*), 180-87 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft.*), 272-73 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 307-09 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 334-36 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c10 ]

### **Bill 4 — Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (\$) (Horner)**

First Reading — 55 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 159-63 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 155-56 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 187-90 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 309-13 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 336 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2023 c13 ]

### **Bill 5\* — Public Sector Employers Amendment Act, 2023 (Horner)**

First Reading — 55-56 (*Nov. 1, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 156-57 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 190-97 (*Nov. 8, 2023 aft.*), 265-72 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft.*), 403-09 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 430-35 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 456 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*), 519-22 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., recommitted*), 559-62, 563-64 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed with amendments on division*)

Third Reading — 515 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., recommitted to Committee of the Whole*), 564-55 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 575-83 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2023 c12 ]

**Bill 6 — Public Health Amendment Act, 2023 (Amery)**

First Reading — 90 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 157-58 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 313-20 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft.*), 435-38 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 456-62 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 462 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c11 ]

**Bill 7 — Engineering and Geoscience Professions Amendment Act, 2023 (Sawhney)**

First Reading — 111 (*Nov. 6, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 158-59 (*Nov. 7, 2023 aft.*), 273-74 (*Nov. 21, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 400-03 (*Nov. 28, 2023 aft.*), 423-24 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 514-15 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c7 ]

**Bill 8 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (Amery)**

First Reading — 209 (*Nov. 9, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 299-307 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft.*), 438-41 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 515-18 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft.*), 546-52 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 564 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve.*), 569-75 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2023 c8 ]

**Bill 9 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 (Schow)**

First Reading — 478 (*Dec. 4, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 513-14 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 546 (*Dec. 6, 2023 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 590-92 (*Dec. 7, 2023 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c9 ]

**Bill 10 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)**

First Reading — 673 (*Mar. 12, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 705-16 (*Mar. 14, 2024 aft.*), 868-73 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft.*), 904-05 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft.*), 899-901 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft.*), 970-75 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft.*), 1003-05 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1005-09 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1040-43 (*Apr. 11, 2024 aft., passed*)

**Bill 11 — Public Safety Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Ellis)**

First Reading — 685 (*Mar. 13, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 976-90 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft.*), 1009-15 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft.*), 1091-96 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft., passed*)

**Bill 12 — Consumer Protection (Life Leases) Amendment Act, 2024 (Nally)**

First Reading — 727 (*Mar. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1015-22 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft.*), 1043-46 (*Apr. 11, 2024 aft.*), 1096-102 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft.*), 1135-40 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

**Bill 13 — Real Property Governance Act (Guthrie)**

First Reading — 779 (*Mar. 21, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1102-09 (*Apr. 16, 2024 aft.*), 1132-35 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft.*), 1161-63 (*Apr. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

**Bill 14 — Appropriation Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)**

First Reading — 791 (*Mar. 21, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 855-63 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 887-93 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., adjourned*), (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 920-24 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on March 28, 2024; SA 2024 c1 ]

**Bill 15 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2024 (\$) (Horner)**

First Reading — 841 (*Mar. 25, 2024 eve., passed*)

Second Reading — 863-68 (*Mar. 26, 2024 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 893-99 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., adjourned*), 901-04 (*Mar. 27, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 924 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed*), 920 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft.*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on March 28, 2024; SA 2024 c2 ]

**Bill 16 — Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Nally)**

First Reading — 935-36 (*Apr. 8, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1127-32 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

**Bill 17 — Canadian Centre of Recovery Excellence Act (Williams)**

First Reading — 959 (*Apr. 9, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1156-61 (*Apr. 18, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

**Bill 18 — Provincial Priorities Act (Smith)**

First Reading — 993 (*Apr. 10, 2024 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1122-27 (*Apr. 17, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

**Bill 201 — Alberta Health Care Insurance (Access Fees) Amendment Act, 2023 (Brar)**

First Reading — 90 (*Nov. 2, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 114-25 (*Nov. 6, 2023 aft.*), 234-37 (*Nov. 20, 2023 aft., reasoned amendment agreed to on division; not proceeded with*)

**Bill 202 — Education (Class Size and Composition) Amendment Act, 2023 (Chapman)**

First Reading — 209 (*Nov. 9, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 237-46 (*Nov. 20, 2023 aft.*), 358-64 (*Nov. 27, 2023 aft., defeated on division; not proceeded with*)

**Bill 203 — Foreign Credential Advisory Committee Act (Dyck)**

First Reading — 111 (*Nov. 6, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 364-70 (*Nov. 27, 2023 aft.*), 479-86 (*Dec. 4, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 730-43 (*Mar. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 805-12 (*Mar. 25, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2024 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on June 28, 2024; SA 2024 cF-16.5 ]

**Bill 204 — Municipal Government (National Urban Parks) Amendment Act, 2023 (Lunty)**

First Reading — 332 (*Nov. 23, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 486-92 (*Dec. 4, 2023 aft.*), 649-58 (*Mar. 11, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 812-17 (*Mar. 25, 2024 aft.*), 938-48 (*Apr. 8, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

Third Reading — 1059-66 (*Apr. 15, 2024 aft., passed on division*)

**Bill 205 — Housing Statutes (Housing Security) Amendment Act, 2023 (Irwin)**

First Reading — 510 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 658-62 (*Mar. 11, 2024 aft.*), 948-50 (*Apr. 8, 2024 aft.*), 1066-71 (*Apr. 15, 2024 aft., adjourned*)

**Bill 206 — Child and Youth Advocate (Parent and Guardian Advisor) Amendment Act, 2024 (Cyr)**

First Reading — 917-18 (*Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed*)

**Bill 207 — Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education (Valuing Skilled Workers) Amendment Act, 2024 (Hoyle)**

First Reading — 1152-53 (*Apr. 18, 2024 aft., passed*)

**Bill Pr1 — St. Joseph's College Amendment Act, 2023 (Sigurdson, L)**

First Reading — 289 (*Nov. 22, 2023 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills*), 421 (*Nov. 29, 2023 aft., reported to Assembly; proceeded with*)

Second Reading — 455 (*Nov. 30, 2023 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 515 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 530 (*Dec. 5, 2023 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 7, 2023 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on December 7, 2023; SA 2023 c14 ]

**Bill Pr2 — Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta Amendment Act, 2024 (Justin Wright)**

First Reading — 918 *(Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills)*

**Bill Pr3 — Providence Renewal Centre Amendment Act, 2024 (Calahoo Stonehouse)**

First Reading — 918 *(Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills)*

**Bill Pr4 — Rosebud School of the Arts Amendment Act, 2024 (Petrovic)**

First Reading — 918 *(Mar. 28, 2024 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills)*







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