



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, November 6, 2025

Day 9

The Honourable Ric McIver, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

Second Session

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Bouchard, Eric, Calgary-Lougheed (UC)
Brar, Gurinder, Calgary-North East (NDP)
Brar, Gurtej Singh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Calahoo Stonehouse, Jodi, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)
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United Conservative: 47

New Democrat: 38

Independent: 2

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 6, 2025

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Hon. members, let us pray. 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 ideals but, laying aside all private interests and prejudices, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

Hon. members, we will now be led in the singing of *God Save the King* by Mr. Sidney Manning. I invite you all to participate.

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: Please be seated.

Hon. members, I'm going to take just a half a second here and thank all of you on both sides of the aisle for having such a great turnout today at the ceremony of remembrance that trying to say your names was really awkward, and that's the best kind of awkward we could have. Thank you, all of you.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Today the royal anthem was performed by Mr. Sidney Manning, who is no stranger to the Legislature Building. Sidney Manning joined Alberta Municipal Affairs as the provincial plumbing and gas administrator in 2009. He has been active in the construction industry for more than 40 years between code development, installations, and inspections. Sidney lives in Edmonton with his wife, Jolayne, and has two adult daughters thriving with their families in Alberta. Sidney started singing in Cadogan elementary school, with different performance opportunities throughout his career, singing professionally as well as around the campfire. He even tried a turn with the Alberta honour choir in the 1980s and competed in *Star Search* in the early 1990s. I ask that you please rise to receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

School groups today. The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Lundy: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour to rise and introduce a school group from the Leduc Estates school. Their grade 6 class has joined us today. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors.

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to welcome from the incredible constituency of Innisfail-Sylvan Lake a school group with parents and teachers from the Lighthouse Christian Academy. They're here in the capital learning all about the

legislative process. I would ask that they rise and please receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to rise and introduce Janice McCrimmon and Terri Rolfson. They're here from Bow Valley College to try to reverse the closure of the ESL programming there. I'd like them to rise and receive the warm greetings of the Legislature.

The Speaker: The Minister of Mental Health and Addiction.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to introduce to you and through you several people visiting the Legislature today: Royce Dalupan, an entrepreneur who has been working along First Nation communities since 1985; Steven Walsh, a leader within western Canada's construction and investment sectors; and my handsome cousin Dale Wilson and his wife, Bella, and their family. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The Member for Camrose.

Ms. Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you a valued member of my constituency, Mr. Abdul Abbasi. Abdul is a student at Augustana campus in Camrose and serves as the vice-president external for the University of Alberta Students' Union and is the first Augustana student to hold an executive position. In addition to this, Abdul is an active member of his community and volunteers his time with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations and the Camrose Muslim community. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Chamber.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms. Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon and introduce to you and through you three students from MacEwan University that are in the social work program. They joined us this morning in the rotunda for the Remembrance Day ceremony. I would ask that Shayne Doré, Laigiah Shirt, and Vivian Osedehi please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Cypress-Medicine Hat, please.

Mr. Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and introduce to you and through you some members of the Alberta Paramedic Association: Len Stelmashuk, Carl Damour, Derek Cassista, Justin Stapley, Sheldon Thunstrom, Dusty Myshrall, and Barbara Peters. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

Dr. Metz: I just want to extend that welcome to the members of the Alberta Paramedic Association.

Member Boparai: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Ravina Kaur Toor, a Punjabi Sikh visual artist whose work celebrates her heritage, with her contributing to projects across Alberta. Her illustrated children's book on Singh Hari, Alberta's first Sikh settler, is proudly available here at Capital Gifts. I ask that she rise to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my friend from Calgary-Falconridge I'm pleased to introduce to all members of the Assembly Mr. Naeem Ahmad. He's been a missionary in charge of the Netherlands Ahmadiyya Muslim Community for 28 years, guiding spiritual and organizational growth while promoting unity and service to all. Thousands of Ahmadiyya Muslims continue that very work here in Alberta. I ask that he please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Meadows.

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly Makhan Singh Kohar. Mr. Kohar is a former teacher and leader of the Teachers Union of Punjab. He's a renowned poet and serves as the senior vice-president of the state writers organization. He's here to watch the House in action. I ask him to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Edmonton-West Henday.

Member Arcand-Paul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Chamber two wonderful advocates, organizers, and volunteers with Edmonton-West Henday. I have Tess Chappell and Ashley Mulders, who also volunteers with Edmonton-City Centre. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Members' Statements

Health Care System

Mr. Haji: Mr. Speaker, every Albertan deserves to feel safe, supported, and informed when it comes to their health care, but today too many are feeling confused, neglected, and left behind because no one in this government is providing leadership in our health care system. Parents are worried about the rising measles outbreak for their children. Seniors are unsure how to get their flu and COVID-19 shots. Patients are left in pain on seemingly endless wait-lists.

Mr. Speaker, for six months the office of the chief medical officer of health has been in transition. There is no permanent chief medical officer. No one seems to want the job. Meanwhile Alberta has faced the worst measles outbreak in North American jurisdictions. And this fall's vaccine rollout is one of confusion, cost barriers, and poor communication, leaving vulnerable Albertans with no clear guidance.

The results of this are clear. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information Alberta is falling behind in key public health indicators. CIHI says that Alberta is lagging, not leading, on key metrics. Timely access to care, patient safety, and system efficiency are all behind as Albertans try to navigate the so-called refocused but more fragmented health system. Instead of hiring more family doctors, Mr. Speaker, CIHI data confirms Alberta lost 14 doctors per 100,000 population since the UCP government came to power.

1:40

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services to take this matter seriously. She must appoint a permanent chief medical health officer, she must restore the autonomy and transparency of the chief medical officer, and more importantly, she must ensure decisions are guided by science and expert advice, not politics.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Member for Edmonton-Riverview's Remarks on Bill 2

Ms de Jonge: Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart and a deep sense of duty to speak out against comments made yesterday in this Chamber by the Member for Edmonton-Riverview. In her member's statement the member invoked the Holocaust while criticizing the government's use of the notwithstanding clause. She referenced the poem *First They Came* by Pastor Martin Niemöller, a reflection on the Nazi regime's persecution of Jews and other marginalized groups, and compared a provincial labour dispute to genocide. This comparison was appalling, offensive, and beneath the dignity of this Legislature. It is not only historically inaccurate but morally indefensible.

Mr. Speaker, my Dutch family lived under Nazi occupation during the Second World War. They witnessed first-hand the cruelty, fear, and destruction that came with that regime. They lived through the terror of the Hunger Winter, forced labour, and the constant threat of violence. To hear the atrocities of the Holocaust, the murder of 6 million Jews and over 5 million others, used as a partisan talking point in this House is deeply painful and profoundly wrong. There is a moral line that must never be crossed in politics, and yesterday the NDP crossed it.

Albertans can and do hold differing views on government decisions. That's the foundation of democracy. But invoking the Holocaust to score political points trivializes one of the darkest chapters in human history and disrespects the memory of its victims. Mr. Speaker, the Holocaust is not a metaphor. It's not a rhetorical device. It is a solemn reminder of what happens when hatred and extremism go unchecked.

I call on the Leader of the Opposition to condemn these remarks and ensure that his caucus understands the gravity of what was said. The Member for Edmonton-Riverview must apologize. Let us honour the memory of the victims by ensuring this Chamber remains a place of respectful debate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Support for Education

Ms Chapman: This government has made a mess of public education. After barely negotiating for months with teachers, after receiving, though clearly not reading, thousands of e-mails, after witnessing tens of thousands of people outside this very Chamber rise in protest of Alberta's classroom conditions, they have done nothing. After hearing stories of children who need extra support, whether it be the child with autism spectrum disorder who's unable to regulate in overcrowded, overstimulating classrooms or the child who is years behind with their reading levels or the Ukrainian child requiring additional language supports, not to mention all the six-year-olds who just need help, period, tying their shoes, zipping their jackets, opening their fruit cups: nothing.

After acknowledging complexity in our classrooms is a major issue, after promising that they will do something to address it, what is the first action this government takes when it comes to education after forcing teachers back to work? Was it a concrete plan to fix things? No. It's legislation that will make law a set of assessments for K to 3 students. It is to continue to disrespect the expertise of our educators. It is to sit on their hands and refuse to put in place the actual resources needed to address classroom complexity.

You know who understands what supports a student needs, who knows if a child is struggling with reading or math, who gets that without mental health supports they will never succeed at getting that withdrawn child to engage in classroom activities? It's the teacher. And what that teacher doesn't need to do is take three to five instructional days off their calendar year to deliver assessments. Our

teachers, our students, and our classrooms deserve resources, not more tests.

Remembrance Day

Mr. Wright: Mr. Speaker, this Tuesday is Remembrance Day, a time for sombre reflection. It's a time to think about those who faced the unimaginable horrors of the battlefield while standing resolute in the face of danger. We remember all the individuals amongst the tens of thousands who sacrificed their lives so that we here in Canada could live in peace and freedom.

As we are often reminded, freedom is not free. It is earned through the sacrifice of our fellow Canadians. Our freedom must always be cherished and defended. Always. The tragedies of war will never fade from our memory, nor will the courage of our soldiers. It's our duty to remember these brave souls and to strive to embody the morals and values they upheld, values that define us as Albertans and Canadians.

The Canadian men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in the First and Second World Wars, in Korea, in Afghanistan, and in other conflicts around the world were our sons and daughters. They're our brothers and sisters, mothers, fathers, and friends. They shaped and shared our hopes, dreams, and aspirations for a future. In life they were us, and in death they sacrificed those dreams to preserve ours.

They stand ready to respond to conflicts that threaten our world, knowing that the turmoil in Ukraine, in the Middle East, in Asia, or in Africa could call them to action at any moment. They carry the torch in the boot steps of the fallen soldiers, honouring their sacrifices while vowing their own to continue to protect their country.

We will not take our freedoms for granted. We will always honour the men and women who have served our country and continue to serve our country. We will support and protect them, just as they have done for us. We will always acknowledge the profound loss of those who have fallen.

Lest we forget.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Currie.

Paramedics

Member Eremenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Paramedics are a crucial part of our health care system. When I called 911 this summer, I felt immense relief that it was they who came to help. But a damning in-depth news article came out last week about the untenable working conditions for paramedics in Calgary and area. The numbers are shocking: on any shift paramedics are stuck waiting in emergency departments 25 per cent of the time, night shifts with two-thirds the needed staff members, hundreds of instances of rural ambulances redeployed to Calgary, leaving limited coverage in Okotoks, Cochrane, Airdrie, and Priddis. With pressure like that, no wonder paramedics logged 8,000 sick hours per month in Calgary from March to June of this year.

While the NDP were in government, we put more ambulances on the road and invested in the power stretchers that reduced paramedic back injuries. These investments were supported by Don, a paramedic who has served Albertans for 40 years, who says that though their work is often heartbreaking and always demanding, they know it is life-saving, and they do that job well.

But he and his colleagues are burning out. Paramedics are emergency services. They are community health care, and as the numbers show, they're not doing okay. What thanks or help do they get from the UCP? Well, many paramedics are HSAA members, so

they face a government on the other side of the bargaining table that has no respect for collective bargaining, their union, or their constitutionally protected rights.

This UCP government has got to start taking the health and safety of front-line workers to heart. In an emergency patients know their care and their survival depend on first responders, and it is often the paramedics who are first to arrive. The UCP government is failing to support them to the very best of their ability and to the full scope of their practice.

We stand proudly with paramedics on this side of the aisle and assure them that better is possible. They are owed nothing less.

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

Government Accountability

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Democracy only works when elected representatives respect the people they are elected to serve. Recall the corrupt care scandal, if you will. This UCP government directed hundreds of millions of dollars to sole-source contracts to their friends. The Auditor General and the RCMP have launched investigations, and widespread public outrage towards the UCP in general helped to launch a number of petitions being administered by Elections Alberta.

So what does the UCP do? They fire the Auditor General in the middle of an investigation, deny Elections Alberta the funding they require to process all the petitions signed by hundreds of thousands of Albertans, and to top it all off, they introduce legislation to remove the RCMP as a police force here in the province of Alberta.

1:50

Now, if you recall, democracy only works if elected representatives respect the people and the institutions they are elected to serve. The Auditor General is there to ensure that public money is spent to help Albertans, free of corruption. The RCMP has a long and proud tradition of providing law enforcement here. Elections Alberta counts and verifies the votes and the names on petitions. These votes and signatures, as far as I can recall, Mr. Speaker, are a way of a government to be chosen or defeated. The UCP cannot be trusted to police themselves. As you recall, these are the same people who stripped the constitutional rights of 52,000 people just last week. The best kind of recall is total recall. Albertans can throw out this UCP government in the next election.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The first question goes to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Investigation of Health Services Procurement

Mr. Nenshi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "First the UCP fired the AHS board that was investigating the procurement scandal. Now they have fired the Auditor General. These are not the actions of innocent people." I'm as surprised as anybody that I'm standing up here quoting the Premier's closest political adviser, David Parker, but you know what they say about a stopped watch. It's true even now. This government's consistent refusal to call a public inquiry is the action of a government that has something to hide. So why did the government not grant the Auditor General's request for more time to fully investigate the corrupt care scandal?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier of Alberta.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would invite the member opposite to go and look at the Auditor General Act, which defines an eight-year term for an Auditor General. We thank him for his work and service, but his eight-year term comes up at the end of April, and the first moment that the committee had to be able to launch a new search was when we reconvened the Legislature. We're looking forward to a robust discussion around who that new candidate may be. The Auditor General has until the end of April to finish his work. Once again, we look forward to his report, and we'll implement the recommendations when we receive them.

Mr. Nenshi: The Premier might be surprised to learn that there have been exceptions made in exceptional times, and this is certainly an exceptional time. The Auditor General, on the request of one of the members opposite, when asked if he wanted an extension said that he would like one. He didn't hear back for weeks, yet he found out that he was being fired. But he needs to finish this investigation. Justice Wyant did not clear the government despite the Premier's protestations; he said he couldn't do his job. The AG has the power to subpoena witnesses and to compel testimony. How will the government ensure that he can finish his report accurately and on time?

The Speaker: Thank you to the hon. member for tying that into government policy right at the end.

The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Judge Wyant indicated that there were members of the AHS bureaucracy that he was not able to interview. He never asked to interview anyone in the government and never found any wrongdoing on the part of an elected official, any staff member, or any member of government. I would encourage the members opposite to read the report again. There were rules that were not followed by AHS, and in fact that's a reason why we knew that we had to take procurement back into government. Acute Care Alberta is going to be managing the procurement process. The 18 recommendations that the judge indicated are going to be implemented, and we look forward to more recommendations.

Mr. Nenshi: The Premier may have inadvertently just broken some news. Last week one of her ministers intimated that it was not, in fact, true that no one was asked in government to be interviewed by Justice Wyant. Whether it's true or not, it means the justice didn't have the power to ask the questions, which he himself has said. Now, in those 18 recommendations there was a lot about fixing procurement, yet this government has renewed the very contract at the heart of this scandal with the Alberta Surgical Group. Can the Premier confirm that, as per the justice's recommendations, this contract renewal was actually done appropriately, legally, and with safeguards?

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, there's only one person who didn't agree to an interview, and that person was on the AHS side. No one in government, no elected member, no member of our staff, and no member of the public service was found guilty of any wrongdoing. So we're going to continue working with Acute Care Alberta to examine some of the issues that were raised.

When it comes to our new approach for how we're going to do procurement, what we would like to move towards is having a single price for a surgery publicly available and then allow for individual companies to do . . . [interjection]

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, you need to breathe when somebody else is talking, please.

The second set of questions. The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Nenshi: It's fascinating how the Premier talks about AHS as some alien entity, as though she did not hire and fire multiple hand-picked CEOs and two full boards. She had plenty of time to turn the light on here, but she doesn't like turning on the light. She likes avoiding accountability.

Election Recall Petitions

Mr. Nenshi: I had an interesting exchange with her yesterday. She compared grandmas going door to door collecting signatures to militants who want to overthrow her government. I recall a Premier who liked direct democracy, who said that it gave individuals a mechanism to hold people in account between elections. Does the Premier believe in these rights for everyone or just people she agrees with when it's convenient for her?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier of Alberta.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that every single one of our members are looking forward to talking to their constituents in order to give them the great news of the work that we're doing. We have the highest GDP and fastest performing economy. We have more people wanting to move here than anywhere else. We have record housing starts and record numbers of rental accommodation that are being built, which is bringing the rental accommodation down . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, this is just going to be easier if I can hear the question and the answer. I'd like everybody to make that possible, please.

Ms Smith: We created 42,000 new jobs, which are mostly in the private sector. We have grown the heritage savings trust fund, doubling it from the last time that those guys were in power. They didn't care to increase the investment in the heritage fund. There's lots of good news.

Mr. Nenshi: Including record recalls, massively shifting support for this government, and the Premier may want to talk to the Minister of Indigenous Relations to ask her how well those town halls are going.

Now, a couple of days ago the government's minister said that this legislation was only meant to be used to get rid of criminals in elected office, but the Premier has said, quote: I would hazard a guess that if recall legislation were in place right now, there would be a number of cabinet ministers who would have a hard time keeping their seats. Unquote. She surely wasn't calling those cabinet ministers criminals. So who's right here? What does today's Premier think of recall?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand, when the legislation was first introduced by the former Premier, he had talked about the framework being for a serious breach of the public trust. That was the intention behind recall. That is the intention behind recall wherever it has been initiated in other jurisdictions. We are watching it very closely. We're seeing whether or not any of these recall petitions are going to be successful. We're monitoring some of the rules around them, and we're seeing whether there's going to be a need for us to make any adjustments to them.

Mr. Nenshi: So a Premier who never takes personal responsibility is now blaming a previous Premier because apparently she's able to read his mind now. This Premier finds it so easy to throw away her

ethics, her principles, and even her friends. She came into this job...

Mr. Williams: Point of order.

Mr. Nenshi: ... claiming that she loves freedom, but she has systematically stripped away freedoms from groups of Albertans that don't support her. Will the Premier stand on her deeply held principles, or will she recall her recall legislation now that she personally feels threatened by it?

The Speaker: A point of order was noted at 1:58 p.m.
The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mean, there are some issues that have been raised. For instance, there's a GoFundMe being used to raise money. That's not allowed under the legislation, and part of the reason for that is that you're not allowed to have foreign contributions going to fund initiatives that are taking place in Alberta. You can't identify that if there are recall campaigns going on that are being funded through GoFundMe. The representatives in this Legislature have not even been told by the elections official that they are authorized to be able to start their own funding. These are problems. We're monitoring them, and we're seeing if we need to make any changes.

The Speaker: For the third set of questions, the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Nenshi: Well, of course, the Premier has already amended this legislation. If those problems were there, they should have, which they never do, foreseen them.

Children's Pain Medication Purchase

Mr. Nenshi: They sleepwalk into more crises. For example, this government signed a bloated, untendered contract for Turkish Tylenol with Sam Mraiche. It never got legal review. AHS said: don't sign it. It made Sam Mraiche a lot of cash. Recently unearthed FOI documents show that the government paid MHCare more than \$4 million just for shipping the Turkish Tylenol that nobody wanted or used. To the Premier: were the skybox tickets worth it?

2:00

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mean, the member opposite wasn't here at the time to remember what was happening during the crisis in children's medication. We had people going online who were asking if they could get any of it through Facebook. We had parents talking about crushing up adult Tylenol and putting it into yogourt. There was a lot of danger, and we had to act. This is what we do. As Judge Wyant's report found, it was not unusual for government to make a request to procure medication. This is something AHS does all the time. They didn't follow their own guidelines this time, and that's why we've taken procurement away from them.

Mr. Nenshi: You know, Mr. Speaker, I know a little bit about managing in crisis. One thing I know is that you don't panic, and you certainly don't line your friends' pockets. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, we need to hear the question and the answer without regard for how much we enjoy the question or the answer. Right now we should only hear from the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Nenshi: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. To be fair, we don't know how much of that \$4 million went into Sam Mraiche's pockets. In fact, on page 21 of Judge Wyant's report he states, "I asked Mr. Mraiche what the profit margin was [on this deal]. Through his counsel, he declined to answer." Surely the government wouldn't have signed a contract with a middleman not knowing how much the middleman was getting in profit over what it actually cost. What was the profit margin that the Minister of Justice's bro, relative, and friend actually made on this?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it was shocking that AHS didn't follow its own policies. Yes, it was shocking that they didn't even run the contract by legal counsel. Yes, it was shocking that they didn't get that information. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members. Members. Members, I don't need to finish the sentence, do I? Let's hear. Okay.

Ms Smith: What I can say is that AHS has had decades of doing procurement. Under normal circumstances it appears that they follow the rules. Under these circumstances they didn't, and that is the reason why we asked Judge Wyant to get to the bottom of it and to give us recommendations. It's also the reason why we realized this power can no longer be in the hands of AHS. They screwed it up, and we're taking it to Acute Care Alberta.

Mr. Nenshi: I mean, of course, Justice Wyant's report says that AHS said, "don't sign this deal," and that it was a ministerial order from this Premier and her minister telling them to go ahead and sign it despite their concerns. The Premier someday will take responsibility. When she stubs her toe, she blames AHS.

But here's the issue: \$50 million sitting in MHCare's bank account, 4 million bucks for shipping. It's taxpayer money. It's so much waste. Not a single pill sent to Ukraine despite the minister and the Premier saying that it would happen. Albertans are so much smarter than the Premier gives them credit for. Will she ever take responsibility for this scandal?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, 650,000 bottles have been sent to Ukraine and other countries in Africa through a company that is making sure that that medication goes to those who need it.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there is an amount that is outstanding. The company has been working with Health Canada to get approval to get a high-potency acetaminophen that can be used in place of opioids. Health Canada is going through the regulatory process to approve. We understand that we'll get a decision on that, hopefully, in the new year, and then we'll be able to fulfill the contract or get our money back.

Members' Acceptance of Gifts and Benefits

Ms Pancholi: Last week while Albertans were reeling from the UCP's trampling of their fundamental freedoms, the Premier slipped in a little gift. Well, not a gift for Albertans; a gift for herself and UCP MLAs. See, the rules used to prevent MLAs from accepting gifts over \$200 because insiders shouldn't be able to buy access to decision-makers. But timed perfectly for her trip to Abu Dhabi, the Premier's new rules allow her and UCP MLAs to accept gifts of any value as long as the Premier's staff approves it. Will the

Premier tell Albertans what lavish gifts she got on her Saudi Arabian getaway, and why did she change the rules to hide it?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, we believe in accountability, which is why we have these rules for MLAs and for staff that are in place now. As far as the minister's travel goes and the Premier's travel to Abu Dhabi, this was an important conference, something that was so important that we saw the previous minister Deron Bilous, when he was in government, also attend in 2017. This is about Alberta first, making sure that we get the best possible deals that we can and making sure that internationally we represent our industry. The Premier will not shy away from defending Alberta every single day.

Ms Pancholi: Mr. Speaker, the question was: what gifts did she receive while she was there? Albertans have proved that lavish gifts to the UCP are paying off in big ways for UCP friends. Sam Mraiche took his best friend, the Minister of Justice, to Florida, gave the Premier box seats at hockey games, all gifts, of course. In return, Sam Mraiche and his many, many companies got hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer funds and inflated contracts. What a sweet deal for Mr. Mraiche.

Mr. Williams: Point of order.

Ms Pancholi: He's obviously better at business than the UCP. He took them to the cleaners and Albertans, too. That's corruption. So why did the Premier just make you-gotta-pay-to-play UCP government policy?

Mr. Nixon: Point of order.

The Speaker: Well, hon. member, congratulations, three points of order were called. I can't prejudge. I'm not sure that's something to celebrate, but I'm sure the government will figure out which of the points of order they will bring forward.

In the meantime we will hear from and only hear from the Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, as you just heard, members opposite are trying to make fallacious claims against this government, and it's beneath them. There is real policy to be debated and important values for Alberta to represent on the international stage, which is why the Premier made the trip she did. All public gifts to government are reported, and we are not going to shy away from defending Alberta and our energy industry across every single international stakeholder we can. The Premier's trip was valuable this year . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Members, I don't think I'm the one that you should be hearing from. The problem is that I need to hear the rest of you so that you don't have to hear from me. You know, that's how it works.

Let's try again with the Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, the Premier will continue to defend this province's interest internationally, just as members opposite did when they were in government under Minister Bilous. These are important conferences, and any gifts that came in are publicly reported as per the law.

Ms Pancholi: Well, it's not just the Premier who likes the red carpet rolled out for her in Saudi Arabia, Mar-a-Lago, Las Vegas, and many other places. UCP backbenchers have also been busy travelling the globe on the government dollar. The Premier probably has to throw them a bone since it's pretty embarrassing when two-thirds of the UCP caucus are in cabinet and you're not.

But while Albertans struggle to make ends meet, access health care, and support their kids in crowded classrooms, can the Premier explain why the only things the UCP have increased to keep up with population growth and inflation are the UCP's gifts, international travel, and the size of their cabinet?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, this government has made funding the new growth a priority. Members opposite did no such thing when they were in power. We saw no new schools started under the NDP. This government is putting \$8.6 billion into it. We're continuing to see more progress made to . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Members. Members, I'm getting tired of my voice. You should be getting tired of it, too. I need to hear from you folks, please.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not only do you need to hear from us; we need to hear from Albertans, which we're not afraid to hear from. Members opposite are. Every election we put our platform forward . . . [interjection]

Mr. Nixon: Point of order.

Mr. Williams: . . . and they continue to vote for our government because they believe in progress for Albertans whereas members opposite don't, unfortunately.

The Speaker: A point of order was noted at 2:09.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-South, without preambles on supplementaries.

Job Creation

Member Hoyle: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are watching good jobs disappear while this UCP government insists everything is fine. Imperial Oil, one of Alberta's largest employers, recently announced plans to cut roughly 20 per cent of its workforce; that's 900 Albertans losing their livelihood. After six years of this government's so-called economic strategy investment is down, major employers are leaving, and Albertans are paying the price. With more layoffs looming, when is this government going to get serious about protecting Alberta's jobs?

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

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the truth is that Alberta created 42,000 jobs in the month of September, over 70 per cent of all the jobs created in Canada. If there's a bright light, it's Alberta. That's because of our government putting forward pro-business ideas, cutting taxes for our employees, and making sure that they have a bright future to look forward to. We're doing the things opposite how the NDP did, which was drive businesses out, drive billions of dollars in investment away, and losing jobs for hundreds of thousands of Albertans.

2:10

Member Hoyle: Well, given that Alberta's youth unemployment rate is among the highest in the country and given that the UCP government promised they would bring jobs and investment back to Alberta but instead small businesses are struggling with rising costs and given that this government only made things worse with the youth minimum wage, which is proving to have failed to create jobs, leaving youth out of the workforce, why is the UCP failing the next generation of Alberta workers trying to build a future here?

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

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the truth is that we've just launched the Alberta youth employment incentive, putting forward \$8 million this year to help employees. Our employers hired 2,500 young people. That's putting them to work, again unlike what the NDP does. When they jacked the minimum wage, they put 21,000 young people out of jobs. Everything that they did is what got them unelected. That's why we're not following their example. It was terrible, and Albertans made a choice to put a pro-business government back in power. We're working for Albertans.

Member Hoyle: Given that under the NDP government Alberta led the country in job creation, youth employment rose, and wages were fair and given that after years . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, wow. I know it's Thursday. Nonetheless, this is question period. We need to hear the questions and the answers, and only the member on the member's feet right now is the one we should be hearing from.

Member Hoyle: . . . of UCP wasteful spending, we're seeing economic instability, international investment being scared away, fewer training opportunities, and an economy that's leaving young Albertans behind, when will this government stop blaming others, start delivering a real plan to attract investment, protect jobs, and give Alberta's youth a fair shot at success?

The Speaker: The Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's one of the most creative examples of revisionist history I've ever heard. The fact is that the NDP averaged over \$8 billion of deficit every single year they were in power. They added billions to our debt. They drove out hundreds of thousands of jobs. In fact, if you're talking about women and supporting women, when they left office, 137,000 women were on minimum wage. Our government has cut that in half. We are here putting people to work, we are here attracting investment, we're here growing the economy, and we're here serving Albertans, something the NDP has failed to do every single time they take the stand. We will not be taking any lessons from them.

The Speaker: The Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Queen Elizabeth II Highway 65th Avenue Interchange in Leduc

Mr. Lundy: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's government is delivering on its promise to build safe and efficient transportation corridors that keep our economy moving. The completion of the new interchange on the QE II highway and 65th Avenue marks a major milestone for the city of Leduc, connecting one of Alberta's busiest trade routes with the Edmonton International Airport and surrounding industrial parks. To the Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors: how will this new interchange strengthen Alberta's economic corridors and support job growth and investment in the Leduc region?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors.

Mr. Dreeshen: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the member for his advocacy of this amazing project. It was over \$211 million to build this interchange. It's something

that is right beside the Edmonton International Airport, and it is a great partnership with the city of Leduc and the Edmonton International Airport. It just shows another great example of this government working with municipalities to build long-lasting infrastructure that will benefit Albertans for generations to come.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Lundy: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for that response. Given that this new interchange will not only improve access to the Edmonton International Airport but also enhance the flow of goods and people through one of Alberta's most important trade routes, to the same minister: what time and cost savings will this project deliver for Albertans and the businesses they rely on on the QE II corridor every day?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This project, obviously, will unlock huge economic potential in the Edmonton region. It'll increase air cargo capacity from the Edmonton International Airport. It'll actually save about 2 million hours a year of commercial truck traffic to the airport and about 7 million hours of everyday commutes on highway 2, with about 70,000 vehicles crossing this intersection on a daily basis. Again, this is another example of this United Conservative government building infrastructure all across this province.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Lundy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the minister. Given that our government's focus is on building safe, reliable infrastructure that reduces congestion and supports long-term economic growth and given that this interchange improves emergency access to critical services like the new AHS STARS medevac base, can the same minister please elaborate on how this project reflects Alberta's commitment to strengthening and improving safety while supporting growing communities like Leduc?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, the AHS STARS medevac base is very important, and this will help their services, but this is about legacy. This is the United Conservative government investing in infrastructure near the Edmonton International Airport.

Mr. Speaker, I know you're from Calgary. If you go to Calgary International Airport, you'll see some infrastructure . . .

The Speaker: Hon. minister, even in the most friendly of ways thou shalt not drag the Speaker into debate.

Mr. Dreeshen: The legacy of the NDP leader when he was mayor of Calgary, Mr. Speaker: near the Calgary International Airport there's a big, giant blue circle, a vanity project that the NDP leader invested in instead of actually investing in critical water infrastructure so that the pipes in Calgary wouldn't have burst two years ago.

Minimum Wage Rate

Mr. Schmidt: Alberta's minimum wage has been frozen at \$15 an hour since 2018, and now it's the lowest in Canada. It's nowhere near what a living wage in Edmonton or Calgary would be. Over 130,000 Albertans, more than the entire population of Lethbridge, are legally

paid less than what it takes to afford to pay for rent and groceries. Can the minister explain why this government refuses to raise minimum wage even as other provinces index theirs to inflation?

The Speaker: The Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Roughly 95 per cent of workers in Alberta are earning more than the minimum wage under our government. In fact, under the NDP minimum wage earning workers rose from 2.2 per cent to over 11 and a half per cent during their tenure, and they cost 21,000 youth their jobs. That's why we are going to take our time and consult, make sure that we talk to employers and talk to employees and get this right. Raising the minimum wage to have more people out of work isn't the answer. We are going to take our time and make sure we serve Albertans well in this entire conversation.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that the minister said he doesn't care how much 130,000 Albertans earn and given that this week at Public Accounts we learned that this government approved a \$100,000-a-year pay hike for the president of Athabasca University – that's the equivalent of three years of full-time work at minimum wage – can the minister explain why well-connected insiders are getting six-figure raises while 130,000 of Alberta's lowest paid workers haven't seen a cost-of-living increase in seven years?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're very concerned about 130,000 employees in our province making minimum wage, and that's why we want to make sure we consult with all involved to get the answer right. Having more of them unemployed isn't the answer. Making sure that they have a good wage, making sure they have a good job, making sure they have great prospects is a careful consideration of this government. We are working across every ministry to make sure that they're well served. It is also why we brought forward the tax cut so that those earning the least will have the greatest amount of savings on their taxes, keeping more money in their pockets, where it belongs.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that whenever the minister talks about minimum wage, he forgets to mention who's paying it, huge corporations like Canadian Tire and Tim Hortons, which rake in billions in profits every year, and given that we're talking about the lowest amount that these very profitable companies are legally allowed to pay workers without getting penalized, can the minister tell minimum wage workers serving coffee and stocking shelves why shareholder dividends and CEO bonuses matter more to him than the workers who make those companies profitable?

2:20

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In September the NDP admitted that they have done zero minimum wage consultation with those most impacted, and they have no intention of doing so. That's not governance. That's ideological control over the free market. Again, what we heard there is that the NDP would like to control private corporations on how much profit they make and what they pay their employees. Our government is going to take a free-market approach, making sure that we respect . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Members. Members. Members from both sides. The tradition is here that one person at a time has the floor. Let's go with that.

Mr. Neudorf: That's why we're taking a responsible government approach by talking to all involved to get this right. Making more people get paid more and more people out of work isn't the answer. We're working with Albertans to serve them best.

School Class Sizes and Learning Supports

Ms Ganley: I've been hearing from hundreds of parents, teachers, and students about overcrowded classroom conditions. I've heard from a principal where they have one EA for a school of over 400 students and one requires full-time medical support. One teacher writes that she has five students coded for special education, 12 English language learners, and no support. This is a direct result of the UCP's decision to have the lowest per-student funding in the country. Does the minister think that these classroom conditions are acceptable for our kids?

Mr. Nicolaides: No, they're not, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly why our government is undertaking serious steps, both in the past and current time, to address these issues. In Budget 2025 we increased the classroom complexity grant by 20 per cent to help ensure that school divisions have more resources that they need to support diverse learners. It's also why we'll be announcing the creation of a new committee to help explore these challenges and help identify where supports are needed the most so that we can ensure that all students receive the supports that they need.

Ms Ganley: Given that 3,000 teachers is less than one per student and 1,500 educational assistants is less than half of one per school – it won't even begin to address the classroom problems created by the UCP – and given that it doesn't matter how you distribute them, every school needs more than one EA to help their students and given that the additional supports the UCP is offering wouldn't even take us out of last place, does the minister think that this has reached the point of a breach of public trust, or does he not recall?

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, I don't see the necessity to provide teachers to schools or communities where they may not be needed, where class sizes or composition levels are already at satisfactory levels. Again, that's perhaps how the NDP would operate, but we're going to take a very evidence-based decision-making process here. We're going to look at the situations and the schools and classrooms that need the most assistance and ensure that the resources that we have are distributed to those schools and those communities so that the children can receive the specialized support and care that they need and deserve.

Ms Ganley: Given that the UCP trampled on teachers' rights to avoid having to address these classroom conditions and given that the right to collectively bargain about working conditions is fundamental to our society and given that these teachers were fighting for our kids, I will ask the question that's on everyone's minds: whose rights are next? Does the UCP intend to come for all of us, or do they just really hate teachers?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, as I've said numerous times in this House, this was about balancing rights. Of course, we respect the teachers' rights to bargain, their right to strike. We just witnessed the longest province-wide education strike in the history of this country. At what point does that bleed into Alberta's children's rights to an education? Sometimes the provincial government has to make decisions like that to balance those rights on behalf of the entire province. [interjections]

The Speaker: Members, the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake and only that member has the floor right now.

Northern Alberta Concerns

Mr. Sinclair: Mr. Speaker, last week I voiced my frustration to this House that northern Alberta would be losing another MLA with the boundary commission ready to erase Lesser Slave Lake right off the map. Given that northern Albertans already feel like we're an extraction site where revenue leaves but does not return and now representation is disappearing and given that apparently it's easier to silence a voice than finally give the north a fair shake, to the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance: will you commit to utilizing resource revenue maps so Albertans can see who's pulling the weight and who's cashing the cheques?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the hon. member for that question, but what the hon. member is saying is simply incorrect. This government cares very deeply about northern Alberta. In fact, the member should thank members of this government from northern Alberta who approached the boundary commission immediately after the interim report came out to advocate for an additional seat in northern Alberta. The commission is nonpartisan; government has nothing to do with that commission. It consists of two members from the government, two members from the Official Opposition, and a judge that is chairing it from the Court of King's Bench. It is completely nonpartisan.

Mr. Sinclair: Mr. Speaker, this Premier seems to focus on a daily basis around the fight with Ottawa for provincial equality within Canada, which is fair, but apparently it's not so cool to fight for the same equality for northern Alberta within our own province because it might get you kicked out of caucus. Further given that the arguments are exactly the same and the hypocrisy is obvious, to the Premier: will you make changes to the way this province allocates funds to determine a balanced way of investing back in the areas where the resources came from?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, I present to the House a minister that defends the north and is still in caucus. We believe deeply in northern Alberta. That's why I co-penned a letter with eight other MLAs from this caucus imploring the nonpartisan boundaries commission to hear our concerns in the north. I applaud the member for standing to defend the north. Stand with me; stand with us. Let's get our seats in the north. We contribute so much to this province.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I know with the second supplementary you can do it without a preamble.

Mr. Sinclair: Mr. Speaker, I know this government wants me to stop asking these questions.

The Speaker: No. I just tried to tee you up to not do that, and you did it anyways. Without the preamble, please.

Mr. Sinclair: Given that, to quote the great Canadian show *Letterkenny*, to be fair and given that when it comes time for spending, it should be about matching investment to contribution, not just population and further given that returning resources to northern Alberta would allow our communities to survive and maybe even grow, which shrinks the urban-rural divide and would also alleviate the stress on our health care and schools in the bigger cities, will this government continue to take our northern votes for

granted, or will they consider making some changes to unify our province?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to answer this question, and I think it's a good question for the entire House. We all come from different parts of the province. We all have unique stories and know the needs of our people best. I come from a very remote rural part of the southeast of this province that largely feels very much the same way as the members in the north. All of those things have to be weighed at the Treasury Board table when we see these budget submissions, and sometimes the funding has to go where it's needed most desperately. If you look at where the schools are being built, for example, they're where the kids are.

Affordable Housing

Ms Wright: Mr. Speaker, every week my office hears from families desperate for safe, affordable housing: a family of five crammed into two bedrooms with another baby on the way, people on rental assistance hit with rent increases of \$200 this month alone, seniors terrified that they'll spend their golden years living in a car instead of their own home. Last year 5,000 Edmontonians were homeless because the priority list for safe affordable housing grows longer every single day. Why has the minister not invested to clear the backlog for people who are just looking for safe affordable housing?

Mr. Nixon: One of the challenges for the NDP is they just can't get their facts straight. In that question alone there are so many things that are factually incorrect, Mr. Speaker, including the fact that somebody on rent supplements' rent could go up by \$200 a month. Rent supplements in Alberta, just like the rest of the country, are capped at 30 per cent to somebody's income. That's the type of commitment that we have. We do that for 82,000 households across the province. We also have increased affordable housing all across Alberta and continue to invest billions of dollars in housing. We'll continue to do it, and it's resulting in us being the only jurisdiction inside our country where rent is going down.

2:30

Ms Wright: Given that the Auditor General flagged serious safety concerns in this government's own housing – fire suppression failures, failing roofs – and given there's no plan to fix more than a billion dollars in outstanding housing bills, doing basic maintenance on the government's own assets, and given this means that families, children with disabilities, and seniors are right now living in unsafe homes, why is this minister literally failing to provide opportunities for a safe roof over the heads of Albertans in dignified, safe housing?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct. Several governments did not invest in capital maintenance and renewal dollars across the province. When I became minister just over two years ago, it was one of my top priorities to make sure that we did it. Some of my earliest announcements were around investing in capital maintenance and renewal dollars. I'm happy to report that in this budget alone there's over a quarter billion dollars going to be invested into talking about some of the serious concerns that the Auditor General brought forward about previous governments. That is literally what we're doing. We have to do that, though at the same time investing in new builds and, most importantly, making sure that our market can do their job and not be shut down by socialist policies that we see across the way from us.

Ms Wright: Given that “going to be” doesn’t mean “is happening,” given that Albertans face rising costs of living and some of the highest costs of insurance, utilities, and groceries in this country, given that ensuring that families can find safe, affordable housing is the responsibility of this government, given that Albertans deserve the hope that comes with putting their children to sleep under a safe roof every night, why hasn’t this UCP government doubled down on efforts to build safe, affordable housing options for all Albertans, who deserve the peace of mind of a place to call home?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, when the NDP were in power they built zero net new houses – zero net new houses – in their entire time here. This government has built the most houses in history, has broken records for the last two years straight each and every quarter. We have the most builds in the population. We are building 25 per cent of all Canadian homes right here in Alberta despite being less than 12 per cent of the population. That’s leadership. It’s resulted in the city that we’re standing in seeing its affordable housing stock increase by 30 per cent alone. We’re going to continue to do that, and we’re going to continue to lead the way.

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

Veterinary Education and Recruitment

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Mr. Speaker, Alberta’s growing population is driving increased demand for veterinary services in both urban and rural communities. Edmonton and Calgary have experienced a rise in caseloads in companion animal clinics. Also, rural large- and mixed-animal practices have seen ongoing shortages of veterinary services. To the Minister of Advanced Education: what is our government doing to support the expansion of veterinary education to ensure that sufficient veterinary services are available across the province?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. McDougall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Veterinary medicine is crucial to Alberta’s economy, with rural areas and the province relying on it for the care and health of livestock and large animals. I’m proud and excited to announce that last September I attended the grand opening of the University of Calgary’s new Veterinary Learning Commons, a \$68.5 million investment to essentially double that faculty. Fifty brand new first-year members in that place will increase the capacity over the term from 200 veterinarians to 400.

The Speaker: The member.

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. Given that rural Alberta continues to face significant challenges recruiting and retaining veterinarians to support our livestock producers and further given that these shortages impact animal welfare, food safety, and the economic stability of rural communities, to the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation: what targeted strategies is our government implementing to attract and retain veterinary professionals in underserved rural regions of the province?

The Speaker: The minister of agriculture.

Mr. Sigurdson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Now, veterinarians play a huge role in the health of our livestock. They help prevent, identify, and contain outbreaks, and that’s why we’re ensuring that our rural communities have

access to veterinary professionals by working hand in hand with the University of Calgary veterinary medicine program to ensure Alberta is supported. This includes changes to administration policies to ensure better retention and also address the need for large-animal vets in rural Alberta. We’re also investing \$9 million over the next three years in the livestock diagnostic service unit. This ensures the lab services that veterinarians need to improve animal health.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker and the minister for your answer. Given that it takes several years to train and license new veterinarians within Alberta and further given that internationally trained veterinarians play a crucial role in addressing workforce gaps in supporting animal health across our province, ensuring a smooth and timely transition for those professionals is vital to maintaining veterinary services across Alberta. Can the Minister of Advanced Education provide an update on how our government is working to streamline licensing to help these professionals more quickly enter Alberta’s workforce?

The Speaker: The Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. McDougall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through Alberta’s Labour Mobility Act we are helping to reduce administrative burden for professional associations like the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association and helping them streamline their certification process, and it’s working. We’re waiting for the updated numbers, but in 2023 the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association reported registering both first-time domestically trained and labour mobility applicants within an average of two business days. That includes 74 first-time domestically trained veterinarians, 84 new internationally trained veterinarians, 60 new internationally trained veterinary technologists.

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

Oil Sands Tailings Pond Management

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Chief of the Mikisew Cree Nation, Billy-Joe Tuccaro, travelled to Ottawa to voice the anxiety of his people and the Athabasca Tribal Council chiefs about the UCP-appointed committee’s expedited treat-and-release recommendations for the contaminated tailings pond water. Chief Tuccaro quoted a Mikisew elder, saying, quote: if they’re going to allow treat and release, why don’t they just come and shoot us now? End quote. The government’s own committee reported, quote: many Indigenous communities oppose treat and release. Does consent from First Nations on water in traditional territory mean absolutely nothing to the minister of the environment?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of the environment.

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have a significant challenge when it comes to oil sands mine water in northern Alberta. We cannot continue to ignore this challenge or let water continue to accumulate. We have to continue to work together with local communities, including Indigenous communities, to find practical and effective ways that protect Indigenous rights, people, and the environment for years to come. I’m proud of the oil sands mine water committee, the work they did to speak with companies, communities, First Nations, and Métis communities across northern Alberta. Of course, we take their advice into consideration as we move forward on this issue.

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Mr. Speaker, given that Indigenous people feel like we're in a bit of a time warp because again and again, just like in reports in 2009, 2013, even in 2022, tailings pond management targets are missed while the government rolls back regulations and given that ponds used to be manageable in the 1980s and now they're twice the size of Grande Prairie, will this government commit to rolling up their sleeves and working with First Nations on protecting our waterways, or will they roll back even more regulations designed to protect our land, our water, and our people from contamination?

Ms Schulz: Mr. Speaker, we absolutely agree that this is an important issue. It's why the Premier asked me to look into this in my mandate letter. We are grateful for the work that the independent oil sands committee did over the last number of months to look at practical potential solutions for the challenge we're facing. The bigger risk would be doing nothing. I can tell you that once we take this plan, move forward on solutions, absolutely we will be working with and engaging with First Nations and Métis communities before that work continues.

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Given that First Nations in the Athabasca Delta are scared and stressed and given that anecdotally since the Kearl Lake spill in 2023 cancer diagnoses have spiked but health services in remote northern communities are inadequate to respond to what feels like a cancer crisis, will this Premier commit to a holistic strategy for tailings pond management, take into consideration water safety, put in a remote cancer treatment centre and community health services so that Indigenous Albertans of the north receive a signal that this government cares about them?

Ms Schulz: Mr. Speaker, as I've said in this House before, fear, misinformation, and scaring local communities is not appropriate for members in this Chamber. We do more monitoring in the oil sands region than almost anywhere else on the planet. We take that monitoring data to ensure that the water continues to remain safe for local communities in the north. Even the Chief Scientist, an independent officer here in Alberta, confirmed that the water is indeed safe. It's some of the highest quality water not only in the province but across the country. We'll continue to monitor to ensure that people are safe.

2:40

Teachers' Attendance

Mr. Ellingson: Mr. Speaker, this Premier, rather than loving freedom, loves to trample on the freedoms of Albertans. Last week the government forced teachers back to work by taking the nuclear notwithstanding option, and since then they're requiring every single public school to report teacher absences daily to the minister. Clearly he has time on his hands. Will the minister of education tell all Albertans how many teacher absences were reported this week?

Mr. Nicolaides: The Ministry of Education and Child Care is not tracking teacher absences or attendance, Mr. Speaker. We're focused on ensuring that we're addressing class sizes... [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, I'm pretty sure we can hear each other as long as there's only one person talking. Let's try that.

Mr. Nicolaides: We're focused on reducing class sizes and addressing class composition challenges that we've seen increase significantly over the past few years. That's why we've made a significant investment in Budget '25 to increase what we contribute

in the classroom complexity grant as well as other funding that we've provided, in addition to our \$8.6 billion initiative to build and modernize 130 schools across the province.

Mr. Ellingson: Given that teachers are asking me why this data is being collected, given that Albertans will recall that teacher absences used to be handled with no problems at the school board level and given that this government has taken over the process, adding new red tape that mandates daily reports be shuffled from desk to desk until they reach the minister's office and given how contrary this is to the government's professed love of reducing red tape, why has the minister added more red tape, reporting teacher absences when nobody needed or is calling for it?

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, I think I already answered that question a moment ago. The Ministry of Education and Child Care is not interested in collecting any of that information. What we are interested in, Mr. Speaker, is addressing some of the challenges that we have in our education system at the moment. Over the past few years we've seen a significant increase in our population which, of course, has added significantly to class size pressure and to complexity issues, and we're working hard to address those issues. I mentioned a moment ago the aggressive school bill that we're pursuing as well as other steps that we're taking to address complexity conditions in our schools.

Mr. Ellingson: Given that this government squandered months at the bargaining table, given that they've opted to force teachers back to work without dealing or robbing them of their constitutional rights, given that they've now wrapped teachers and schools in even more red tape, tracking their comings and goings on a daily basis, haven't teachers been through enough? Does this minister even know what his department is asking schools and school boards to do, and will he scrap the tracking of teacher absences today?

Mr. Nicolaides: I think the member opposite is misinformed. I can't scrap something that's not actually happening. Mr. Speaker, while they continue with misinformation, our priority on this side is to make sure that every student receives the very best. It's part of the reason why we've brought forward Bill 6, which we'll be debating in a little bit here, to ensure that every student is screened for literacy and numeracy ability, a move that's been strongly welcomed by groups like Dyslexia Canada and being replicated in other provinces. I know the Manitoba Legislature just passed a similar bill as well.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds we will continue.

Presenting Petitions

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Mr. Speaker, I rise to submit a petition that has been completed by people from all across the province. It's for mandatory social media literacy classes for all elementary students in Alberta. I also have the five requisite copies.

The Speaker: Just before you hand that to the – was that approved by Parliamentary Counsel?

Ms Goehring: I'm not sure.

The Speaker: Okay. If it was not, I think that makes it a tabling.

Ms Goehring: Perhaps I'll wait.

The Speaker: I'm learning here as we go. Anyways, carry on.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Bill 202 Conflicts of Interest (Ethical Governance) Amendment Act, 2025

Mr. Kasawski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Sherwood Park to request leave to introduce a bill being Bill 202, Conflicts of Interest (Ethical Governance) Amendment Act, 2025.

[Motion carried; Bill 202 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

Ms Goehring: I'm going to get some clarity, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Please say again?

Ms Goehring: I'm going to get some clarity on what the intention is.

The Speaker: Okay, not right now.

Ms Goehring: Thank you.

The Speaker: Okay. Any other tablings? Lesser Slave Lake.

Mr. Sinclair: Nope. Sorry.

The Speaker: Okay. No.
Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with two tablings. One is a poem called Enlisted. It was read at last year's Remembrance Day ceremony by Nash Hove. He's a grade seven student.

The second one is a white paper from the government of Canada's Public Safety Canada, A New Policing Vision for Canada: Modernizing the RCMP. I'll be referencing it later.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I have a tabling of a petition that was signed by 1,185 people looking to reverse the closure of ESL programming at Bow Valley College.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite copies of postcards from teachers in my constituency indicating the abysmal conditions in their classrooms.

The Speaker: Thank you. The Member for Calgary-Currie.

Member Eremenko: Thank you. FOIP Data Reveals Soaring Alerts, Wait Times and Burnout with Calgary EMS. This is the article I referenced in my member's statement.

The Speaker: Thank you.
The Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have copies of a letter written to the Member for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain. The writer was worried that it wouldn't be read, but the concerns are about the UCP support for transphobic policies.

The Speaker: Thank you.
The Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a tabling today from Justin, a teacher of 15 years who talks about the government's approach being a Band-Aid on a bullet hole.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table an e-mail, with the five copies, from a constituent, Asma. Asma is a teacher sharing her concerns with Bill 2 and being forced back without class sizes being addressed.

The Speaker: Are there any more tablings? Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have so many tablings, so I'm just going to table three again. These are e-mails – one from a teacher, one from a psychologist, and one from a student at J. Percy Page – all of whom are calling on the UCP to fund education properly and to treat teachers with respect.

The Speaker: Three tablings done in a small amount of time. Gold star.

Any other tablings here today? I see none.

2:50 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. Amery, Minister of Justice, pursuant to the Legal Profession Act Alberta Law Foundation, 2025, annual report.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this comes to the part of the day where we deal with points of order. At 1:58 the Deputy Government House Leader rose.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Williams: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I unfortunately rise because the Leader of the Opposition was at the time asking a question at 1:58 of government where, as far as I have written down, the Leader of the Official Opposition said, "This Premier finds it so easy to throw away her ethics." I'm rising on point of order 23(h), (i), and, unfortunately, (j). This is one that hits all three. This is language that will continue to cause disruption in the House. It is categorically inappropriate to accuse another member of the House of having no ethics, of being immoral, of being unethical. As we know, imputing misuse of funds or otherwise corrupt or inappropriate behaviour has been considered unparliamentary in *Beauchesne* 489. There's a list of words that continue in that space. It added nothing to the debate. It does nothing but try and attack an individual member of the House, in this case the Premier. We ask the Leader of His Majesty's Official Opposition to withdraw and apologize for the statement.

The Speaker: The House Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the member I apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: This matter is dealt with and completed.

The next matter I think is 1:56. I think there were potentially three points of order all at the same time. Let's go with the Deputy Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Allegations against a Member

Mr. Williams: I believe that the three were in the period of about 2:16. We'll withdraw the last one from the minister. [interjection] Pardon me? Okay; 2:06 perhaps. If this is the one I'm correct on, the set of three, we'll withdraw the last one from the minister of housing, and the other two, from the fellow Deputy Government House Leader, will be combined into one.

I rise on 23(h) and (i). At the time, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was asking a question surrounding lavish gifts, et cetera, implied – and we believe this not to be factually the case – that the Minister of Justice and the Premier accepted trips and box tickets. That didn't happen. However, the question continued on to say: "all gifts, of course. In return, Sam Mraiche and his many, many companies got hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer funds and inflated contracts." I can quote the same 489 of *Beauchesne* to this effect.

I will also quote a number of previous Speaker rulings in this House. Corrupt politicians: Wednesday, December 2, 2015, Speaker Warner said that it was inappropriate and cautioned against it. Corrupt: Monday, May 30, 2016, Speaker Warner asked the member to withdraw and apologize. Corruption: November 18, 2023, the Speaker cautioned the member against further use. I have more examples as well, Mr. Speaker, around the term "corruption" and implying corruption. I can cite them, but I'm certain the table can show those to you.

We just ask the member to not make personal allegations against members of the House. The political points can be made without trying to accuse individual members. We will do our part on this side of the Chamber. But today we're asking the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud to apologize and withdraw on those statements.

The Speaker: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I understand the Deputy Government House Leader's comments around personal accusations. My comments are focused on the use of the corruption language. We are in a situation where we've got the Auditor General doing an investigation, the RCMP investigating. The call for a full public inquiry has been made repeatedly. Talking about these issues needs to continue to be a matter of debate in this place. I want to say that comment because the Deputy Government House Leader specifically talked about the use of the word corrupt and its use in past history and past rulings here in this Chamber.

That being said, under 23(h), (i), and (j), without the benefit of the Blues, if there were personal accusations made, on behalf of that member I apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: Thank you. Well, here's an easier part of the whole thing. She did mention hockey tickets. On February 25, 2025, the Speaker ruled, and I'll quote it to you.

I have been informed that the matter with respect to hockey tickets from MHCare or Sam Mraiche has been referred to the Ethics Commissioner, and as such pursuant to section 24(6) of the act "where a matter has been referred to the Ethics Commissioner ... neither the Legislative Assembly nor a committee ... shall inquire into the matter."

That certainly needs to be withdrawn and apologized for.

The other point on corruption. There's a word that's caused quite a bit of disorder in this House. On March 12 Speaker Cooper had cautioned a member, a couple of members, for repeatedly using that word and the word "corrupt." He cautioned members to avoid using language that is apt to cause disorder. We don't think this is – it's right walking on the line.

I'm going to ask you to withdraw and apologize for the remarks regarding the hockey tickets, and I'm going to ask House leaders on both sides to be cautious. If you really want to make the word "corrupt" a word you can't use, I guess we're heading down that path. I think there are probably correct references where that word needs to be used here, but if you walk over the line, then I'm just a servant to this House. You're going to take away your ability to use the language if you abuse that ability.

I would ask you to apologize and withdraw for the one point, and I would ask both sides to caution their members about the use of that word "corrupt."

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, I'll apologize and withdraw.

Under 13(2).

The Speaker: Okay.

Point of Clarification

Ms Gray: My question is regarding that ruling with hockey tickets. Apologies. I believe you said 24(6), but my standing orders doesn't have that, so I probably misheard you.

The Speaker: I am reading *Hansard* on page 2398 from February 25, 2025. I see it right there in front of me: pursuant to section 24(6).

Ms Gray: Sorry. That must be a legislative reference, not standing orders. My confusion.

My 13(2) question to you, Mr. Speaker. The Ethics Commissioner started investigating something, hockey tickets in this case. Will the House be informed when that investigation is complete? Otherwise, this forbids a topic of debate in the Legislature for perpetuity, which seems inappropriate to me, and I would appreciate clarification now or at some future time.

The Speaker: Well, and I say this with the greatest deal of respect, whether it's troubling to you or not, we've got to go with the rules of the House. I don't think I'm necessarily in control of whether somebody reports this to the House.

Madam Clerk, is there a requirement for independent officers of the Legislature to report when these things are complete if they are doing an investigation?

I can't answer your question. Not because I don't want to, but I will follow up with the Ethics Commissioner and see if I can get an indication and get back to you.

Ms Gray: I will thank the Speaker for tracking down the answer.

The Speaker: Hon. member, you got two 13(2)s that you fit in there, and I'm good with that; I hope you're not going to slide into debate at this point.

Ms Gray: Not at all. Only that I appreciate that the Speaker in his role of protecting the rights of all members will look into this issue. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Opposition House Leader.

Orders of the Day
Government Bills and Orders
Third Reading

Bill 1
International Agreements Act

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to move third reading of Bill 1, which is the International Agreements Act. I would like to thank all of the members who have spoken to this bill. Of course, at the core of the legislation is the goal of asserting that Alberta has the constitutional authority to implement or not implement federal international agreements in our areas of jurisdiction. Clarity and certainty for the people of Alberta, Alberta businesses, and Alberta industry, clarity and certainty for the federal government as they look towards revising or renegotiating new international agreements, and clarity and certainty for investors who want to make commitments to grow our economy and create jobs here in our province: that is behind why we are proposing to pass this bill.

Currently, there is no formal agreement in place between the provinces, territories, and the government of Canada mandating that the federal government consult with Alberta on international agreements or treaties that have a direct impact on the people living in Alberta, and this has led to an inconsistent approach when it comes to the federal government's negotiating on international matters that have real impacts on people living in Alberta.

3:00

In the absence of a formal process this legislation makes a few things clear. International agreements signed by the federal government with subject matter that falls within Alberta's constitutional jurisdiction are only binding and enforceable in Alberta if implemented under provincial legislation. The legislation would cover agreements entered into by the government of Canada or a federal minister or agency or official with one or more countries or states, any agency or official of those foreign countries or states, or nongovernmental or international organizations with international membership. The proposed legislation seeks to explicitly state Alberta's role in international agreements rather than relying on tradition.

Unfortunately, we've seen in recent years, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government continues to legislate and negotiate in areas of provincial jurisdiction, and while convention may have served us well in the past, it is time for us to draw a clear line. We are proactively getting rid of the grey area and spelling out things in black and white. We're also broadening the scope of the current legislation that is on the books to make sure we're covering all of our bases because currently we do have legislation. It's the International Trade and Investment Agreements Implementation Act. It's been in effect since 1995. It was revised in 2000. It provides a mechanism for Alberta's government to declare approval of international trade and investment agreements. That's underscoring that we have this power. We've always had this power. We have asserted it through legislation, and now we need to extend it because this does not go far enough.

That is why, if passed, the International Agreements Act will replace the existing legislation and include all international agreements, not just those related to trade and investment, and this is important. Alberta's interests in international agreements go far beyond trade and investment. For example, the revision of current climate pacts or signing on to new ones could and have had real,

measurable, and detrimental impacts on our resource sector, and this in turn could scare away Alberta jobs and investment flowing into our province; or the signing of an agreement around pandemic responses, an area that affects Alberta's largest government expenditure, which is health care, clearly an area of provincial jurisdiction. Albertans need a clear mechanism to actively defend and protect our provincial jurisdiction in our areas of constitutional authority, whether it's our natural resources, property and civil rights, hospitals and municipal institutions, or education, emergency management, or data, or more.

This legislation provides much-needed certainty and reassurance to people living in Alberta, Alberta companies, and our international investors that we will not implement agreements in Alberta if they are damaging to Alberta. We've worked hard to maintain a business environment that creates certainty and stability so that when businesses and investors look at our province, they respond with a resounding yes. That is why this legislation also aims to minimize red tape.

Quebec already has a similar legislative framework in place. It ensures that the provincial Legislature has the final say on the implementation of international agreements in areas of provincial jurisdiction. Their legislation states that no international agreement, even those that fall exclusively under federal jurisdiction, is binding on Quebec unless consent is formally expressed by the National Assembly or the government. Fully adopting Quebec's approach would create new legislative and administrative requirements that are not aligned with the Alberta government's existing processes and, we acknowledge, would be burdensome to implement.

That's why we're taking an even more streamlined approach than Quebec has. Alberta's approach focuses on terms of international agreements that specifically fall in provincial jurisdiction. While the federal government enters into a large number of international agreements, this legislation will only apply to agreements or specific parts of agreements that directly fall under provincial jurisdiction. The purpose of this legislation is to reassert Alberta's authority in areas that are clearly and rightfully ours.

Importantly, this legislation allows Alberta's government to review and assess new international agreements on a case-by-case going forward, and it gives us the flexibility to implement favourable terms that benefit people living in Alberta while omitting the specific terms and obligations that do not. This legislation provides a balanced approach while minimizing red tape, unintended delays, or impacts on stakeholders.

Bill 1 is about how Alberta chooses to implement international agreements that are not exclusively within federal jurisdiction, and Alberta's Legislature decides whether international agreements apply to provincial matters. That includes anything that could intersect with Indigenous issues, and Alberta's government takes that responsibility seriously. I want to be clear. This bill does not touch treaty or constitutional rights within the federal government's jurisdiction under section 91(24) and section 35 of the Constitution Act.

Mr. Speaker, I call on all members of the Assembly to support Bill 1, the International Agreements Act. This legislation draws a clear line. International agreements that touch on provincial areas of jurisdiction must be debated and passed into law here in Alberta. Alberta, not Ottawa, will decide how international agreements that affect provincial matters apply in the province. Our approach builds on existing legislation that defends provincial authority, including the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act and the Provincial Priorities Act. This legislation is another tool in our tool box to make sure that when it comes to Alberta's priorities, we have the final say. Together we can ensure that Alberta's jurisdiction and

interests are protected and that decisions that shape our future are made right here at home.

With that, Mr. Speaker, third reading of Bill 1, the International Agreements Act.

The Speaker: On third reading of Bill 1, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today not only to debate the text of Bill 1 but to speak to the constitutional and moral foundations of this province. I want to add to the comments that my fabulous colleague from Calgary-Bhullar-McCall has already spoken to and what this Premier herself has just admitted, namely how this province has put together a make-work piece of legislation that does nothing because this province already has the jurisdiction to do what this bill purports to do, but I digress.

We are wasting time in this Chamber for nothing else but to appease the Premier's base. Nothing else. I rise today because the Assembly has refused to include the amendment I proposed, a simple, clear, lawful amendment that would ensure that "nothing in this Act [shall be interpreted] as abrogating or derogating from . . . [the] existing aboriginal and treaty rights of [Indigenous] peoples". My colleague from Calgary-Bhullar-McCall stated that this should not have been controversial. This should not have been debatable. This is the baseline that is required to honour treaty, the Constitution, and the honour of the Crown, yet this government refused. So I speak plainly to this House, to the record, and to history because the decision to reject this amendment is not procedural; it is the refusal to affirm treaty as the foundation of this province. Treaty is the foundation of Alberta.

Before there was an Alberta, our nations existed here with law, governance, diplomacy, political systems, peacemaking systems, and systems of accountability. Treaties were not land surrenders; they were agreements to share the land in peace as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow. Distinguished Anishinabe legal scholar John Borrows writes,

Treaties are not relics; they are relationships. They require renewal as the river renews itself, through movement, respect, and returning again and again to the teachings of how we are meant to live with one another. And it reminds us of how our laws live on this land in our stories and in our responsibilities to one another. Treaty is not a moment; it's a practice. Treaty is not historical; it's living.

And this was recognized not only by the Indigenous law but also by Crown law.

As Lord Denning of the High Court of the United Kingdom stated in 1982, "No parliament should do anything to lessen the worth of these guarantees. They should be honoured by the Crown . . . [as] long as the sun rises and [the] river flows. That promise must never be broken." This means that no provincial government, including this one, has the authority to weaken, diminish, or ignore treaty. It is beyond their jurisdiction to do so.

Ironically, this government already affirmed this last year. Here's what makes this moment so striking. Last year the same government amended the referendum to add a nonderogation clause protecting treaty rights. The minister said, and I quote from *Hansard*: "We recognize the importance of protecting treaty rights, which is why we're proposing this amendment." In spring of this year we recognized that treaty rights no longer require explicit protection, but later in the fall the protection is refused? It's not consistent. It's not principled. This is a political choice to retreat from the treaty relationship, and when political choice overrides constitutional duty, that is where the honour of the Crown collapses. Treaty rights are recognized in the Constitution under section 35. Section 35 of 1982 affirms that treaty rights are recognized and

protected. Recognized means they exist independently of government approval. Protected means they cannot be diminished through silence, neglect, or legislative omission.

3:10

The Supreme Court of Canada and Delgamuukw affirm that Indigenous law and the oral history are equal in evidentiary weight to written colonial documentation. This means treaty is defined by both nations and not unilaterally by the Crown.

Later on in the Mikisew and the SCC identified that this province, our province, has legal notice of the importance of the Crown's responsibility to the First Nations of Alberta. Further, the Library of Parliament researchers Sara Fryer and Olivier Leblanc-Laurendeau write: both federal and provincial governments share responsibility of upholding treaties, and this obligation is rooted in the honour of the Crown.

The responsibility lies here, right here in this Chamber. The United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples is not optional. It's a framework for reconciliation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission call to action number 43 states explicitly, "We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation," because this declaration affirms that treaties are matters of international concern. Treaties are the basis of partnership, not policy. Free, prior, informed consent is required before laws affecting Indigenous peoples are passed. States must honour and enforce treaties, and by rejecting my amendment, this government is rejecting the framework for reconciliation.

The American declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples, known as OAS, also states, "Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance, and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors . . . and to have States honor and respect same," and further: nothing in this declaration may be interpreted, diminished, or eliminated by the rights of Indigenous peoples contained in treaties.

This Assembly does not have the authority to diminish or ignore treaty rights. International law does not permit it. Treaty cannot be unilaterally withdrawn from, and this is where I turn to the work of Professor Laurence R. Helfer, one of the world's leading scholars on treaty law. His article *Terminating Treaties* remains foundational. He says, "foundational treaties, those that establish political relationships, jurisdiction, and shared obligation cannot be unilaterally exited from; withdrawal would destabilize the very legal order that treaty creates," meaning that if a province acts to undermine treaty, it undermines its very own legal authority to exist on these lands. Without treaty, there is no lawful Alberta. Without treaty, Crown jurisdiction dissolves. So I'll say it very clearly, Mr. Speaker. If you weaken treaty, you weaken yourselves.

I had the privilege of spending many years studying and working as a research assistant to the brilliant legal scholar Val Napoleon, who received many international awards on her work, including the Governor General's award for her dissertation on Gitksan law. Napoleon writes that: "Indigenous law is not culture. Indigenous law is law with precedents, accountability, legitimacy, and interpretive standards." She explains simply: "when treaty is dishonoured, it's not only Indigenous law that is violated; it is also Canadian law because treaty is the bridge between the two." She also writes: "to treat Indigenous law as symbolic while recognizing Canadian law or provincial law as authoritative is to reduce the very colonial hierarchy that treaty was meant to resolve. Treaty is the

space of shared legal order, where neither legal system is subordinate to the other.” Our legal pluralism in this country and in this province is what allows for all of us to coexist on these lands. A dear friend and mentor Michael Asch wrote the book *We Are All Treaty People*. He is a respected anthropologist in academia, and often the courts in this country draw on his work. He writes: “Treaties are not agreements in which Indigenous peoples consented to be governed. They were agreements in which settlers consented to live as guests with responsibilities to the hosts.” He further states: “If we take treaty seriously, then Canada is not a colonial state. It is a treaty partnership.” That means that we are to uphold treaty, not merely just benefit from it.

I would suggest that we must reflect upon those words about partnership. The consequences of denial of recognitions are felt very deeply in our community. When treaty is ignored, it translates to lived realities where our children are seized faster into foster care, our women and girls continue to go missing and are murdered, our youth age out of systems that fail them and more often than not find themselves incarcerated, and, again, we fill some of the highest rates in the country of institutions and jails alike. First Nations are always continuously fighting for their people, for their health care, and their own homelands.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice demand that governments must dismantle structures that normalize violence. Indigenous girls, Indigenous rights to culture and legal systems must be protected. Omitting protection is also violence. You cannot say that you care about missing Indigenous women while refusing to honour treaty. You cannot say the word “reconciliation” while rejecting the framework for reconciliation. It is simply a contradiction that violates our very existence.

When I was a young girl, I used to ask elders: “Why don’t we just burn the treaties? They’re not upholding their end of the obligation, and we always do, and we suffer for it.” I was taught very firmly that as Indigenous, as Nehiyaw people we are kind and that treaty is sacred. It was made with the pipe. It’s a covenant between our people and the Creator. Tobacco was offered. Songs were sang. Nations witnessed, land witnessed, and we agreed to coexist in peace and friendship as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow. This is law. The land remembers. The rivers remember. The ancestors remember.

We carry that memory in our DNA, so in this address I’ll speak plainly. You do not get to undo treaty. You do not get to diminish it. You do not get to have it as an omission. You cannot legislate treaty away. Treaty is far older than this Assembly, older than our province, and older than any political ideology. We as First Nations are still here, we have been here, and we will always be here. As long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow, we will continue to work to uphold treaty with or without the co-operation of this UCP government.

Hay-hay.

The Speaker: On third reading of Bill 1 are there any speakers?

The hon. Premier, would you like to close debate? I need to offer you that opportunity.

Ms Smith: Waived.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a third time]

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 6 Education (Prioritizing Literacy and Numeracy) Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2)

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased to move second reading of Bill 6, the Education (Prioritizing Literacy and Numeracy) Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2).

This bill is about making sure that every student in Alberta has the strong reading and math skills that they need to succeed not just, of course, for success in schools but also for success in life. As I think we all know, our world is changing quickly, and the skills that children learn today will shape their futures tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta’s classrooms are more complex today than ever before. Students come from a variety of backgrounds, and each child learns in their own unique way. Some, of course, pick up reading and math quickly while others need some more time and even some extra help. This bill recognizes that complexity and is designed to help teachers and schools identify challenges early so students get the help that they need as soon as possible. By focusing on reading and math, the building blocks, of course, of all learning, we give every child the best chance to succeed.

3:20

Now, Mr. Speaker, recent news makes it clear that we need to employ every possible mechanism we have at our disposal. Alberta is facing a serious challenge, as are many other provinces and jurisdictions around the world. Illiteracy rates amongst young students have almost doubled in recent years. According to the latest PISA results nearly 15 per cent of Alberta students are now functionally illiterate. That is not something we can sit idly by and watch happen.

When children can’t read, they struggle in every subject, they fall behind, and they face barriers that can last a lifetime. Illiteracy affects their confidence and future job prospects, and that’s why Bill 6 is so important. This legislation directly responds to the alarming rise in rates of illiteracy. It will require every school to use proven, evidence-based reading and math screeners to catch learning difficulties early before they become bigger problems. With mandatory screening for all students in kindergarten to grade 3 we will identify children who need help and give them the support that they need.

When we talk about complexity in our classrooms, we mean more than just having a lot of students, of course. We mean that many children learn in a variety of different ways. They come from different backgrounds, and they have unique challenges as well. Some students may speak English as a second language, for example. Others may have learning disabilities or need extra help with reading or math. Some children might be just shy and find it very difficult to ask for help, while others may be outgoing but struggle to focus. Without the right tools it can be difficult and hard to know who needs help and what kind of help is needed. That’s why, again, Bill 6 is so important. By giving teachers simple screeners for reading and math, we make it easier for them to spot problems early and give students the support that they need.

These screeners have been mischaracterized. They are not tests, Mr. Speaker. They are short, simple diagnostic checks that help teachers see if a student is struggling with basic foundational skills. For example, a reading screener might ask a child to read a few words or sentences. A math screener might ask them to solve a few simple and basic math problems. The goal is not to grade the student but to find out if they need extra help. If a student does indeed need help, the teacher can act quickly. For example, maybe the child needs more practice with sounding out words or maybe they need help with adding or subtracting. The teacher can work with the student, give them extra support, and keep track of their progress so that, again, small problems do not become bigger ones.

Another important part of Bill 6 is making sure that parents are involved in these important conversations. When schools share

screeners results with parents, families know exactly how their child is doing. If a child is struggling, parents can talk to teachers and work together to make a plan. Maybe the child needs extra reading at home as well, or maybe they need some further assistance with a tutor. But by working as a team, teachers and parents can help every child succeed. This is teamwork, and it is essential in addressing classroom complexity. Parents know their children best, and teachers have the skills to help them learn. When everyone works together, students get the support that they need.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest worries for parents and teachers is that a child might fall behind and that they might not get the help that they need. Bill 6 is designed to prevent this. By checking every student early and often we make sure no child slips through the cracks. If a student is having trouble, we find out right away and, more importantly, do something about it. This is especially important for young children. The first few years of school are when kids learn the basics of reading and math. If they fall behind early, it can be very hard to catch up.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Bill 6 sets out clear requirements for schools across Alberta. If passed, the bill will require all schools to do three very simple things: administer reading and math screeners to all students in kindergarten through grade 3, share the results with parents or guardians so that families know how their children are doing, and report the results to the Ministry of Education and Childcare so that progress can be tracked across the province. These new requirements will start in the '26-27 school year.

Bill 6 makes sure that every school in Alberta follows the same rules. Whether a child goes to a public, francophone, or charter school, they will all get the same checks and the same support. By collecting results from all schools, the ministry can see how students are doing across the province; if some schools need more help, we can send more resources. If some students are struggling in certain areas, we can create special programs to help. Furthermore, this data helps us make smart decisions and targeted decisions where they're needed.

Transparency, Mr. Speaker, is also critically important, and Bill 6 makes sure that all schools follow the same process so that every student has access to early assessment and support. Parents will receive their child's screening results and can work with teachers, as I've outlined.

Now, Bill 6 has received some strong support, and government initiatives with respect to screening in literacy and math have received strong support, including from experts and advocates across Canada. As an example, Dyslexia Canada, a leading organization dedicated to helping children with reading challenges, has welcomed our legislation requiring these assessments. Dyslexia Canada says that early screening is an essential part of making reading instruction fair for everyone. When we screen students early, we can find out who needs help and ensure that they do not become larger barriers. This is essential for children with dyslexia and children that suffer with other learning disabilities. When experts like Dyslexia Canada weigh in and support our plan, it shows that we're on the right track, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 6 will help teachers spot difficulties and ensure that students receive their necessary supports, but I also want to talk a little bit more about what's happening in other provinces. Many other provinces are following Alberta's lead in mandating literacy and numeracy screening assessments from kindergarten to grade 3. In fact, Manitoba's government as recently as a couple of days ago unanimously passed Bill 225, which makes early reading screening a universal practice for all students. Their experience offers valuable lessons for Alberta, and it shows why Bill 6 is not just helpful but absolutely necessary.

These recent developments in Manitoba further highlight the importance of early intervention. As Manitoba's NDP education minister stated in November 2025,

We know parents and teachers want kids to excel in school. We supported and strengthened Bill 225 to focus squarely on early reading, which is the foundation of all future learning. By acting early, we can support students before reading difficulties become learning barriers. This bill will ensure educators have the right tools and families have the right information to help children thrive.

Mr. Speaker, I don't often agree with the NDP, but in this case I do. But that, of course, is a statement from the NDP government in Manitoba and their leadership in Manitoba. I wonder if the Alberta NDP will adopt the same position.

An NDP MLA also emphasized,

As mentioned, our government recently announced that school divisions will implement universal early reading screening tools to ensure that no student is left behind.

As well, Manitoba's Minister of Environment and Climate Change stated,

Just this past week, as the member mentioned, our government moved another policy initiative forward where we are going to implement a universal early reading tool, a screening tool, to ensure that kids aren't left behind.

Ultimately, that's what we need to do. This is a way that we can directly impact kids' literacy. It's a way that we can do it quickly and implement it quicker than through [other mechanisms], and so I appreciate the leadership of the Minister.

These examples from Manitoba demonstrate the effectiveness of these universal screening tools. Alberta's Bill 6 follows this path and ensures that no child is left behind in this regard.

Alberta faces some of the same challenges that Manitoba's leaders have rightly seen as well. Bill 6 is critical because it brings the same proven strategies here. By introducing early reading and math screeners, we will catch learning difficulties early, we'll give teachers the tools that they need, and we will keep parents informed and involved. Of course, if Alberta does not act, as I mentioned earlier with some of the challenging illiteracy rates that we've seen, children will fall behind. It is our imperative to take every action and every step that we can now, and that's why this legislation is so important.

3:30

Mr. Speaker, this is not just a simple piece of legislation; it is much more. It is about ensuring that every student is able to succeed, that every possible mechanism and measure is used to spot learning challenges early and students receive the support that they need.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about investments and intervention because, of course, conducting the screening assessment is critically important, but it is also even more important to ensure that our school divisions have the resources that they need to conduct necessary intervention. In Budget '25 we allocated \$12 million directly into math and reading supports, but we're also planning for more dollars in future years. We're planning \$13 million in Budget '26 and \$15 million in Budget '27. These real dollars will go straight into the classroom to help students who need help the most. Since 2021 our government has invested over \$92 million in extra supports for students who need help. Our government is making historic investments in Alberta students. We know that strong reading and math skills are the foundation for success in school and in life, and that's why we're making sure that every student has the skills that they need to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 6 is a critical part of our plan. It ensures that funding goes where it's needed the most and to assist every student

who needs that extra help. More importantly, Bill 6 is not just about today; it's about building on a better future for Alberta's children. By focusing on reading and math, by supporting teachers and parents, and by making sure every child gets the help that they need, we're building the foundations for a better province. Strong literacy and numeracy skills are the foundation of a stronger future.

In closing, I ask all members of the Assembly, as we just saw very recently in Manitoba, to support Bill 6 at second reading so that we can work together to make our classrooms less complicated but most importantly give our students the brightest and best possible future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, on second reading of Bill 6, the hon. Member for Calgary-Beddington.

Ms Chapman: There we go. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Historic investments: I'm just going to start there because that was kind of how the minister closed out, and that phrase has just been ping-ponging around in my brain since then. I'm not sure I consider it historic to underfund public education. I think that's something we've seen Conservative governments do, really, over the last 20 years in Alberta, certainly for the time that I've been paying attention to public education. There's nothing historic about not funding our education system to keep pace with population growth and inflation. It's actually kind of the standard for Conservative governments.

To speak on the bill, Mr. Speaker, Bill 6 says that it legislates a set of literacy and numeracy screeners. This is for all students in kindergarten to grade 3. If you are scratching your head as to why the government needs to make law what is already mandatory, I am not surprised because I find myself in the same position. I was hoping that in the minister's introduction of this bill I would be able to hear an answer as to why legislation was required in this case. Why we need to actually bring legislation or make a law to set these screeners given that, as the minister mentioned, they are already mandatory in all schools. I didn't hear an answer from the minister today on that, but of course, we will have future stages of debate and I will look forward to the minister bringing a response as to why legislation is required in this case.

At his press conference when he was asked that question by the media "Why is Bill 6 needed; why do these assessments need to be made law?" his response at that time was, "So that they can be standardized across the province." I'm back to scratching my head on that one because diploma exams are standardized across the province. They are not law. Provincial achievement tests are standardized across the province. They are not law. I think that I will actually stop there because that's probably enough ideas for the minister on other pieces of legislation that he can waste our time with when we have real problems facing us in our schools today.

Now, I appreciate the good intentions that I believe the minister has when he brings forward this piece of legislation. I do believe that he is misguided in bringing it. I don't believe that it is going to address the overcrowded classrooms that we have in Alberta, the underresourced complexity, but I do believe that he was well intentioned but misguided, Mr. Speaker, on this legislation.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

I do worry that this is, of course, just an attempt to change the channel. The last few weeks have probably been a bit difficult for the minister, of course, the handling of the largest labour action in Alberta's history. Not an easy thing for anyone to go through, for sure, and I do understand why any minister or any government would be quite desperate to change the channel. I do believe that that is what is happening now, that Bill 6 is simply a distraction.

It is not talking about the root of the issues that we know are happening in our classrooms. Bill 6 again – right? – is making law this set of assessments, and these are assessments that teachers have been delivering now since 2022, originally for the grades 1 to 3 – and kindergarten was added last year – but they have been around for some time now, so teachers have had the opportunity to offer feedback to this government. I don't believe that the government themselves have asked teachers for feedback, but teachers – bless – did the work on their own to do a survey and to collect some feedback so that the government would be able to know how teachers feel about these assessments.

Unfortunately, I didn't hear any signs in the minister's introduction of the bill that he's making any changes to the assessments based on the feedback of the educators who are tasked with all the work of delivering them, right down to the printing, right? They print it, they administer it, they assess it, and then they report all that data back to the government. In the survey that was conducted of teachers – it was an ATA survey – 71 per cent of respondents had concerns around developmentally inappropriate content. The criticism here was that the screeners were actually misaligned with students' developmental readiness. Literacy screeners test phonics, patterns, and vocabulary that were not yet introduced in class, and numeracy screeners were presenting mathematical concepts that were beyond the grade level, and many of the expectations did not align with the Alberta curriculum or developmental best practices.

Absolutely, in future stages of debate, I would love to hear the minister's feedback on this, whether he agrees with this assessment that teachers have made of these screeners and whether any changes have been made in the time between when the survey data was collected and now to ensure that these screeners are actually aligning with Alberta's curriculum.

I will note as well that there are particular concerns from teachers, school boards, and programs that are teaching a second language, like French immersion programs or other second language immersion programs, which have a very unique approach to particularly literacy in the early years, of course, because those foundational years are primarily spent on the second language learning time, with the English language learning coming in a little bit later, coming in at around the grade 3 or 4 level. There have been concerns raised about whether these assessments are at all appropriate for children who are in those immersion or second language learning programs. Again, I would love to hear back from the minister on that, on what alterations they have made to the assessments to make sure that they are aligning with the needs of immersion language programs.

3:40

Teachers also raised concerns about the limited value of these assessments. Teachers widely question the usefulness of the screeners, and they report that test outcomes fail to accurately reflect student abilities or to guide instructional planning. Challenges include a lack of actionable insights – 50 per cent of teachers agreed with that statement; over 40 per cent felt there were unclear benchmarks and insufficient training on interpreting the results – and the belief that the repeated administration of these assessments further diminishes their value.

I have a letter from a teacher that I would like to share at this point in the debate. When I was reflecting on this, the limited value of assessments from teachers, what I thought about most was the fact that if you talk to teachers during the current job action, Mr. Speaker, a theme that reoccurs is a lack of respect for the expertise of educators, a lack of acknowledgement that they are professionals, that they have a job to do in the classroom, and that

they are very capable of doing it. I think that one of the reasons that I am hearing from teachers – there are a few – on why they aren't super happy about these assessments in their classrooms is that assessing is what teachers do. They do it from the very first day. They have their kids in their classroom. They are constantly assessing their kids in their classroom.

Other things that the minister had mentioned about getting parents involved: there are all sorts of mechanisms that already exist in our school systems to have parents involved, to connect parents with teachers. The opportunities are there. It just requires both parties to take part in that.

But that point about assessment. Emily, a teacher, shared this e-mail with me, and I thought she summed it up quite well, where she says:

Our classrooms don't need more pointless assessments or data collection exercises that tell teachers what they already know. Teachers already assess their students constantly through their daily interactions and classroom work. They know exactly who needs help and in what areas. What they don't have are the resources, time, or manageable class sizes to actually provide that help, and Bill 6 does nothing to change that.

She goes on to say:

If the government truly cared about improving literacy and numeracy, it would properly fund schools, reduce class sizes, restore support staff, and trust the people who are trained to do this job. Instead, this bill piles on more bureaucracy and testing, taking time away from real teaching and learning.

Thank you, Emily, for sharing those words.

Another issue that teachers raise, of course, is the challenges with the administration of the screeners. I'm calling them screeners, not tests. A little bit of credit maybe for that. I'm not sure that teachers would agree on the other description, though, about short and simple. Of course, it depends on class size and all those things, Mr. Speaker, but what teachers average the workload at is about three to five instructional days per year. That's quite a few. I think 181 is the standard number of instructional days. But let's just go ahead and think about it as a week, a week of time that it takes for teachers to, again, do all of these pieces that I mentioned. There is no support from the government on any step: the printing, the administering, the assessing, and then also the reporting on these outcomes.

Challenges with administration of the screeners. Teachers face significant logistical issues. Seventy-seven per cent cited insufficient time for data entry; 70 per cent, a lack of substitute teacher support; 49 per cent note inadequate training, and this is referring to any step of the assessment, whether it be on how to deliver it or on how to report the outcomes to the government and whatever system they're using.

This is the biggest one, and I think it's really important, that 79 per cent of teachers feel that the early timing of the screeners negatively affects relationship building and classroom routines. That's a really important point, Mr. Speaker, because in the past these screeners have had to be inputted all by the end of September. [interjection] It really is. That's just about the worst time, actually, to be taking kids out of the classroom and to be taking the teacher out of the classroom for an entire week. The beginning of the school year is a time to set routines, to build relationships. That's what we want our teachers focused on.

I have received, honestly, countless e-mails from teachers specifically on that issue of administering the screeners, and even with what I know about how poorly this government manages our education system, I still found myself surprised at how little support they provide to teachers who are required to deliver the assessments. I do think it would probably be well worth the minister's time to review even a sampling of the correspondence

I'm sure he's received on this issue. He just may not understand what is going on.

I will share a little bit from an e-mail from a teacher, Elisha. To the point that I made, she says:

These assessments are . . . due by the end of September – a time that should be spent [on] building relationships, establishing classroom routines, reviewing prior learning, and setting students up for success. Instead, students are often left doing "busy work," watching a movie, or playing games while their teacher is tied up testing.

There are no supports provided by this government to deliver these assessments. There is no funding attached to delivering the assessment.

I am curious what the minister thinks happens during this time when the teacher has to take, you know, the 20 minutes per child for the delivery of the test, this one-on-one time she has to take the child. What does he think happens in the classroom? Like, this is not a 1950s classroom. It's not a bunch of kids just sitting tidily in rows and filling out their readers. That's not what a modern classroom looks like, Mr. Speaker. So without any kind of support, how are teachers meant to deliver these? Where are they meant to find the time? Who is running the classroom if teachers are delivering these assessments?

Elisha also talks about the printing thing. This one kind of blew my mind. So the teachers are responsible literally for every step of this process. There is no support from this government at any step of this process. They have to print the materials. That's time. That's school resources. She said – this is a teacher who's been in the system for a number of years now – that the government used to have systems where they had testing booklets printed and distributed by Alberta education. I do hope that's something that the minister will consider moving forward with these assessments.

Elisha goes on to say, "This past September, teachers have done their part. We have printed, administered, assessed, and reported. My question is: What is the government doing with the data?"

An Hon. Member: That's a good question.

Ms Chapman: Which is a great question.

I'm a little surprised that a teacher has to ask what the government is doing with the data. The government now has detailed information showing which schools are thriving and which ones need additional support, yet there has been no evidence that the data is being used to direct funding where it's most needed. No additional education assistants, no learning specialists, no new literacy or numeracy intervention programs, no targeted supports for struggling schools. What is the government doing with the data?

Now, I know that in the go-forward they have committed to reporting on the data. The world is topsy-turvy. There are many things topsy-turvy today. Never in a million years did I think that I would hear the minister of education stand up here and praise the NDP, but it happened. The world is upside down today. Absolutely loving the NDP although I think that technically it was a Liberal who brought the bill, so the minister is a big fan of the Liberals and the NDP now. Who saw that one coming? Not me. Not me. I didn't see that one coming.

3:50

But the data that exists, Mr. Speaker, because the key here – oh, I had so many more letters from teachers I wanted to read. The time goes fast. The key here is that what is needed in our classrooms is not more testing. Teachers already know. They know who is struggling. They know who is struggling in math. They know who is struggling with literacy. They know who needs extra support with phonics or addition or subtraction. They don't need more testing.

They need more support. They need more resources in the classroom. That can look a number of different ways, whether that's bringing more teachers into the system, whether that's bringing in EAs, whether it's bringing on paraprofessionals. You bring in speech-language, occupational therapy, mental health. Obviously, it's going to look very different from school to school.

I appreciate that the minister has finally come to the realization that complexity in the classroom is an issue, but now we need this government to go the next step. We need them to take the next step and to make a real investment. The problem is that when you for years choose to fund your public education system below population growth and inflation, there are consequences to that choice, and Albertans are living with those consequences right now. That is the reason that we have overcrowded classrooms. That is the reason that there are not enough school spaces to accommodate all Alberta students. That is the reason that complexity can't be addressed in the classroom. It is not for lack of assessments, Mr. Speaker. It is not. It is for a lack of resources.

I must touch on the numbers that the minister quoted: \$12 million this year, \$13 million next year, \$15 million. One of Alberta's big school boards produced a very helpful doc. I just stumbled across it today. What they are saying is that in order to address, to truly address, the complexity in their classroom, and I'll give you – no, I don't have time for a lot of background. Look, it's a big school board. It's a lot of students. They need a lot of help. Their number: \$148 million. That's what they need to address complexity.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Any other members wishing to speak? Edmonton-South.

Member Hoyle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I rise here to speak to Bill 6, Education (Prioritizing Literacy and Numeracy) Amendment Act, 2025, you know, at a time when Alberta students are funded at the lowest level in Canada, classrooms are bursting at the seams, kids with complex needs lack the support they deserve, and teachers and families are facing immense uncertainty this school year because of this government's neglect, the UCP government's focus could not be more misplaced.

Students and teachers don't need legally binding standardized tests. They need classroom supports, resources, and respect. Every student deserves a chance to thrive, and parents deserve to know their kids are getting the best education possible. Right now that's not happening because of decisions made by this UCP government. Bill 6 is evidence of that.

Despite all this, teachers continue to show up every single day, giving everything they can to support our kids. Teachers are proud to be part of educating future generations that will continue to be a part of the prosperity and growth of our province. Teachers love what they do. They're passionate about it, and they believe in the potential of every single student. But they deserve a government that supports them in return, not one that underfunds education and pushes them towards a strike action. A teacher and parent in Edmonton-South told me, quote: it's disheartening to feel so undervalued in a profession I have dedicated my life to; the public perception of teachers as lazy or money grabbing is wholly untrue, yet it persists. End quote.

On this side of the House we stand with Alberta's teachers. It is clear that this Bill 6 falls short of delivering real support for education, educators, and students. Implementing these tests is a distraction from the crisis in Alberta's education system that the UCP has caused. Our teachers deserve an environment where they can effectively educate students, especially when so many students have diverse needs. Classrooms are complex. Unrealistic class sizes, unsupported student needs, and the inability to disconnect

from work have led to widespread burnout for teachers. All of this has direct impact on student learning and well-being and, quite frankly, on families as more and more teachers are choosing to leave the profession.

Now the minister brings forth Bill 6, but more than ever we need, teachers need, students need, families need enforceable class size caps and targeted classroom complexity funding, which Alberta's New Democrats introduced in 2023 with Bill 202. We need increased support for English language learners and students with complex needs; mental health resources and inclusive education specialists in every school; fair wages that reflect inflation and help retain experienced educators; dedicated time for preparation, collaboration, and planning; transparency and guarantees around education funding so that money actually reaches classrooms. But we're not seeing any of this in Bill 6.

There are major gaps in our public education system, Mr. Speaker. Class sizes and classroom complexity are nonnegotiable. I recently heard from a husband-and-wife couple who are teachers in Edmonton-South who told me:

I have taught in classrooms with 35 to 38 high school students with various special needs. My wife and her colleague have taught in kindergarten classrooms of 30 to 32 students. We have been insulted, spat on, assaulted, et cetera, all while trying to give the best possible education and support to students that we have had the privilege of teaching. All we're simply asking is for our profession to be treated with respect and dignity. This means a gradual cap in class sizes, like the majority of provinces in Canada.

This is an issue that's been going on since the UCP took government in 2019.

Another teacher in my riding told me:

Over the years I have witnessed first-hand how increasing class sizes are affecting both teachers and students. Alberta hasn't had class size caps in over a decade, and it shows. Many elementary classrooms now have over 30 students. Junior high classes exceed 35 students, and high school numbers go even higher. In these conditions, it's simply impossible for teachers to give each student the attention they deserve.

It's this UCP government that stopped publicly reporting on class size averages in 2019, but data from the ATA shows that many high school classes exceed 35 to 40 students, well above recommended levels. These are areas that this Bill 6 could have addressed.

On top of this, teachers juggle lesson planning, assessment, report cards, individual program plans, contacting parents, adapting curriculum for ELL and special-needs students, leading extracurricular activities, to name a few, all while maintaining high standards of teaching. Much of this work is done on teachers' own time, after school hours, with little to no help. It is no wonder teachers are burnt out, and this affects our students' quality of education. This is unacceptable and directly impacts teaching quality and student learning. If the UCP cared about improving literacy and numeracy, they would have addressed teachers' concerns over the past 18 months of negotiation or at a minimum during the strike rather than stripping teachers of their constitutional rights.

For the fourth year in a row our province has landed squarely at the bottom of the national list for per-student funding, and the gap between Alberta and the national average continues to grow. The newest release from Stats Canada in February covers the 2022-23 school year and pegs the national average school board operating expenditure at \$13,692 per student. That's over 16 per cent below the national average, increasing the gap by 3 per cent from the previous year. This discrepancy between the average and Alberta's spending has grown 11 per cent since Alberta first fell to the bottom of the scale in 2018-2019.

4:00

One area on the StatsCan report where our province is above the national average is the ratio of students per teacher. Close to 200 K to 12 schools in Alberta were over capacity in the 2023-24 school year according to statistics from Alberta education. Another 27 schools are 100 per cent capacity, having the same number of students enrolled as they were designed to hold. Dozens more sit between 97 and 99 per cent full, in some cases only a few students away from running out of room. The above stats are not something to be proud of, and I don't see this being addressed in Bill 6.

Improving literacy and numeracy scores is not achieved through standardized testing. It's achieved through improved classroom conditions and support for teachers. About three-quarters are full or overcapacity schools in Edmonton and Calgary. School authorities in 28 other municipalities also hit enrolment limits. I know overcapacity in schools is a huge issue in Edmonton-South. As a parent whose kids attend local schools in my riding, I have witnessed this for years.

Mr. Speaker, families in my riding deserve real action on education, not shortcomings in this Bill 6. Young children in Edmonton-South, some only in kindergarten, are being told they need to commute 20 to 25 kilometres or more round trip for school because not only is their catchment area full, but all the surrounding schools are full as well. No funding was provided to expand existing capacity for K to 9 schools in Edmonton-South, which are bursting at the seams. No funding for modular classrooms or pods, which would significantly benefit young students.

I recently heard from a parent who told me:

Currently families in Desrochers Villages . . .

A neighbourhood in Edmonton-South.

. . . including my own, are designated to Duggan elementary school, which is 14 kilometres away from our community. This distance presents a significant hardship for families, particularly those with young children who are beginning their educational journey.

As parents my spouse and I moved to this neighbourhood with the understanding there would be accessible schooling options available for our children. However, the reality of the situation has left us feeling disappointed and concerned about the future of our family in this community. We're even contemplating the possibility of selling our home, which we built last year, in search of a more suitable location for better educational opportunities for our children.

This is not the first family who's told me they're considering leaving Edmonton-South because there simply isn't a school nearby that is able to enrol their children. It shouldn't be this way, Mr. Speaker.

The chronic underfunding of public education in Alberta has created a crisis that can no longer be ignored, especially for students with special needs. Bill 6 doesn't seem to include any of this. You know, teachers are trying to teach students who are developmentally challenged and trying their best. Families are trying their best to make sure students get the support. Teachers are acting as a counsellor, support worker, and academic specialist all in one. The gap means that Alberta students are receiving fewer supports compared to their peers across the country.

We are losing many of our young educators, and our students are falling further and further behind. Our youngest educators, full of potential and passion, are leaving the profession entirely because they feel unsupported and overwhelmed. Not only does this affect our kids; it affects our job market.

These are just some of the factors that have left Alberta teachers with no other choice than to strike for the betterment of Alberta's education system and our children. Our children deserve safe,

supportive, and well-resourced classrooms. There are better ways to support children's learning needs in the classrooms that empower kids to learn rather than making them feel incompetent with standardized testing. It is easy to see that this wasn't a consideration in Bill 6 at all.

This government has said that Bill 6 will ensure students identified as struggling are receiving targeted help from school staff, but we have major gaps in the system that are being ignored. There are simply not enough teachers and educational assistants to ensure students who are struggling are getting the help they need. Alberta is one of the wealthiest provinces in Canada, Mr. Speaker, yet this UCP government funds our students at one of the lowest rates in the country. This issue affects the future of our children and the trajectory of education in Alberta. This UCP government needs to invest in our children, which means investing in the future of our economy. These are Alberta's future workers, and poor education funding and supports means a weak economy and workforce in our future.

Teachers are not asking for luxury; they're asking for the bare minimum requirements to give our students the education they deserve. Instead of working with teachers for real solutions for our schools, the UCP government keeps trying to distract from the issues at hand, attempting to pit parents and teachers against each other. The UCP's actions are an absolute disgrace when this government says they're focused on economic prosperity. This Bill 6 does not show any improvements on these areas. Teachers deserve better. Students deserve better. Families deserve better. Our province deserves better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Any others? The Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Ms Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought I'd begin my remarks today on Bill 6 and give this lovely Assembly a bit of a look into that sort of first couple of days of school for that lovely kindergarten student. I've got a particular kindergarten student in mind, who may be my grandchild. When thinking about how teachers set up their classrooms at the very first of the year, particularly for those teachers who are kindergarten teachers – and kindergarten teachers are exceptionally, exceptionally, special human beings. What they attempt to do is to create a really safe and not just caring but really loving environment so that those kids, some of whom are still four years old – they don't need to turn five until December. Those kids who are four years old, those kids who are five years old can come into school and feel as if it's a place that they want to be and that they are accepted for who they are, whether or not they can hold a pencil or know what a pair of scissors is or can sort of, you know, colour within the lines and all of those sorts of things.

The first couple of days of kindergarten – and if you've been in a school kind of any time in the last five years, you will know that the very first day of kindergarten is as difficult for parents as it is for those little kids. You see parents crying. You see parents not wanting to let go of that little four-and-a-half-year-old human being. You see teachers and EAs, if there is one – and too often there isn't one – hang on to both of those folks, hang on to the little four-and-a-half-year-old and hang on to the parent to say to both of them: "It's okay. We will take care of you. You're in a safe spot now. You're in a safe place now." And the idea that just a few months later those tiny little people need to be sat down for 15 minutes, a half hour with that teacher to be given a screening test, when what kindergarten is supposed to be is that sort of generalized entrée to what it means to be a human in school, is anathema. It

takes away instructional time. It takes away all of those things that are as important as learning how to read, particularly in those early years.

Kindergarten teachers in those first weeks are establishing relationships with those children. They're teaching them where the bathroom is, where the library is, where the office is, where to go to get a Band-Aid. They're teaching them how to be at recess. They're teaching them how to sit on that particular square that is meant just for them on the carpet. They're teaching them calendar math – today is, yesterday was, tomorrow will be – so that they have a sense of time. They're teaching them how to stand in line and wait their turn. They are, of course, also teaching them letter-sound relationships, Mr. Speaker. They're also teaching them how to count. They're teaching them also what it means to be a young person in school and what their responsibilities are to the other people who are in their classroom. They're teaching them what it means to be a good friend.

4:10

I think about that young now grade 1er in my life and what it must have been like for him just a few months later not to have sort of been sat down with his teacher and having a lovely conversation, which was the previous EYE test that was done earlier, to say, "This is what I know; this is what I don't know," then to all of a sudden perhaps have a great deal of anxiety and not believe that he's intelligent enough to pass kindergarten.

I myself taught a number of grade 3 kids not that long ago who were worried that they would simply fail in life if they didn't pass what was then the SLA or the PATs. They're worried that they're going to fail at life, Mr. Speaker. My concern about things like this, when screeners are legislated in the way in which we have it in Bill 6, is that we are not setting kids up to thrive. We're not setting teachers up to teach. We're not setting parents up to sort of pave the way to help their kids be successful in life. We're setting all of those folks up to fail.

Again, I bring it back to that five-year-old grandson. Kindergarten is supposed to be about figuring yourself out in school. That's what it's supposed to be, and when I consider all those kindergarten children in the past that I've encountered as a music specialist, it's also about how to sit in school and it's also about what raising your hand means. It is, of course, about some of those letter-sound relationships, but that is not the only thing, and it shouldn't be the only thing.

I think about what's happened in the United States over the course of the last 20 or 30 years, Mr. Speaker. In the United States they have done something very, very similar in most states, where they have mandated not just early screeners, but every single grade has kind of a before, during, and after assessment. Indeed, you don't pass, you don't move on if something happens and you happen to have a bad day. I worry, with putting these sorts of things into legislation when they are already mandated, that that is the route that we are going on, and I have certainly no wish to have my five-year-old grandchild experience that sort of education because that is not where we should be going.

Outside of all of that, there are indeed, though, those issues of – and my colleagues have already talked about it, Mr. Speaker – why legislate what already is mandated, particularly when it's been mandated despite what teachers have been saying for the last year that these screeners have been implemented? I happen to have been working in a school just, oh, gosh, only two years ago, when they first came in, where we had to, as my colleague talked about, implement these screeners. It's absolutely true. There was not enough professional development for teachers. People were not able to use these screeners for any sort of diagnostics, which meant

that if you can't use it to sort of diagnose, "Okay; the problem is that they are not sort of looking at the sound of this particular letter and being able to make it work with the book that we have in front of them," if you can't get down to the detail of whatever that diagnostic measure is, then intervention cannot work. Intervention only works when you have an idea of what that child needs to fill in whatever gap that happens to be. These screeners don't necessarily do that.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I appreciate the fact that the screeners at that time, at least a couple of years ago, were certainly on the new LearnAlberta site, and I appreciate the fact that there were some intervention measures. But in terms of really, really making those gaps end and go away so that that one thing that that one particular child wasn't understanding can indeed be fixed and remediated and then helping them to read – while I appreciate all of that, it isn't going to work, Madam Speaker, if the teachers themselves don't have the training, first of all, to be able to offer that screener to the child and then interpret that screener to the child. Moreover, if they don't have the time to be able to do a lot of that – I've talked to teachers who are teaching presently, and my colleague talked about it as well. One week of school instructional time is lost between kindergarten and grade 3 when teachers are having to offer these screeners, when it's mandated multiple times a year for multiple kids.

Now, again, in my past I used to teach grade 1, so I'm certainly familiar with screeners. I can tell you that even the screener that says, "It's okay; it'll only take five minutes": when you have a little grade 1er, it doesn't take five minutes. It just won't. It just won't, Madam Speaker. These tests take between five minutes and a half hour at least per child. You're taking away valuable instructional time.

I have no doubt that every single teacher out there is appreciative that screeners exist, but every single teacher out there is not appreciative of the way in which this government is creating a situation, quite frankly, that's incredibly heavy handed in terms of their own right to practice, to actually teach those kids in their classroom, Madam Speaker.

If I may, this is the reason why we endured three and a half weeks of a teachers' strike. Teachers have been telling us for years, Madam Speaker, about the complexities in our classroom. If I go back to thinking about my grandchild, for instance, and the schools that I've had some personal experience with: every single class has a level of complexity that I believe this government doesn't truly understand.

Now, in many ways I was very, very fortunate because I came from Edmonton public. Every single year in Edmonton public we not only looked at the number of kids in those kindergarten classrooms and grade 1 kids, grade 2 kids, grade 3 kids, but we also looked at the complexity of those individual children in those individual classrooms. What we were able to do, Madam Speaker, was a kind of a weighting. We would know that child A over here we thought was on target, was on the right track, that sort of a thing, but maybe child B over here was somebody like me who stuttered in grade 2 and couldn't make themselves understood and so might need some additional speech therapy. That actually doesn't exist anymore, but that's another subject.

Maybe child C over here had some kind of a medical illness that needed to be treated by the folks in school, which adds another layer to the complexity. On occasion schools are required to ensure the safety of that child who has that medical illness, so maybe that school isn't just looking at hiring an educational assistant but may

have to, in fact, hire an LPN in order to ensure the safety of that child.

Perhaps there's a child over here that came from an early learning situation but they haven't been coded yet, which means that there is no money; there are no funds to allow for the hiring of that educational assistant for that particular child. Maybe that child has recently immigrated to this country and becomes an English-as-an-additional-language student. But if you don't have, again, either the experience or the funds to be able to have the actual people in this school and in this classroom to assist this child and when those children are in a classroom like my last school – 28 children in kindergarten, Madam Speaker. Twenty-eight kids. And we had phenomenal teachers and phenomenal educational assistants and amazing folks who came down from the board office to help us out. Despite that, those 28 kids were worth about 40 when it all kind of was parsed later.

There simply aren't enough supports for teachers, and that's why teachers walked out en masse in this province, Madam Speaker. The conditions that led to the reasons why teachers walked out haven't changed. Teachers walked right back into schools that are still too crowded.

I talked to a couple of teachers during that strike who came into my office from different schools, one of the schools in south Edmonton, one of the schools in north Edmonton, and they're dealing, quite frankly, with remarkably similar challenges. They're dealing with too many kids in their class. They're dealing with too many complexities and not enough resources both in terms of actual things, like books or specialized equipment for kids, and resources as people because the funds simply don't exist. One of these two teachers let me know that their school was so crowded that they've simply run out of space. There are no portables, so they're having to use a loft to have a classroom, which technically they probably shouldn't be doing. I'm pretty sure that's against fire code. Nonetheless, they have to do it because this is all that they can do.

These are some of the conditions that teachers left on October 6 and then returned to just a week ago, Madam Speaker. The conditions haven't been changed. So if the conditions haven't been changed, one wonders how, then, the teachers' concerns about the administration of these screeners – and I know you heard many of these concerns. The conditions in which these screeners are being offered to these children haven't changed either. There still isn't enough time, there still aren't enough supply teachers, and even if there were enough subs out there, schools couldn't afford them.

4:20

I think about the sort of glory days when I started teaching. We had this wonderful thing called the Alberta initiative for school improvement. When I was giving similar assessments and screeners to the kids in my grade 1 class, if I needed that sub to come in, I got that sub, Madam Speaker. I could sit out in the hallway and administer these assessments for one or two or three days, however many days it took, knowing that my kids, as you heard from my colleague from Calgary-Beddington, had another body in the classroom who was teaching them that day so that they didn't, in fact, miss instructional time at all.

But that is not at all what the situation is now. Speaking of those old glory days. If I needed to, because I perhaps thought, "Okay; the screener that I've given indicates that something's up with this particular kiddo over here," then of course I would have a meeting with a parent. That's what teachers do. Then, after that, together we would decide what was next, what kind of intervention might be required. Again, in those days we had time and space and money for interventions.

I know that Dr. Georgiou talked about it when he did a pilot study just a couple of years ago. It was absolutely clear.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there are others to Bill 6? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm happy to add my voice to the debate on Bill 6, the Education (Prioritizing Literacy and Numeracy) Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2). I just want to really acknowledge my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview for her thoughtful remarks and her lived experience as a teacher herself for many years who obviously knows intimately the challenges that teachers face, that students face in our education system currently. I'm so honoured to work with her, so thank you so much.

Bill 6 seems to be the legislation the government has put before us. I am, like I think a lot of Albertans, kind of confused a bit by why this is a priority for the government. Certainly in my time in government and sitting at the cabinet table it was always a struggle to get, you know, your priorities to the top. The minister has been obviously successful in bringing this bill forward. This UCP government, the cabinet, the Premier all think this is the legislation that Albertans need now. It surprises me because it seems like it's not legislation that actually is needed. What we know is that there already is mandatory testing, and this is legislating that testing.

I don't know. I've been in Alberta for some time, and certainly I've been watching very closely what's been going on in my province. I would say that in the education system we have a lot of work to do, and Bill 6 isn't necessarily the thing to do. We know that we have the shameful title of funding students at the lowest level in the country. Alberta: we rank at the bottom. You know, maybe investing more – more than maybe, the government should be investing more in our students. We're really failing students, we're failing teachers, we're failing parents, and we're failing our society.

We know that last week the UCP ordered over 51,000 teachers back to work by invoking pre-emptively the notwithstanding clause, stripping teachers of fundamental rights again. These are the things that the government should really be conscious of what they're doing. Certainly, I have heard the UCP talk about how important it is for people to have rights and freedoms and things like that, but just to cavalierly take that away with that legislation, Bill 2, that they rammed through in one day: you know, these are the concerns that Albertans care about.

Also, teachers, parents, and students are speaking about the abysmal conditions in the classrooms, and that indeed is why the teachers went on strike. We know that students have increasing complexity in their learning. We have many English language learners. We have newcomers unfamiliar with Canadian culture and our systems. We have students needing support with foundational learning. Teachers have to manage all of this in the classroom with no educational assistants, extremely large class sizes, very few resources. This is all what is sort of top of mind for me when I think about all of the concerns that we have in our education system.

Yet, despite this reality, despite what the teachers clearly told this government, told all Albertans, the UCP is putting forward Bill 6, legislation that's not needed for standardized diagnostic assessment tools. We know that in 2022 grades 1 to 3 started administering these and in 2024 it was also made mandatory in kindergarten. It's happening already, so why do we need Bill 6? We don't. We don't. We need many other things, but Bill 6 isn't one of them.

We need to hire teachers at the rate of student growth, and certainly the UCP has failed to do that. We need to hire educational assistants to support students with the increasing complexity that I

just spoke of. We need to pay these professionals fair wages so that they are respected and can fulfill their duties.

I was listening to the minister's remarks earlier, and he said that early testing, which is this bill – you know, it's saying, "early testing that's being legislated" although it was mandatory already – means that children will get help quickly. I'm just quoting from his words. I don't have the Blues, but I listened to what he said. He said: so that "small problems do not become bigger ones." I would like to believe what the minister is saying, but as far as I know, the resources are not there to support students even when these standardized tests are in place. There are long wait-lists for students to be able to access those supports, to be able to get up to grade level for their studying in numeracy or literacy. So despite his remarks here, I would say that we're failing. We're failing right now, and we'll continue to fail unless investment is put into this area. This legislation talks nothing about investment, about putting resources into the classroom.

To top it off, I mean, it feels like we have to have some consistency, some understanding of government policies. The minister today is saying: well, we're going to do this so that kids get all the help they need. Yet this is the same government that in

2019 cut PUF funding. People probably have heard of that before. It's the program unit funding. They made the eligibility for students to access that much more rigorous, more difficult. At Edmonton public school: 76 per cent drop in PUF funding, which meant the closure of multiple early learning sites. As far as I can tell, you know, the minister is just saying that we absolutely need to support students to be able to be assessed and get support right away, early, yet on the other hand, this government has cut eligibility criteria and therefore funding to exactly that, to early learning programs for students.

It doesn't really make any sense. If I'm being cynical, I would think that this is just smoke and mirrors, that this actually doesn't really matter.

The Deputy Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt, but the clock strikes 4:30 on Thursday afternoon. The House stands adjourned until November 17 at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 4:30 p.m. to Monday, November 17, at 1:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 31th Legislature - 2nd Session (2025)

Activity to Thursday, November 6, 2025

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

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

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

Bill 1 — International Agreements Act (Smith)

First Reading — 6 (*Oct. 23, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 77-85 (*Oct. 28, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 109-18 (*Oct. 29, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 133-35 (*Oct. 30, 2025 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 184-87 (*Nov. 4, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 250-52 (*Nov. 6, 2025 aft., passed*)

Bill 2 — Back to School Act (Horner)

First Reading — 26 (*Oct. 27, 2025 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 27-28 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve.*), 29-35 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 35-36 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve.*), 37-45 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Third Reading — 45-46 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve.*), 47-54 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Oct. 28, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on October 28, 2025]

Bill 3 — Private Vocational Training Amendment Act, 2025 (McDougall)

First Reading — 65 (*Oct. 28, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 135-37 (*Oct. 30, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 187-93 (*Nov. 4, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 215-16 (*Nov. 5, 2025 aft., passed*)

Bill 4 — Public Safety and Emergency Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (Ellis)

First Reading — 121 (*Oct. 30, 2025 , passed*)

Second Reading — 193-201 (*Nov. 4, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 216-24 (*Nov. 5, 2025 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 6 — Education (Prioritizing Literacy and Numeracy) Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (Nicolaidis)

First Reading — 150 (*Nov. 3, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 252-60 (*Nov. 6, 2025 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 7 — Water Amendment Act, 2025 (Schulz)

First Reading — 121 (*Oct. 30, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 224-35 (*Nov. 5, 2025 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 201 — Employment Standards (Protecting Workers' Pay) Amendment Act, 2025 (Ganley)

First Reading — 121 (*Oct. 30, 2025 , passed*)

Second Reading — 154-65 (*Nov. 3, 2025 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 202 — Conflicts of Interest (Ethical Governance) Amendment Act, 2025 (Kasawski)

First Reading — 248 (*Nov. 6, 2025 aft., passed*)

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