



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, December 4, 2025

Day 21

The Honourable Ric McIver, Speaker

# Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 31st Legislature

Second Session

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

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Brar, Gurtej Singh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)  
Calahoo Stonehouse, Jodi, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)  
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Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)  
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Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)  
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Dyck, Nolan B., Grande Prairie (UC)  
Eggen, Hon. David, ECA, Edmonton-North West (NDP)  
Ellingson, Court, Calgary-Foothills (NDP)  
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Kayande, Samir, Calgary-Elbow (NDP)

LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, ECA, Red Deer-North (UC)  
Loewen, Hon. Todd, ECA, Central Peace-Notley (UC)  
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Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC),  
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## Party standings:

United Conservative: 47

New Democrat: 38

Independent: 2

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Nolan Dyck	Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous and Rural Policing
Shane Getson	Parliamentary Secretary for Economic Corridor Development
Chelsae Petrovic	Parliamentary Secretary for Health Workforce Engagement
Jason Stephan	Parliamentary Secretary for Constitutional Affairs
Ron Wiebe	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health (North)
Justin Wright	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health (South)
Tany Yao	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Northern Development

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

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Cyr  
Ip  
Petrovic  
Rowswell  
Yao

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 4, 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 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 Kalyna Brytan. 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.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Members, seated in my gallery today is the family of one of the Legislative Assembly pages, who are here to witness him in action. Aidan Hopwood has been part of the page program for three and a half years, joining before entering high school. He currently attends MacEwan University, where he studies political science and psychology. Over the years Aidan has participated in a wide variety of activities, including sports, theatre, Model United Nations. He credits many of his best experiences and most significant personal growth to the page program. Outside of school and work Aidan enjoys writing and debate as well as spending quality time with friends. He expresses his gratitude to the Members of the Legislative Assembly for the opportunity to serve the Assembly and thanks his family for helping him reach where he is today.

Joining us today are Aidan's parents, Patricia and Alastair Hopwood; his brother Ian Hopwood; Aidan's girlfriend, Sylvia Cammidge; his grandparents, Tessa Merry and Jack Hassan, Elizabeth Brown and Charlie Brown. I ask that you all please rise to receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Mr. Speaker, I'm rising to introduce to you and through you the executive committee members of the Edmonton Tamil Cultural Association, a community organization established in 1979 that is dedicated to preserving and promoting Tamil heritage by supporting families and youth. Please rise to receive the warm traditional welcome of this Assembly.

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

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce students and teachers from the ShepMUN, the Model UN club. Let's start with their teachers, Kelsey and Amanda, as well as their president, Jeanette. Among them: Isabel, Lily, Mikael,

Karina, and then, of course, among our pages, Liam and Malcolm. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of our Assembly and our gratitude.

**Mr. Ip:** Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you my amazing constituency office staff: Julianne Chua, Aidan Moore, and Carl Paolo Hernandez. All members of this House know that we can't do our work without great support. I want to thank my team for their service to Edmonton-South West. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Camrose.

**Ms Lovely:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Allow me to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Chamber Henry and William Smandych and their parents, Natalie and Dave. William was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes earlier this year, and they're here today to advocate for the inclusion of a new insulin pump on the Alberta insulin pump program. Thank you for being here. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Chamber.

**The Speaker:** Edmonton-City Centre and the Official Opposition Deputy House Leader.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you a group from Kulan Community and Youth Services, which works here in my constituency: the leaders, Khadar Jama and Omar Abubakar; several community members with them, Abdiasis, Abdiaziz, A. Adnan Dega\*, Hodan, Mohammad\*, Sulekha, and Sumaya: I ask them all to rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

**Member Boparai:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Jalal Ladak, a community leader and advocate who founded two renowned radio programs, Koffee with Jalal and Salaam Namaste Calgary. For 17 years he has showcased local talent, hosted fundraisers, and supported local global charities through art and entertainment. Here with his wife and daughter, I ask that he rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**Mr. Stephan:** Mr. Speaker, today is a good day. I introduce leaders from the Council of India Societies of Edmonton, a super big umbrella organization representing 27 Indo-Canadian societies. I request that Digraj, Puneet, and Lalabhai stand to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Legislature.

**The Speaker:** Chestermere-Strathmore.

**Ms de Jonge:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you Lawrence Magee, better known as Berta Proud Dad. Lawrence is one of Alberta's most followed creators, a proud father, a hard-working small-business owner, and a constituent of mine. I ask that he rise to be recognized and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Dreesen:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you Marc Nixon. As a champion of common sense Marc is one of Canada's most followed independent media voices. He joins us today all the way from British Columbia. Maybe he'll leave here with a pipeline, but, Marc, please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

\*These spellings could not be verified at the time of publication.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

**Mr. Lundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'm pleased to introduce Mandeep Bal. Mandeep is a proud Albertan and a rising star on social media with a standout TikTok presence reaching over 80 million views, about 80 million more than my social media. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Are there any other introductions? The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly my partner, Jo Cusack. She's here in the gallery. I haven't prepared an introduction, so I'm not sure what to say other than that she's an excellent dog mom and she's looking very cute in the sweater that she made herself today. I ask that she please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of red tape reduction.

**Mr. Nally:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce you to someone that I went to school with a long time ago. He may try to tell you stories that are not true. I wouldn't even listen, but he's a good man. His name is John Williams, and he's right there.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

**Ms Wright:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize a constituency assistant of mine as well as a fellow member in this House, Omar Abubakar. We could not do the work that we do without the very important work that Omar and lots of other constituency assistants do every day. Thank you, Omar.

### Members' Statements

#### National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women

**Ms Goehring:** December 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women in Canada, marking the anniversary of the 1989 murders of 14 young women at l'école Polytechnique in Montreal. The 1989 école Polytechnique massacre was for decades the deadliest shooting in Canadian history. It began with the shooter stating that he was fighting feminism before opening fire on a classroom of young women. A 2020 mass murder in Nova Scotia left 22 people dead and began with an act of domestic violence. In 2018 a Toronto van attacked and killed 10. The attack was characterized as revenge for perceived sexual and social rejection.

1:40

Three of the deadliest attacks in Canadian history began with violence against women, with ideology rooted in misogyny. Connecting misogyny and violence is vital to prevent such violence from happening again. The Canadian Women's Foundation reported that every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner. More broadly, one woman or girl is violently killed every 48 hours in Canada. Violence exists on a spectrum. When we demean and dehumanize women, we normalize violence against them.

Solutions to violence and misogyny are both complex and broad: investing in education initiatives, giving young people the emotional tools to accept rejection and handle anger in nonviolent ways, and supporting housing and legal support systems for those

who are fleeing violence. Perhaps the most important step that we can all take is acknowledgement, acknowledging that violence against women is a rampant issue, acknowledging our own capacity for misogyny, both internally and externally, and how we can all work together to treat one another with respect and dignity. Hatred has no place in Alberta.

**The Speaker:** Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

#### School-based Mental Health Supports

**Mr. Rowsell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to address the challenge facing Alberta schools, the growing complexity in our classrooms. Teachers and parents across the province have made it clear that incidents of aggression and diverse learning needs are increasing, making the classroom environment more demanding than ever. One of the driving factors of this complexity is mental health challenges that, if left unaddressed, can disrupt learning and the well-being of everyone.

To address this issue head-on, our government is investing \$69 million over three years through the mental health and well-being grant. This significant funding will provide every school board with the tools and resources needed to support school mental health with allocations based on enrolment, base funding, and local needs. This grant builds on the success of the mental health in schools pilot project, which demonstrates that targeted supports make a real difference for students. The new funding also supports recommendations from the Aggression and Complexity in Schools Action Team report, ensuring students have timely access to a range of supports from wellness coaches and counsellors to specialized assessments and addiction counselling. Up to 20 per cent of the grant can be used for personalized supports, allowing schools to address the unique needs of their students.

By investing in mental health, we are equipping schools to ease the pressures that teachers face and help students thrive. The resources will make classrooms less complex by addressing the root causes of aggression and learning challenges, allowing teachers to focus on teaching and students to focus on learning. Together we are building safer, more supportive classrooms where every student has a chance to succeed.

Thank you.

#### Immigrants to Alberta

**Member Boparai:** Today I rise to speak about something deeply personal and profoundly important, the escalating tide of hatred we continue to witness here in Alberta. Whether someone arrived in Canada two days ago or their family came here 200 years ago, one truth remains unchanged: except for Indigenous people, every one of us is an immigrant.

Today I want to begin by honouring the First Peoples of this land, expressing gratitude for their generosity, their wisdom, their strength, and for allowing all of us the opportunity to build our lives and dreams here. Yet despite the extraordinary diversity that makes Alberta stronger, hate still finds a way to manifest itself. This is not just something we hear in stories; it is something many of us know through lived experience.

I have endured attacks and discrimination. Many others across our province have as well, and still we do not stand here consumed by anger. We stand here anchored in courage, resilience, and unity. Immigrants, people from every culture, language, and faith, have helped build this province and this country. We have contributed to its economy, its culture, and its identity. Our communities have sacrificed, persisted, and succeeded.

We have cultivated this land, safeguarded this land, worked in its industries, served in its institutions, and helped shape the Alberta we are proud to call home today.

As a proud Sikh Canadian, as someone who loves this province deeply, I stand here proudly, unapologetically, and with my head held high. To every young person listening: be proud of who you are, your culture, your faith, your language, and the story your family carries. Walk with your head held high. This province belongs to you as much as it belongs to anyone else. Never diminish yourself to make someone else feel comfortable. This is your Alberta. This is your Canada. All together, united in our differences and strengthened by our diversity, we will always be stronger than hate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

### Federal Firearms Policies

**Mr. Wright:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Three hundred seventy-four thousand legal gun-owning Albertans are who the members opposite voted yesterday to betray. Nearly 8 per cent of Alberta's population betrayed by the urban, privileged New Disarmament Party. They only had one member stand up to speak against Government Motion 17, only one. His speech: what a bunch of Bolsheviks.

In 1916 Lenin wrote, "Disarmament is the ideal of socialism." When you can't provide for yourself, you need the government to provide for you. Or in this case, when the Liberal-NDP strip your ability to hunt, provide for your family, they force your reliance on them. Taking away someone's reliance is forcing them into socialist, Marxist, Soviet-style bread lines.

This isn't about making streets safer; this is about assaulting law-abiding gun owners. If it was about public safety, the feds would be spending that \$1 billion on fixing broken federal borders, breaking up organized crime, and going after gun smugglers. Let's be clear what this program is actually targeting. It's not gang members, criminals, or traffickers. This is socialist, Marxist assaulting of farmers, ranchers, Indigenous hunters, sport shooters, all under the guise of public safety.

The Liberals and NDP continue with their soft-on-criminals, hard-on-victims approach, which is the real danger. They ignore illegal firearms, ideologically release violent repeat offenders into our communities, putting families at risk. Contrary to that, I believe we must lock up violent offenders, we must go after illegal gun runners and gang members, and most importantly, we must support their victims. We must end the Canadian firearms program, re-establish our provincial jurisdiction to legislate in areas that belong to us. It's time for Ottawa to get out of our way. Only then can we assure that law-abiding citizens are protected from the criminals who hunt them down.

**Ms Gray:** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** A point of order is noted at 1:48.

### Tim Williams and Neil MacGonigill

**Member Ceci:** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to two remarkable figures who shaped Calgary's music community and left an indelible mark on Alberta's cultural landscape. First, Tim Williams, a master guitarist, storyteller, and mentor, whose passion for blues and roots music inspired generations. Born in southern California, Tim made Canada his home more than four decades ago and

became a pillar of our music scene. His artistry earned international acclaim in 2014 when he won top honours at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis. Beyond awards, Tim was known for his kindness, humility, and his ability to make every performance a lesson in history and heart. As friends of his have said, he didn't just play the blues; he lived it. His passing leaves a profound void, but his music and spirit will continue to resonate.

We also remember Neil MacGonigill, a visionary promoter and manager who championed Alberta talent for over 40 years. Neil guided the careers of icons like Jann Arden, k.d. lang, Ian Tyson, and Billy Cowsill. He had an encyclopedic knowledge of music and an unwavering commitment to artists, often saying that it was all about the song and how you delivered it. Neil's influence helped put Alberta on the map in the music industry, and his encouragement shaped countless careers.

On behalf of this Assembly I extend condolences to their families, friends, and all who were touched by their artistry. I'd like to end by quoting a prescient lyric from one of Tim's songs. "If the words I write live on long after I'm gone, that's enough for me; it's enough to be remembered." Tim and Neil, send us word from the new range that you ride on.

Thank you.

1:50

### Oral Question Period

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

### Health Care System Governance

**Mr. Nenshi:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It looks like I have to update the numbers from yesterday. The government has now hired five CEOs, hand-picked for Alberta Health Services without any search, without any advertising. The most recent one has been placed on a mysterious administrative leave. Now, Albertans have a right to know who's in charge of 125,000 employees, \$42 billion. Why can't this government keep qualified CEOs, and what happened to Mr. Tremblay?

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

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said yesterday, we don't comment on internal HR issues, but I can tell the member opposite that Erin O'Neill, who is the senior vice-president of finance and shared services, will be acting in the role of chair and CEO of Alberta Health Services provincial health corporation on an interim basis. Ms O'Neill has 20 years of experience in emergency management operations and government administration, including five years in the department of health. We're very confident that AHS is in strong hands under Ms O'Neill's leadership, and we look forward to working with her.

**Mr. Nenshi:** It's interesting that they can't comment on HR issues now, but they had no issues with insulting and debasing the former CEO Athana Mentzelopoulos in this House and in the community.

This government is absolutely allergic to transparency, Mr. Speaker. They hold on to information every chance they get, but, critically, the Premier has said over and over again in this House that those two signed contracts were fine. She said that a report no Albertan has ever seen was fine; it exonerated everybody. But now they've cancelled them. What made the government change their mind?

**The Speaker:** The Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I think the minister said yesterday, we're taking a new approach to procurement. We've completely transformed the approach that we're taking. Acute Care Alberta will be responsible for managing contracts, and the approach that we're taking is going to have a transparent, standardized price for all procedures that is payable to anyone who is able to provide those services at a certified facility. They will be paid based on activity. The more activity they do, the more money they will get. That's the approach we're taking, and that's why we had to take a change of direction.

**Mr. Nenshi:** This is amazing. I sat in that gallery for a whole year and heard the Premier go on and on about how their approach was the best approach possible.

**Mr. Nixon:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Nenshi:** Now we're hearing a brand new approach. Members opposite are hearing the wrong thing. Get caught up on your briefing notes there.

It seems like Mr. Tremblay is being set up to fail.

**The Speaker:** Just through the chair, please.

**Mr. Nenshi:** It seems like Mr. Tremblay is being set up to fail. He's a long-time public servant. He followed the minister from health to education. Why is the government setting up yet another fall guy instead of taking responsibility for the corrupt care scandal?

**Ms Smith:** Mr. Speaker, that's not what is occurring. We have an internal HR matter that AHS is going to be dealing with. In the meantime we'll be working with Ms O'Neill in order to implement the new approach that we're taking. The member opposite does need to update his briefing notes. What we were saying was that under the old AHS management procurement system, where there were different prices for the same surgeries at different facilities and different contract terms – we've gotten rid of all of that under Acute Care Alberta. We're going to have standardized contracts, standardized approvals, and each company is going to be paid on the basis of the activity.

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

**Mr. Nenshi:** Now, of course, that's not what the Premier has been saying all this time when she's talked about how great the chartered surgical facilities are.

### Justice System Concerns

**Mr. Nenshi:** Let's bring the Premier's mind back to something else: May 2023, when she became the first Premier in Alberta's history to be found by the Ethics Commissioner to have breached the Conflicts of Interest Act. At that time the Ethics Commissioner said, "This entire conversation is deeply problematic on many fronts, including its implications [on the] rule of law, judicial independence and our democracy." Does the Premier regret interfering with prosecutors in this way?

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite knows, the government is able to establish policy objectives and policy directorates for our policing and for our Crown prosecutors. We are able to say what our policing priorities are, for instance, and we are able to say what our prosecution priorities are, and that is what the Justice minister has done. He just did a press conference earlier this week. That's the reason we can confidently say that we will not be going after law-abiding gun owners and we will not be

going after homeowners who protect themselves in their own homes. That's the job of government to do that.

**Mr. Nenshi:** The Premier appears to have learned nothing from her previous breach of the Conflicts of Interest Act with the Ethics Commissioner. The Ethics Commissioner told her that she's not, in fact, the governor of a U.S. state. She cannot interfere with prosecutors, but the government is attempting to do it again. As the Premier just said, the minister is telling the police who they should prosecute. I don't want to live in that kind of society. Can the Premier explain how that is different than what happened in her previous interference with prosecutors, which was found to be illegal?

**The Speaker:** A point of order was noted at 1:55.

**Ms Smith:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that in New Democrat British Columbia they decided not to enforce any drug laws. They had a safe supply Wild West for a long time. It's part of the reason that so many criminals set up in British Columbia, and they had to reverse course. That was the government deciding it was not their priority to prosecute laws that we here in Alberta are going to prosecute. We do not believe drug dealers and organized crime and gangsters should be able to put our people at risk. We support a recovery-oriented system of care. We have a different approach, but we've seen a precedent in British Columbia.

**Mr. Nenshi:** That remarkably tangential answer highlights one important thing about this government's thinking, which is that this government doesn't believe in the supremacy of the courts. It wants to tell police officers who they should prosecute and what laws they should enforce.

Further, yesterday the minister of education, in backing up the Minister of Infrastructure, said that unelected arbitrators have no role in collective bargaining. Now, that's both illegal and unconstitutional. Why does this Premier think that her government is above the police, above prosecutors, above the courts, and above the rule of law?

**Ms Smith:** Well, Mr. Speaker, none of that is true. As the member opposite knows, we had two negotiated settlements at the table with the ATA, and the last time we ended up further apart than ever. We were worried about getting the kids back to class, and we knew that we were not going to get there with the agreement that was on the table. It is our obligation . . .

**Ms Hoffman:** To break the law?

**Ms Smith:** . . . to make sure that we preserve the management rights and decision-making authority of all of the 61 boards as well as offer a fair settlement to teachers, who incidentally were left without a paycheck because they didn't put aside any money for a strike fund. We wanted to get teachers back, we wanted to get kids back, and that's what we did.

**The Speaker:** Is that a point of order? Noted at 1:58.

For the third main set of questions we invite the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

### Parliamentary Secretaries' Allowances and Expenses

**Ms Pancholi:** Most Albertans don't have more in their pockets this year than last year, but there are nine specific Albertans who are about to get more, thanks to their generous boss. It's the nine UCP parliamentary secretary backbenchers. Add them to the 25 cabinet ministers, two associate ministers, three in the Speaker's office, and



that's 83 per cent of the UCP caucus getting some kind of financial perk. That's really got to sting for the eight UCP MLAs who are not getting it. So much for a lean, mean, efficient government machine, but the Premier needed to keep them happy; some of them are facing recall. Why does the Premier think Alberta taxpayers should pay for her to manage her own caucus?

**The Speaker:** I felt it was a minor infraction, but you can't drag the Speaker into debate.

The hon. House leader.

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are certainly adding this because it brings us into line with other provinces like Ontario, who have parliamentary secretaries taking on extended roles working in the Legislature, supporting ministers. What I would say in response is that this is coming from the side whose leader gave himself a raise as mayor of Calgary, making him the highest paid mayor in the country of Canada in addition to having two fully funded pensions. Glass houses.

**Ms Gray:** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** A point of order is noted at 1:59 p.m. [interjections]  
Members, it's time to hear from the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

**Ms Pancholi:** The UCP thinks their parliamentary secretaries' salary should be compared to others across the country but not minimum wage workers.

As families get ready for the holidays, they know things are getting more expensive, and there's no good news today. The Food Price Report shows that Albertans will see an above national average increase in groceries next year. It found that families will be on the hook for another \$1,000 per year in grocery prices just to put food on the table. Luckily for the nine backbenchers in the UCP, they'll have just a little extra in their stocking thanks to the Premier's generosity. So when average Albertans have to spend even more on groceries, why is the UCP government only helping these nine UCP MLAs with their . . .

2:00

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would appear that the members opposite are having a hard time hearing the answer, so I'm more than happy to repeat what I just said. Adding a salary to parliamentary secretaries in the province of Alberta brings us in line with other jurisdictions as those parliamentary secretaries take on extra roles. [interjection] I love that the Leader of the Opposition decides to chime in whenever he feels necessary and not his turn to speak. That's that professorial thing creeping in. What I can say is that on this side of the House we are attracting investment, increasing job opportunities for Albertans so that they have a job to support themselves right here in the province.

**Ms Pancholi:** Let's be clear. This pay bump for UCP MLAs isn't to recognize their performance. It's not for merit. Unlike every other worker trying to make ends meet, they didn't actually have to do anything to get their bonus. They just had to complain to the Premier about missing out on being part of the largest cabinet in Alberta's history. So when Albertans are getting ready for the holidays, knowing the bills are piling up and the cost of living keeps going up under the UCP, why is the UCP only delivering presents to their own MLAs while ignoring the millions of Albertans that they serve?

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, the only people that are ignoring the needs of Albertans are the members opposite; for example, yesterday when they voted against our sovereignty act motion protecting law-abiding gun owners.

But to the point, Mr. Speaker. In this province we believe that we need to be investing in youth, making sure they get that first opportunity for work. That's why we've created the youth hiring incentive for Albertans to derisk bringing on first-time employees so they get those skills and the things they need to become successful throughout their entire employment career. I wish the members opposite would get on board and support this great initiative. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** I'm giving you all a minute to quiet down before we only hear from the Member for Edmonton-North West.

### Chartered Surgical Facility Contracts

**Mr. Eggen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it was meant to be a very Merry Christmas for the companies wanting to run private surgical facilities in Red Deer and Lethbridge. The UCP government has left thousands of residents waiting and paying for a very long waiting list due to their chronic underfunding. This government's answer: build private clinics. But this week suddenly they cancelled these private clinics' contracts when some very suspicious details came out. The UCP then dropped these private clinics like a hot potato. Why did they do so? What's the story behind it? [interjection]

**The Speaker:** Member, order. Order. Order.

**Member Irwin:** Trying to help.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Perhaps you could send a note to the Clerk's table.

The hon. minister of hospitals.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In reality, Alberta performed a record number of surgeries last year, 318,000, and in reality we're on track to perform even more surgeries this year, setting a new record. But that's not all. We're also allocating funds to do 50,000 more surgeries on top of those record values. You're going to see more surgeries in hospitals, more surgeries in chartered surgical facilities because that's what's going to reduce wait times for Albertans, get them the surgeries they need.

**Mr. Eggen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this government can try to run from these bloated contracts, but they cannot sweep them under the rug. The UCP is gutting public surgeries in Red Deer and in Lethbridge to justify private clinics. They must be asking themselves: is it the owner of the clinics, or is it the bloated cost per surgery that's the problem? Right here on the floor of the Legislature they cancelled these same private clinics that they were singing the praises of before. What is this government running away from?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The procurements the members opposite are referencing began in 2022. A significant number of changes have occurred over that time. The entire health system has been refocused. Our approach to surgical programming and funding is changing towards an activity-based funding model. It makes absolute sense to reprocure our surgical programming in central and south Alberta and to implement activity-based funding, which is public, transparent, equitable, and fair, and that's what we're going to do.

**Mr. Eggen:** Mr. Speaker, thousands of people on wait-lists in Lethbridge and Red Deer regions have been hung out to dry by this UCP's half-baked private clinic scheme. Then suddenly the UCP is cancelling these contracts, with potentially massive cost implications. They alerted everyone in Alberta by doing this, including the police. I would say that there's something very wrong going on here. Doesn't this government know that just because you tried to bury the evidence does not mean that you can escape scrutiny?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of hospitals.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to share that we do have an ongoing request for expressions of interest for surgical programming, which includes the Red Deer and central Alberta area and Lethbridge, and I do expect that we will have new providers in both regions to provide even more surgeries for Albertans. That's on top of our work to expand the Red Deer regional hospital. We're also doing work to see what more we can do at Lethbridge hospital. I've toured it recently. There's a lot going on there, and we're going to see if we can build some of that shelled space.

**The Speaker:** From now on there's no preamble on the supplementaries, and it is the time for Calgary-Acadia.

### Child Care Affordability

**Member Batten:** In spring this year the UCP eliminated the child care subsidy, something that had been in place for decades. The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta has just released a jarring new report. It shows that while Albertan families struggle with the cost of living, the cost of child care here is skyrocketing. That means that child care fees have gone up an average of \$227 for families with one child and by \$478 for families with more than one child in child care. To the minister: why, in an affordability crisis, did the UCP eliminate the child care subsidy for . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education and Childcare.

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to work towards a \$10-a-day daycare, a sustainable model for all Alberta families. We are working with the federal government as our current agreement with the federal government lapses in a few months. I'll have some more to say about that in the coming weeks. There are some challenges that not just Alberta but other provinces are recognizing, and we're working together collaboratively with other provinces to find a mechanism and a solution that's sustainable for provinces and the federal government and, most importantly, meets the needs of Alberta families.

**Member Batten:** Given that the report found that the UCP's reworked program has forced many families to withdraw from regulated child care and given that Alberta is one of only four provinces who actively create the barriers by failing to provide the child care subsidy and given that the changes actually increase the costs for many low-income families at a time when they are juggling high utility bills, higher car insurance, and higher grocery bills, why can't this government make affordable child care a priority instead of burdening Albertan families?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** I just mentioned a moment ago that it is a priority for the government. It's why we're continuing to work with the federal government in the context of our child care agreement to deliver \$10-a-day daycare. As I mentioned, there are some

challenges there. I know many other provinces are having some challenges in reaching the \$10-a-day target, so collectively we're working together with those other provinces and with the federal government to find a model that is sustainable and that works for Alberta families to ensure that there's affordable child care available for all Alberta families.

**Member Batten:** Given that if this actually was a priority, the government would have a plan already – they've known it's due in March 2026 – and given that the UCP policy changes meant "lower income families at the majority of centres had their fees increase" and given that the most recent funding changes have compromised equity for Alberta's lowest income families, many of whom experience significant fee increases and now face unaffordable child care fees, why won't the government bring back the child care subsidy immediately?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** As I noted Mr. Speaker, and as the member correctly pointed out, the current terms of the agreement that we have with the federal government are lapsing this coming spring. We have been meeting with the federal government. I had the opportunity to connect with my federal counterpart very recently. As well, I've had the opportunity to connect with ministers of education and child care in other provinces as many provinces are raising concern over sustainability, and we'll be working together to find an appropriate model forward.

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

2:10

### Complex Classroom Supports

**Ms Pitt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta classrooms have seen an unprecedented rise in classroom aggression and complexity. This aggression and complexity can be compounded when students do not have their mental health needs addressed. We need action now to ensure students can learn in their classrooms and teachers are safe from abuse when they are at their workplace. To the Minister of Education and Childcare: can you please tell Albertans what you have done to ensure that student mental health needs are met at our schools?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, addressing the mental health needs of students is a top priority, and that's why yesterday I announced that, as part of Budget '25, our government will be investing \$69 million over the course of the next three years to help school divisions support the mental health needs of students. Mr. Speaker, this is a significant step forward in addressing the mental health challenges of students. This is the first time school divisions will receive dedicated funding to support the mental health needs of students, something that the NDP never took seriously and never prioritized, but our government is pleased to support the well-being of all students.

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

**Ms Pitt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we have seen a significant investment into mental health supports for schools and our students by our government and given that when student mental health is not supported, it can lead to even more complexity in the classroom and given that we've already seen steps from this government to address the complexity in the classroom issues, can the minister please share what other funding allocations have been made to address the complexity issues in the classrooms?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, the first thing I'll do is point out the fact that it was our government in 2023, for the first time, again, in the history of this province, that created a new dedicated funding stream. That time it was the classroom complexity grant, a dedicated revenue stream to help school divisions support students with complex needs. In addition, Mr. Speaker, in Budget '25, seeing the increase in complex needs in our classrooms, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to increase funding to that grant by over 20 per cent. In addition, collectively there's approximately \$1.6 billion that our government is providing to support student needs.

**The Speaker:** The member.

**Ms Pitt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. Given that we've seen this funding rolled out through Budget 2025 to address the complexity and given that we're seeing more teachers and EAs hired right across this province and given that complexity and aggression are complicated subjects with many nuances, can the minister share how Alberta's classrooms have become this complex in such a short amount of time?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Yes. There has been an exponential increase in complexity as recently as just the past two years, Mr. Speaker. When we look at the data, we see this trend. For example, there's been a 41 per cent increase in the number of refugee students just in the course of the past two years. There's been a 38 per cent increase, again just in the last two years, of the number of students who speak English as an additional language. There's been a 17 per cent increase in the number of students with severe disabilities, again just in the last two years, and we'll be continuing to address this challenge given this significant pressure.

#### Pension Fund Investment Management by AIMCo

**Member Arcand-Paul:** Mr. Speaker, in Cree culture treating our elders with respect is a duty and a responsibility. First, the UCP lost \$2 billion of Alberta public servants' retirement money in their gamble with AIMCo. Now the UCP is going after Albertan public servants' right to protect these hard-earned pensions in Bill 12. The very people who built this province, our elders. Will the Minister of Finance please explain to Albertans what respect this government is giving by preventing them from holding AIMCo responsible for its decisions?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, there are amendments to the AIMCo Act in Bill 12 that do a few things. They do shield liability, not from AIMCo but from the Alberta taxpayer. There is no sitting pot of money or slush fund to pay something like this. They also acknowledge the fact that this volatility trading strategy that started in 2018 and ran through 2020 has long since been remedied. We're very confident in the new leadership at AIMCo that took over in 2024, and no pensioner will be negatively impacted by this bill.

**Member Arcand-Paul:** Given that these pensioners were also taxpayers and given that the UCP's gambles aren't paying out anymore so instead they're changing the house rules and given that AIMCo lost a whopping \$1.3 billion from the public service, local authorities, and special forces pension plans after the UCP forced them to make AIMCo their investor – meanwhile the UCP is threatening the hard-earned CPP of Albertans – will the Minister of Finance explain why Albertans should have any confidence in this government's management of any of their money after this AIMCo boondoggle that holds no one responsible?

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, we respect the pensioners of this province. We respect the taxpayers of this province. When we see that leadership needs to be changed, we change it because ultimately we're responsible.

But, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite mentioned CPP, APP. We've had this conversation many times. What did we do? A report was commissioned. We released it. A conversation ensued. We brought forward legislation that said a few things. Any government would need a referendum to bring forward an Alberta pension plan in this province.

**Member Arcand-Paul:** Given that our teachers, nurses, social workers, hard-working municipal workers, and the women and men in uniform are represented by these pension plans and they have all said they are disappointed with this government's decisions and further given that arbitration by these pension plans tried to recoup the UCP-caused losses, to the minister: why is the government using Bill 12 to strip away our hard-working public servants' right to hold the UCP responsible? Right now it doesn't look like the UCP government really cares about the workers in this province.

**Mr. Horner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, to steal a line from my friend here, nothing could be further from the truth. I think if you've seen the actions of this government, we've landed 90 of 155 collective agreements with the public service at a time when, you know, we're in a sincere deficit cycle. We're still projecting a 6 and a half billion dollar deficit, and what have we done? We've said: we want you at market rates and we're okay with you being top of the market. We don't want recruitment and retention challenges in this province. It's important to us to be consistent and fair.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-Decore.

#### Primary Health Care Workforce

**Mr. Haji:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The solution to our struggling public health care is not introducing an American-style health care. It is better access to higher functioning primary health care services, yet many residents struggle to find a doctor, secure same- or next-day appointments, or access care after hours without resorting to emergency departments. Why is the minister responsible for primary health care introducing American style instead of improving Alberta's overall primary health care performance?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of preventative health.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is incorrect. It is not American style; it is European style and any other country that has a dual system with a strong, universal, publicly funded health care. We're going to continue to have that, but you know what actually improves access? Having more doctors. I am going to share with you the new numbers as of December 1. Doctors in Alberta registered to practice: 13,576. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** I want them to hear you when you start, hon. member. Go ahead.

**Mr. Haji:** Given that the Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services fails to understand the health care planning workforce system – let's visit the European countries Denmark and the Netherlands, countries that the minister and the Premier like to talk about having higher performing primary health care models to ensure timely appointments, continuity of care, and aftercare availability – and given that Albertans deserve to know how

Alberta's primary health care performance benchmarks with the Netherlands and Denmark, can the minister explain the comparison of the two?

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can explain the fact that we have more health care workers in this province and more coming every day. As I said just a few months ago, in September, we had 12,769 doctors. In 2018 when the members opposite were in office: 10,600. We now have 13,576. We have a 27.5 per cent increase in nurses alone, over 52,000 nurses. That includes LPNs, RNs, and psych nurses.

**Mr. Haji:** Given that the minister fails to understand population health planning, let's again revisit. Only 85 per cent of Albertans have regular family doctors compared to 98 per cent for Denmark, 99 per cent for the Netherlands. Given that 1 in 5 Albertans can get same-day or next-day appointments after hours where in Denmark and the Netherlands 1 in 2 people get access to after-hours care, why does the minister package the American style as a European package and sell it to Albertans?

2:20

**The Speaker:** The minister of preventative health.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the member is arguing against himself. He just said that those countries actually have higher numbers of health care workers. He didn't hear my numbers. I'll repeat it again. More doctors than we have ever seen in this province: 13,576. When the members opposite were in office, they actually drove away people. They had fewer doctors, yet they drove away people. We are bringing people to Alberta, a workforce to Alberta. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** I'm only making you wait so they can hear you. The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

### Recovery Community Contracts

**Member Eremenko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm half Ukrainian, and when I was a kid, I loved playing with matryoshka, the wooden nesting dolls that you'd open up and there'd be one inside, and then you'd open that one up and there'd be another one inside. Corrupt care is the UCP's matryoshka. It's corruption nested inside grift inside a cover-up inside cronyism. Did the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction inform Justice Wyant that recovery service providers were operating out of a building owned by Sam Mraiche? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Are we done? Okay.

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, we watched in this House now and yesterday the hon. members get up and imply something is going on with a building that is funded and rented by the Métis Nation, not owned by the government, not rented by the government. Yes, we are proud of the work that we do with the Métis Nation, from everything from recovery support to housing support and other very important social services work. This is the problem with the NDP. They keep accusing people of things who aren't in this House to defend themselves, and that's very, very wrong.

**Member Eremenko:** Given that senior ministry staff and two UCP chiefs of staff toured an Edmonton building looking to turn it into a medical detox centre and given that that might have seemed reasonable had not a few months later Sam Mraiche purchased the

same building and given that the Premier's former chief of staff has consistently been found to be in the same places, the same skyboxes, and the same backroom deals as Sam Mraiche, will the minister pretend that Mraiche's numbered company on the recovery building's land title is purely a coincidence?

**Mr. Nixon:** Again, we respect the Métis Nation's ability to rent buildings, to make decisions. We respect their sovereignty. That's why we work with the organization, because of the incredible work that they're doing. Standing up in this House and continuing to accuse people of things that ain't true when they cannot defend themselves is unparliamentary. If we want to talk about things, Mr. Speaker, through you to the hon. Leader of the Opposition: who paid for your trip to go to England to watch a soccer game?

**Member Eremenko:** Given that freedom of information documents reveal that the CEO of ROSC Solutions Group was also on the building tour with political staff and ministry officials and given that this company, which was handed \$70 million in contracts despite having no operational record in Alberta, is now the sole tenant of the building owned by Sam Mraiche and given that the detox centre has yet to come to pass, we need to get to the bottom of the corrupt care scandal. Enough is enough. Where is the public inquiry?

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, what Albertans have had enough of is watching things be made up inside this place. Again, the Métis Nation rents the building. The government does not own the building. We do not tell our First Nation partners nor our Métis partners what they do. They make the best decisions that they can. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Members. Members, let's all hear from the person that should be speaking.

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, the final decision on which providers they want to use and which buildings they want to use is up to the Métis Nation. We're proud to partner with them, and here's the most important thing: we're very, very proud of the great work they're doing in that facility.

**The Speaker:** Well, the next question. Time to hear only from the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

### Public Health Care

**Mr. Gurtej Brar:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not European-style health care, not Australian-style health care, not American-style health care; Albertans deserve Canadian-style, Tommy Douglas health care. Unfortunately, it is on the UCP government's chopping block. Can any of the health ministers explain why they want to trade Tommy Douglas health care with American-style health care?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of preventative health.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Canadians and Albertans deserve health care that works, health care that is timely, health care that makes sure that when they need a surgery, they get it 100 per cent of the time in clinically approved times. That is what we're doing. We are making sure that we have (a) the workforce – as I said, we've got record numbers of workforce – that we allocate dollars such as the 50,000 additional surgeries that we will be doing in this upcoming year. That's what Albertans deserve.

**Mr. Gurtej Brar:** Given that three years, one month, and 14 days ago the Premier promised to fix health care in 90 days and given

that she also promised that Albertans will never have to pay out of pocket for health care and given that now she's introducing American-style private health care that no one voted for, why did the government make promises to Albertans they knew they would not keep?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier made a promise to fix health care. She's on the road to fixing health care, check number one. We made a promise to ensure that we would maintain and support the public health guarantee. We are still doing that, check number two. We said that we would ensure that every Albertan has better access to health care, and that's exactly what we're doing. The member opposite who was the minister of health at the time couldn't do it. We plan to do it.

**Mr. Gurtej Brar:** Given that Alberta New Democrats will strengthen health care, not dismantle it, accessible by health card, not credit card, built on Tommy Douglas' principle, not Sam Mraiche, given that even her own constituents are launching a recall over privatization, will the Premier call an election today to see if Albertans truly want her to sit in the same chair any longer?

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me read the record for the NDP. In 2018 there were 10,674 doctors. Right now we have 13,576, three thousand more doctors and most of those in the last two years. We have a 27.5 per cent increase in the number of nurses. We have a 77 per cent increase in the nurse practitioner number. I could go on and on.

**The Speaker:** Leduc-Beaumont.

### Crime Prevention and Law Enforcement

**Mr. Lundy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Supreme Court has recently struck down mandatory minimum sentences for child pornography offences. While our government has condemned this ruling, the NDP has been shockingly silent. On an issue this serious silence is unacceptable, leaving many Albertans wondering just who the NDP is standing up for. To the Minister of Justice: what steps is Alberta taking to ensure that offenders face real consequences and that our justice system continues to protect children and communities?

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

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Look, Albertans are absolutely sick and tired of unchecked bail reform laws, and this government is stepping up. We've updated our bail protocols to provide guidance to prosecutors seeking detention of repeat offenders and serious criminals. We cancelled the NDP triage protocol, which saw countless cases being dropped by prosecutors here in this province. On this side of the House we're focused on keeping violent criminals out of our communities and behind bars.

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

**Mr. Lundy:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. Given that the Supreme Court's ruling has raised serious concerns about the safety of our communities and given that Albertans should feel confident that offenders who exploit children will be

caught and prosecuted, can the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services please outline what steps are being taken to ensure that police have the tools and resources they need to investigate and respond to these heinous crimes?

2:30

**The Speaker:** The minister of public safety.

**Mr. Ellis:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. You know, we've invested unprecedented amounts into ALERT, including Alberta's Internet child exploitation teams, because this government will do whatever it takes to keep our children safe. What we won't do is what the NDP, the defund party, did in 2016 when they cut ALERT's budget by \$12.5 million. That was one-third of ALERT's budget. These cuts affected units that investigate criminal offences involving child pornography, computer-related sexual abuse, child luring, and the criminals responsible. We won't allow that to happen.

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

**Mr. Lundy:** Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for that answer. Given that Albertans deserve reassurance that their government is taking action to protect children and given that the Supreme Court's decision has left many families questioning how their safety is being prioritized, can the same minister explain how this government is engaging with families, victims, and front-line agencies to communicate its response and to reinforce Alberta's commitment to protecting children from these criminals?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of public safety.

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, human trafficking violates fundamental human rights, exploits vulnerable individuals, perpetuates the cycle of abuse. We know that children are the most vulnerable, and that is why we've invested over \$5 million to fight human trafficking, which includes grants to The Alberta Centre to End Trafficking in Persons. We've created an organization which is the role model for Canada and, I think, the role model for North America.

### Energy Development and Environmental Policies

**Ms Al-Guneid:** Mr. Speaker, Alberta is blessed with mountains, clean air, low pollution. That's what makes this province a great place to raise a family. It was astonishing to hear the environment minister yesterday suggesting that we return to the days when industry could pollute with no limits because she thinks our protections are outdated. Then do something about it. The AER has been regulating flaring since the 1990s to keep our air clean. Why isn't the minister protecting clean air instead of meddling with the regulator?

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

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This specific flaring limit was originally meant to reduce smoke, odours, and local air pollution, all of which have declined over the last 20 years. However, it also counted nonroutine flaring, which is critical for safety. It didn't reflect increases in energy production, new strategies that reduce methane emissions through flaring, and broader reporting definitions for flaring. Stronger, more effective programs and measures are now in place to reduce routine flaring and lower methane emissions. This is a practical move.

**The Speaker:** A point of order was noted at 2:32.

**Ms Al-Guneid:** Given that Alberta was one of the first oil and gas jurisdictions putting limits on pollution and we were proud of it until this government decided to drag us backwards and given that our oil and gas engineers and workers have been doing their part innovating, cutting pollution, building clean technologies, and even turning excess gas into electricity instead of waste, why is this government choosing to side against common sense, against Alberta workers, and against the clean air that every Alberta family deserves?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Nothing the member opposite said is true at all. We are continuing to grow energy production, to step up and meet the demands of safe, affordable, reliable energy that people across Canada and around the world need. We're doing that while reducing emissions. We've reduced methane emissions by over 53 per cent. We've reduced electricity emissions by 53 per cent. Intensity in oil sands production is down around 25 per cent. We are very proud of our record, and other countries around the world see the same.

**Ms Al-Guneid:** Given that Albertans have watched this minister weaken one environmental protection after another, from allowing flaring with no limits to watering down TIER to paving the way for coal in our headwaters in the majestic Rockies to even green-lighting race tracks in some of Alberta's most fragile ecosystems, Albertans are asking: does this minister believe in the basic principle of polluter pays, or is she taking her cues from the Premier's friend David Yager? When will the environment minister start doing her job and protecting the environment?

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

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are absolutely committed to the polluter-pay model. We have strong regulatory systems in place, and we do expect all energy producers to be environmentally responsible and meet our high standards. What we won't do is take lessons from the members opposite, whose activist approach to energy development was designed to shut in and shut down production to kill hundreds of thousands of jobs, to drive investment out of Alberta and out of Canada. We're going to take the opposite approach, and we will not take lessons from the NDP.

### Continuing Care System

**Ms Sigurdson:** Alberta's continuing care system is in chaos. Since the UCP took office over six years ago, seniors living in these facilities have seen their care deteriorate, putting their very lives at risk. Norma Wensley is one of them. She died of septic shock. Her family believes this was caused by an untreated bladder infection. They also identified a lack of basic care for hygiene and nourishment. To the minister of assisted living: why is the UCP government not ensuring seniors receive the care they deserve?

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, that's pretty rich coming from the former minister of seniors who oversaw a department that sought less care than has been legislated by this side of the House. Her government couldn't even be bothered to legislate the care that is in place inside continuing care homes. This government tripled it. She was in charge at a time where people were being left in hospitals for upwards of six

or seven years, who did not need acute care but needed actually to be put into continuing care homes. Why were there no continuing care homes? Because that minister and her government built none.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Given that seniors across Alberta are not receiving the care they deserve from Vulcan to McLennan and points in between and given that the Protection for Persons in Care report details a tripling of the founded allegations of seniors in continuing care being neglected and abused during the UCP's time in office and given that the minister is allowing the situation to continue and is not protecting vulnerable seniors, when will the minister enforce the contractual obligations for standards of care and hold operators accountable for founded allegations?

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, again, sadly, underneath the NDP the investigation division for these very, very serious concerns was moved into AHS, and it turns out that AHS was sometimes occasionally sending out those investigators, but even when they found out things were wrong, there were no consequences being put in place. This government took the investigators out of AHS, brought them into the department so we could have direct control of this very serious situation. We are investigating when we receive complaints. We are investigating even when we don't receive complaints to be able to make sure that the law is followed. That's concrete action that's been taken by this government, something the NDP did not bother to do when they were over here.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Given that nonprofit operators are not being funded at a sustainable level and some in rural Alberta are at risk of closing due to the UCP's lack of funding and given that even the Conservatives in Ontario know the importance of the superior outcomes for seniors in nonprofit facilities and funds them accordingly and given that research demonstrates that for-profit operators have worse outcomes for seniors because a good chunk of their revenue goes to their shareholders and not into resident care, when will the minister properly fund nonprofit continuing care providers, who we know deliver better outcomes?

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, when that minister was in charge, she built no new homes for seniors, no increase in continuing care facilities. This side of the aisle, since they have been in charge, has record spending on continuing care facilities, has increased the care standard and legislated those care standards that the NDP did not, and has the highest amount ever being invested in continuing care since the beginning of the Confederation. We won't be lectured by a member who had spent four years in cabinet and couldn't build one home. [interjections]

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

**The Speaker:** A point of order is noted at 2:39.

Now we are going to hear from the Member for Camrose.

### Diabetes Supports

**Ms Lovely:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Type 1 and type 2 diabetes are growing issues in this province, affecting almost 400,000 Albertans in 2024. According to Diabetes Canada that number is expected to rise to over 550,000 by 2034. Both are associated with numerous health risks and reduced quality of life and increase the likelihood of developing mental health issues. To the Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services: what supports are being provided to Albertans living with diabetes?

2:40

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of preventative health.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Through Primary Care Alberta and the Alberta healthy living program Albertans can access free nutrition classes, exercise programs, and self-management workshops to manage diabetes. Primary care networks also provide team-based care with doctors, nurses, dietitians, and mental health supports to help people manage their condition earlier and much more effectively. Across all five zones diabetes and endocrinology clinics continue to give Albertans the specialized care and education they really rely on.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Camrose.

**Ms Lovely:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the answer. Given that living with diabetes comes with many costs to the patient, including insulin shots, continuous glucose monitors, and insulin pumps, many of which are expensive and unaffordable, and further given that there is confusion surrounding what is covered by health care and what isn't, to the Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services: can she please tell this Assembly what costs are covered by Alberta health for Albertans living with type 1 and type 2 diabetes?

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to answer this question. Many Albertans are worried about the cost of diabetes care, so let me be clear. Alberta's government-sponsored benefit plans cover a wide range of diabetes needs, including insulin, oral medications, and continuous glucose monitors. The insulin pump therapy program, which we were able to expand last year, also covers some pumps and pump supplies at no cost to patients, with no age limits, which makes it one of the most generous programs in the country. Coverage for seniors, nongroup coverage, and low-income Albertans helps ensure no one is left behind.

**The Speaker:** The member.

**Ms Lovely:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again to the minister for the answer. Given that diabetes is hardest on young Albertans, some of which have to get upward of four insulin injections a day if they don't have access to an insulin pump, and further given that some families have to wait months after diagnosis to even get an insulin pump, once again to the same minister: what is being done to decrease wait times for insulin pumps and other essential supplies for diabetes patients?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have heard the concerns of families who want faster, clearer access to insulin pumps, including new devices like the Omnipod 5, but coverage for new devices must go through an evidence-based review and national pricing negotiations, which we are in Alberta fully participating in. Once those negotiations finish, the Omnipod 5 may be considered for listing in the province. In the meantime we already fully cover access to automated insulin delivery systems like the t:slim X2 and the MiniMed 770G and 780G.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, in 30 seconds we will continue with Members' Statements.

For any members heading home, please travel safely. I understand the roads aren't great out there.

## Members' Statements

(continued)

### Government Health Policies

**Ms Hoffman:** The UCP's 2025 Spotify wrap list on health care just leaked, and here are their top hits. Number 12, the fired AHS CEO sues for wrongful dismissal, saying that it's because she pushed back against political pressure to overpay the Justice minister's relative for private surgeries. Her board said to call on the RCMP to investigate.

Number 11, the UCP admits that their \$70 million useless Turkish Tylenol, procured through the same Justice minister's relative's company, is costing taxpayers millions more in storage fees.

Number 10, nearly a million Albertans don't have a family doctor.

Nine, a record number of emergency departments are closed.

Eight, the chief medical officer of health resigns. More Albertans contract measles than the total number of cases in the United States, which has 70 times our population.

Number seven, seniors on a fixed income have to pay more for their drugs.

Number six, the UCP creates disastrous processes to register for COVID vaccines and charges most Albertans for them. An 80-year-old diabetic with a heart condition is told to pay up.

Five, the Wyant report into the corrupt care cover-up confirms that he wasn't given all of the relevant documents or the ability to subpoena witnesses.

Four, licensed practical nurses and health care aides are forced to go on strike before they get a collective agreement.

Three, the Auditor General confirms that at least \$125 million was wasted on a lab privatization experiment, the DynaLife debacle.

Two, the Premier appoints more health ministers and hires more CEOs and deputy ministers, but it just creates more chaos.

And, number one, the UCP introduces Bill 11, an act to bring in American-style health care, which nobody asked for in Alberta.

Buckle up, Mr. Speaker, because unless the current Premier gives us all the gift of an early election, 2026 is bound to be brutal, too, because you just can't trust the UCP with your public health care.

### Notices of Motions

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of jobs, economy, and trade.

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 34(3) I wish to advise the Assembly that written questions 1 through 9 will be accepted, and Written Question 10 and motions for returns 1 through 8 will be dealt with.

### Introduction of Bills

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

#### Bill 14

#### Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and move first reading of Bill 14, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025.

If passed, this bill will strengthen public confidence in our democratic processes and ensure all Albertans have an opportunity to share their views and participate in democracy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that, I move first reading of Bill 14.

[Motion carried; Bill 14 read a first time]

## Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Wright:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with three tablings. One is an op-ed article from Sam Cooper, investigative journalist, titled *From Exception to Routine: Why Canada's State-assisted Suicide Regime Demands a Human-Rights Review*.

The second one is a *National Post* article headlined *Statistics Canada Said It Missed 38 Per Cent of Non-citizens in Last Census*, enough to fill Halifax.

And the last one, Mr. Speaker, is an *Edmonton Sun* article. It says that ALERT was running at an operational budget of \$38 million in 2012, yet during the NDP's term it was reduced to . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you for that tabling.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Beddington.

**Ms Chapman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table five copies of an article detailing UCP cuts to early intervention, that I referenced in debate yesterday.

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

**Ms Renaud:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling five copies of an open letter to the government of Alberta, *Cancel the ADAP Program: Protect the Dignity and Livelihoods of Albertans with Disabilities*, written by nine previous members of the council. I referenced these comments last night.

**Member Irwin:** I am tabling five copies of a heartfelt letter from Will, a constituent of Edmonton-Meadows, a happily married gay man and father of three who is very concerned about the future of Alberta under the UCP.

**The Speaker:** Are there any other tablings? I see none. I'm not sure because there are people properly leaving. I get it. Okay. There are no more, I guess. Thank you.

That takes us to points of order. The first point of order was called during Members' Statements at 1:48 today by, I think, the Opposition House Leader.

**Ms Gray:** Yes, you are correct, Mr. Speaker. I think I will withdraw this point of order.

Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** Well, that matter is dealt with and concluded.

Point of order 2, 1:55 p.m., called by the Government House Leader.

### Point of Order

#### Insulting Language

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on 23(h), (i), and (j). It is becoming apparent to me that the precedence of the House is that presupposing the intentions or thought processes or learning experiences of one member would be considered out of order. In this instance, at the time noted, the Leader of the Opposition said, "The Premier has appeared to learn nothing." I don't think that this is really appropriate language because there is no way for the Leader of the Opposition to know what the Premier has or has not learned. I can assure you, however, that the Premier has learned a great deal leading this province into some of the most prosperous times that we will ever see, and I'm very grateful for her leadership.

What I can say is that to imply that the Premier has learned nothing or understands nothing or is slow is really abusive and

insulting language. Again, Mr. Speaker, I won't dive deep into this, but this is a pattern of behaviour that I'm not overly happy to see coming from the Leader of the Opposition, implying that strong conservative women on this side of the House are incompetent, don't know their file, can't handle the job, should resign, and the list goes on and on. It's unparliamentary, and I ask that the member apologize, withdraw, and refrain from that kind of language going forward.

2:50

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

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is not a point of order. This is absolutely a matter of debate. In this interchange the Leader of the Official Opposition reminded the Assembly that the Premier had been found to have breached the Conflicts of Interest Act and asked a question about that breach and about how government should interact with prosecutors. In the answer, and I enter this into . . .

**The Speaker:** What about what was said, please.

**Ms Gray:** Absolutely. The Government House Leader just argued, and I believe I'm almost directly quoting him, that there was no way to know what someone has learned or not learned. That's not true. If you ask them a question and they cannot answer it, that might give you an indication, and in this case I believe you'll find in the Blues that the Leader of the Official Opposition said: it appears that the Premier has not learned this particular. He is judging the value of the response. He is not making personal aspersions, not insulting, and I believe this is a matter of debate.

**The Speaker:** Yeah. Thank you. I disagree with everything you said except the last sentence, which is the most important sentence that you said.

To the Government House Leader: close but no cigar. If indeed the hon. member said that the Premier has learned nothing, that would indeed be a point of order, but they said, "The Premier appears to have learned nothing," which means it's a debate over whether the appearance is that the member has learned or not learned. Consequently, while it was close to a point of order, it actually was not one of those.

That takes us to point of order 3 at 1:58 p.m.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much. Under 23(h), (i) . . .

**The Speaker:** I think yours is the one after this, at 1:59. That's okay. It's an honest event.

Government House Leader, it's your turn now.

### Point of Order

#### Parliamentary Language

**Mr. Schow:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. At the time noted, the Premier was answering a question – I believe you said it was 1:58 – and off the record the Member for Edmonton-Glenora said: did you break the law? We don't accuse members in this Chamber of breaking the law. We can't also do indirectly what we cannot do directly. This would be a sentence that I think actually ends with an exclamation mark and not a question mark. Accusing the Premier of breaking the law would be unparliamentary under 23(h), (i), and (j).

**Ms Gray:** Interestingly, for this point of order, the Premier was found to have breached the Conflicts of Interest Act, and that is a matter of public record from an independent officer and a matter of debate. That being said, Mr. Speaker, at 1:58 I did not hear that



heckle. The Member for Edmonton-Glenora assures me she did not say those things, and the Member for Edmonton-Glenora has a long track record of owning up to when she does heckle things that may have not been parliamentary. I do believe that's the case, but I don't have the benefit of the Blues, and I leave it in your capable hands.

**The Speaker:** We're going to test that track record because what the Blues say is that the Premier said, "It is our obligation," and the Member for Edmonton-Glenora it seems, though I can't say what's on other people's mind either, finished the sentence, "To break the law," as if to put the words in the mouth of the Premier: it is our obligation to break the law. That's what it says here. Consequently, I'm not sure that you can say it.

**Ms Hoffman:** That's okay. I'm not one to argue with *Hansard*. I don't recall it, but, nonetheless, I will apologize and withdraw.

**The Speaker:** That takes us to number 4. The Opposition House Leader.

#### Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much. At the time, 1:59, the Government House Leader was speaking. I do not have the benefit of the Blues, but by my best recollection – under 23(h), (i), and (j), including making allegations against another member and using language of a nature likely to create disorder – he said that the Leader of the Official Opposition, when he was mayor of Calgary, had increased his salary. As anyone ever elected to Calgary city chambers would know, as this House and many people know, elected officials in the city of Calgary do not set their own salaries. The Leader of the Official Opposition, as mayor, certainly could not have taken that action. This type of language is likely to create disorder.

There are many, many things we can have genuine debates on, including records of past action, but making up accusations that are false, under 23(h), (i), and (j), especially things that can be searched for online at any point, makes this, I believe, a point of order, but I leave it to you to rule once the government has made their arguments.

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe that this is a point of order but, rather, a matter of public record that, while mayor, the member and Leader of the Opposition was the highest paid mayor in Calgary. That salary increase took place while that member was sitting in the mayor's chair in Calgary, and I don't think that there is really any way to say that is not public record, that that is incorrect. I am certainly not making up stats on the fly. I think that, actually, in itself would be a point of order, but as we know in this Chamber, you can't triple stamp a double stamp and you can't go and call a point of order on a point of order. With that said, I don't believe that this is a point of order; rather a matter of debate, but I leave it in your very capable hands.

**The Speaker:** Well, here's what I have written down, that was said. What I would say in response, Mr. Speaker, is that this is coming from the side whose leader gave himself a raise as mayor of Calgary, making him the highest paid mayor in the country of Canada in addition to having two fully funded pensions.

Here's an interesting something that I'll present, that I'm pretty sure is a fact based on some random experience I may have had in the past: only municipal councils actually can vote to give or not give

themselves a raise. Anyway, it's a matter of debate, I think clearly a matter of debate, and this is not the time for debate, though it was when it happened.

The next point of order is 2:40. Is that correct?

**The Clerk:** At 2:33.

**The Speaker:** At 2:33. My goodness, so many points. It's okay. So much paper.

The Government House Leader, 2:33.

#### Point of Order Insulting Language

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try to be quick on this because points of order, you've got to get through them. The Member for Calgary-Glenmore was speaking at the time to the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas and in those remarks asking legitimate questions about the government's protection of environmental regulations, but in one part I think the member deviated into a place that's unparliamentary, saying, with my unofficial records: she thinks our protections are outdated. Now, taking lessons from an earlier point of order that I think was my error, in this instance it would be unparliamentary to assume what someone else is thinking in this Chamber. You made that point clear yourself, Mr. Speaker. So I think that under 23(h), (i), and (j) the member did cause a point of order, and I would ask that the member not do that anymore.

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

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to your ruling, but I believe this is again a matter of debate, specifically because the MLA for Calgary-Glenmore was engaged with that minister in a debate on these topics yesterday, when the minister said that she reviewed and removed the unnecessary gas flaring limit because it was arbitrary. It was outdated. It wasn't used anywhere else in Canada. It was introduced over 20 years ago, and it no longer worked for the development that we were seeing here in Alberta. It was originally meant to reduce smoke [odours] and local air pollution, all of which have declined significantly over the last 20 years.

Because the minister talked about how outdated it was, we are now having this debate. I believe this is a matter of debate. This is a continuation of something that happened the day before and a reflection of literally the minister's words in this House, certainly not intended to be unparliamentary, not intended to insult, but, again, referencing a previous debate in today's question period.

I look forward to your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** And I have one. Thank you. Here's what I have from the Blues.

It was astonishing to hear the environment minister yesterday suggesting that we return to the days when industry could pollute with no limits . . .

And here's the important part.

. . . because she thinks our protections are outdated.

Now, had she said, "It looks like she thinks our protections are outdated," or even if she had said, "Our protections are outdated," but she said, "She thinks." In other words, she's presuming what another member of – the opposite thing saved this side because they made a comment that it appears the Premier thinks this. This time it didn't. The hon. member actually claimed to know the mind of another member, and it's well established in the standing orders that you don't get to claim that you know what's in another member's

mind. Without regard for whether you're right or not, you just don't get to say that. That's a point of order.

3:00

**Ms Gray:** On behalf of the member I apologize and withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Now we're at number 6 from 2:40.

### Point of Order

#### Allegations against a Member

**Mr. Schow:** I thought I heard the Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall at 2:37 say "corruption" when one of our members was speaking at 2:37. I do not recall who was speaking on our side of the House, but it sure sounded mean: 23(h), (i), and (j).

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I did not hear if there was a heckle of that word at the time, so I will have to rely on the Blues and the context therein for your ruling.

**The Speaker:** It's not in the Blues. I didn't hear it. There's no context. There's no proof. If it was said, it would be a point of order perhaps or not based on the context. Since we have no context and no hearing, it's not a point of order.

Is that it? Already? Are we done already? [interjection] Did that sound sarcastic? My apologies to the House if that sounded sarcastic.

### Orders of the Day

#### Government Bills and Orders

##### Third Reading

##### Bill 8

##### Utilities Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to move third reading of Bill 8, the Utilities Statutes Amendment Act, 2025.

When I moved second reading of this bill, I spoke to how this bill will create a strong foundation for Alberta's energy future by building on our government's ongoing work to strengthen every aspect of our province's utility system. This bill, if passed, provides a common-sense solution to concerns about how data centres might impact the reliability and affordability of our grid.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I do want to set the record straight on a few items that members opposite have brought up over the course of debate. Madam Speaker, many of the members opposite said that Bill 8 would embed hidden costs in Albertans' power bills. The facts would suggest that this is an absolutely fabricated phantasm of fantasy. Albertans will be protected from rising transmission costs because our government brought in a cost-causation model through the Energy and Utilities Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, that was passed this spring. What cost causation does is ensure that the costs for new power infrastructure will only be paid by those driving the need for said infrastructure. That means if the only beneficiary of a project is a developer, they hold responsibility to cover those costs.

To put that into perspective, the NDP decided to prematurely phase out coal-powered electricity and incentivize renewable energy projects to build wherever they wanted. This includes through their disastrous renewable energy program contracts, which are costing more than \$80 million in '25-26 alone. Under this

program the NDP agreed to subsidize those contracts when the wholesale electricity price dropped below the contract price, which they have been for over two years. The only way this program generates revenue is when electricity prices are high, which means that Albertans pay more for their power than they need to, whether the power price is high or low, thanks to those terrible contracts.

The NDP also failed to update the transmission rules to be functional through the energy transition that they hastily rammed through. This drastically increased the need for new transmission lines, and those costs were borne entirely by Alberta ratepayers. Bill 8 aligns with cost-causation principles and protects those very same ratepayers. When it comes to data centres, that means that developers will pay for the necessary power infrastructure upgrades, not the ratepayers within Alberta.

The members opposite also brought up the idea that authority is being shifted away from the Alberta Utilities Commission, or the AUC. A year ago our government instructed the Alberta Electric System Operator to work closely with industry on the development of the independent system operator rules to implement the restructured energy market. This will allow the ISO to resolve any technical deficiencies that may arise during the test phase of that restructured market. Once all the elements are complete, industry will be able to raise concerns before the AUC and propose changes to individual aspects of the rules, if needed, which is the standard process.

The members opposite have also brought up the idea that the restructured energy market has a kill switch. Madam Speaker, just like a website designer would test any page before going live to ensure everything works before being published, we need to test the market and allow the ISO to fix any issues that might arise before we fully implement it. This is a responsible contingency measure and one that every Albertan would expect a system operator to have.

Further, the opposition continues to attack this bill on the affordability end. They pat themselves on the back, claiming that they had low power prices when they were in government. What the NDP failed to acknowledge is the fact that Alberta started out with low-cost coal-powered electricity that they decided to phase out. The grid alerts in 2024 are a direct result of the NDP's failure to bring forward responsible energy policy. When the wind stopped blowing, wind power dropped off and we had the grid alert.

Renewable energy, like wind and solar, is intermittent. It is one of its characteristics. If Alberta ran on renewables alone, like the NDP would like, Albertans would face regular brownouts and blackouts, which is being experienced in California because their system is highly reliant on renewable energy. Battery storage alone isn't enough to get Albertans and their families through the harsh winters that we face here in our province.

The NDP continue to put ideology above the well-being of Albertans in their debate. Their coal phase-out cost Alberta taxpayers over \$2 billion, which we are still paying off to the tune of nearly \$100 million every year. They disrupted the balance of our market, drastically driving up new transmission costs, which resulted in drastic increases on Albertans' utility bills.

Through cost-causation principles and the body of legislation that we have so far brought through and brought forward, we have protected Albertans from being charged on projects that they don't directly benefit from. Our government has taken major steps to ensure affordability, and our measures have been working. We saw the wholesale price of electricity drop 53 per cent in 2024. Competitive and variable fixed rates were on average 32 per cent lower, and we reduced the default rate by 63 per cent from its peak. Generation costs are at some of the lowest levels ever in the province of Alberta.

It is the long-lasting high transmission costs from the NDP's bad policy that Albertans are still paying for and see on their bills. The

work our government is doing, including through Bill 8, is restoring the balance between affordability, reliability, and sustainability that the NDP destroyed. Madam Speaker, on this side of the House we're prioritizing the reliability of the power Albertans need for their families, for their businesses, and to keep our economy running. The opposition is prioritizing the interests of their eco-radical multinational friends, and our government is doing everything we can to ensure that Albertans do not freeze in the dark. If passed, this bill will continue to build on all the work that we've done in the utility space and ensure that Albertans, industry, ratepayers, taxpayers, and our province as a whole will continue to benefit.

With that, Madam Speaker, I hereby move third reading of Bill 8, the Utilities Statutes Amendment Act. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any members wishing to join the debate on third reading? The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

**Mr. Kasawski:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thanks to the minister for starting off a sleepy afternoon with some lively debate and some great points to litigate here in the Chamber. Maybe we'll just start off with a clear statement. We want Alberta to be a great place to do business. We want it to be a place where people want to bring their investment dollars from around the world so that we can create jobs in this province, create a reliable grid, create an affordable grid, create a sustainable grid for the future. That is our aim, and on this side of the House we aim to get to government so that we can create the stable investment environment that we know is so desired by players and proponents inside of the electricity system.

Now, the cost-causation model that's being brought forward is called locational marginal pricing in the restructured energy market. By all accounts, I can tell this is going to be a good thing. It's the right thing to come in and be brought in. Bill 8 has problems with it, which is why on this side of the House we want to oppose it. I'm going to stand up and give a few reasons why, but first, Madam Speaker, because of all the rich material that was brought in by the minister, I have to address a few things.

3:10

First, he brought in his great love of coal. The love of coal from this side of the House is so new. Persistently now, since they got into office in 2019, they have been trying to create coal mining in the eastern slopes of the Rockies. It's been said loud and clear from the rooftops of Alberta: this is not at all what we want in this province. But big coal lobby constantly comes in. I don't know what's going on behind closed doors in secret meetings with ministers, but this party is a huge proponent of coal, ignoring the fact that if we were to burn coal – and we haven't burned coal in Alberta since 2024. There was one coal power plant. Most of the coal in Alberta for use for power has been gone since before the 2020s.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

What's interesting and most needs to be brought forward in terms of debate is that it was Jim Prentice when he was a minister in the Harper government that brought forward the good as gas standard in Canada that made it so that no new generation in this province or in this country would be coal fired. On that side of the House there is constant yelling about how great it would be if we could go back to the good old days of coal. I've invited them: bring the coal power plants back if you think it's possible or you think the market even wants to bring it. They won't and it's not possible because there's a good as gas standard in this country and

nobody, no electrical generator, is bringing forward a proposal for a new coal-fired power plant.

What's interesting also is that back in, I think, 2012 – it was the Member for Edmonton-Manning that did the history lesson – the Wildrose Party ran on a campaign promise to eliminate coal-fired power plants in this province. As early as 2012 the roots of this party that was started from transmission grid development were arguing not to have any more coal power in this province. Somehow this argument of coal power that is brought over by the UCP, that we should have more coal power, doesn't make any sense.

I also want to take the minister to task a little bit on the contracts for difference. The contracts for difference are a very reliable, very well-used mechanism of pricing electricity in marketplaces. When the Alberta NDP were in charge in 2015 to 2019, in that period of time, we went to the market and we tested it. We said: what if all of the energy use by the government of Alberta came from renewable energy sources? What would that cost? They put out a request for proposal to the marketplace, inviting any of the large developers of electricity generation to make proposals to win the contract for government of Alberta electricity. To this day the minister is complaining about these contracts, but the government that he's in charge of is still abiding by these contracts because they know they're getting a good deal.

When we went to the market and we tested it, we said: look, if we can give you a large contract for the electricity that the government of Alberta consumes, what would it cost if it came from renewable energy sources? I'm going to get a little nerdy, Mr. Speaker, and talk about prices per megawatt hour. You know, if you had a good price per megawatt hour of coal nowadays, maybe you could get it for \$130 a megawatt, is what you could offer to the market. Gas, maybe \$170 a megawatt hour, maybe better, maybe less, depending on the type of generation.

The interesting thing is that when we went to the market and asked, "How much would it cost for all of our electricity that Albertans use for our government buildings to come from renewable energy?" it came in at a remarkable price, Mr. Speaker. It came in at \$37 a megawatt hour. For \$37 a megawatt hour we are locked in to a really good, low price for the operations of all of our government of Alberta buildings. It's a great deal. It's been a great deal for decades. It continues to be a good deal.

That contract for difference says: well, let's say the price for electricity goes up to \$100 a megawatt hour; we still stay at that \$37 a megawatt hour, and actually the government nets proceeds for the difference between \$37 and \$100. So they're going to be getting about \$63 a megawatt hour that they return to general revenue. It's a phenomenal deal. So right now if electricity is sitting at \$25 a megawatt hour, yeah, we have to make up that difference because we could be getting it for \$37. But it's a great deal for Alberta, and it's why the minister has maintained that contract, because when the New Democrats brought it in, we got lower priced, sustainable, clean energy for all of our operations.

What's more interesting, Mr. Speaker: if you look at the restructured energy market that the minister is trying to build, that's still under construction, there are provisions in the restructured energy market to take the ceiling on the price of electricity in our marketplace from \$1,000 a megawatt hour, which it is right now – I know I was just talking about \$3,700. We do have a ceiling on the bid price in our market of \$1,000. The minister is going to move it up to \$3,000 a megawatt hour. We are locked in at renewable energy for under \$40 a megawatt hour, and the government is going to be bringing in changes to the marketplace that will be bringing up the price for the highest bid price at \$3,000 a megawatt hour, almost a hundred times' increase in what pure renewable energy costs.

It is rich to hear the government taking down that contract for the difference and suggesting that in any way it was a bad deal for Albertans. It's been a great deal for Albertans, and every member of this House knows that.

The transmission line history that has been brought up has been brought up for relevance. During the period of time when the Progressive Conservatives were the government and Ed Stelmach was the Premier, that period of time that is legend to have probably created the Wildrose Party in this province because landowners were furious that the government was coming through their parts of the province and letting them know through the Alberta Energy Regulator that you're going to be getting transmission lines through your property, a lot of landowners were really unhappy about it. At the time New Democrats and other people in the industry that were paying attention were saying: "This could be overbuilt. We don't need this much transmission line, and it's not anywhere close to where the loads are."

The interesting thing is that now with Bill 8 and with the restructured energy market the government is trying to now say: "I think I remember back to what the New Democrats were saying back when Stelmach was government. Maybe we didn't need this overbuilt energy system with all these transmission lines that aren't near where energy is used. Maybe there's a better way to do things." So they're trying to do that. They're trying to find that better way of doing things.

I think what's most interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that at that time that was \$16 billion for the build. It was split between two companies, and those two companies still run those large transmission lines. That bill goes on our distribution and transmission at \$16 a month per household. If you look at your bill, you're going to see that there is a fixed price you're paying every month that is 100 per cent due to the PC government of the Stelmach era.

It's rich to have the minister say, like: where is all this fear of transmission costs going to go up when the UCP bring in a bill that's going to be affecting transmission? Well, it's based on a history and a learned history that this government always makes Albertans pay. They always find a way to make Albertans pay more.

The minister also brought up this idea that there's a kill switch. We can tell you it's pretty clear when you bring everything inside a minister's office. Very significant decision-making processes for the transmission and utility system are going inside the minister's office with this bill. In Bill 8 the minister does have the opportunity to make a decision that would usually be led to a commission and a regulator and an independent system operator. It's an immense amount of power going into the minister's office.

We'll get into that, but I'd like to frame a debate in this House around expediency and transparency. Expediency is what the minister is seeking, but we have no transparency in that system, and we have seen from this government that when there's a lack of transparency, there is trouble that comes for Albertans.

One other thing I'd like to make a point of is that in this province, as we can see with the weather outside, it's a hard place to get through a winter without burning something. In this province we burn gas. There has been an effort with this government to lay out a hydrogen road map. A lot of players in the market took those signals of a hydrogen road map, and they have invested in it. They're preparing for it. The idea would be that with all of the pipes we have throughout this province, with all of the pipes we have that are used for moving natural gas to buildings and businesses and homes, perhaps we could have a good mix of renewable, clean hydrogen in that gas, which would be good for the environment. That hydrogen road map that has been laid out by the government

is not being revisited in a way that is giving the market much confidence that we are going to go very far with hydrogen in this province.

3:20

So let's get back to the main course of debate, Mr. Speaker. That's just a response to what the minister had to say today. Transparency versus expediency: I think there is a great amount of investor risk and a great amount of investor uncertainty with this government right now. I think this government – as it's been so well put by the Member for Calgary-Elbow, Alberta is a difficult place to do business. There is a lot of talk about people that are interested. Everyone is interested because in the past it was a good place to do business, but right now they're holding back because there is so much uncertainty, and it feels very fragile when we're going to go through a restructured energy market.

It feels even more fragile when you bring the decision-making for that restructured energy market tightly into the minister's office, where there is not oversight, where there's not sober second thought, where there are not good checks and balances, where there are not good signals of certainty, where you cannot just pause and take a moment, which you might do with a commission or an independent system operator. Instead, we're going to get expediency. That's what the aim is here.

The minister is talking about lots of tests that are going to be run and preparation that's going to be run for the switchover from the current market to the restructured energy market, but as other ministers in this House have said when they brought things in the minister's office, they have argued that it's so they can turn on a dime. Turning on a dime is not what electrical generators need. It is not what investors need. There can be flip-flopping back and forth between the future restructured energy market and the current market, which is robust, is energy only, and there is an immense amount of secrecy, so we don't know what's going on. Our key on this side of the House: we want to make sure there's investor confidence in our electricity market where it's a good place to come and do business, and we want to protect Albertans from higher electricity costs.

A lot of talk has been brought forward about the AI data centres and the plans for that. It's really interesting to know that Alberta was in the top seven places in the world for AI previously, and now we're 54th. So we are actually slipping down the road on AI. In the last few years so much has changed in the AI world that we have gone from being a leader to being way down there in 54th place. We are not leading at all in this, so let's try and create a place where we can attract AI data centres. It is probably a good investment, a good plan. Let's create a marketplace or an investment place where people would want to do that, but that's going to create a great deal of increased demand on our electricity system.

AI data centres consume a vast amount of energy, and it's been brought up in research that in some jurisdictions electricity prices have gone up over 267 per cent for retail homeowners because of AI data centres that were brought in without good planning, without good oversight from independent systems operators, without good oversight from utility commissions, and for the AI data centres now we're getting special service from the minister. That oversight that would usually be done by technical experts and economic experts and market experts is going to be brought into the minister's office, and for us that's a great concern because we are not confident that it's going to be providing the reliability and affordability that we need in this province.

The minister has talked about cost causation. It is good to know that the locational marginal pricing that is going to be introduced

into this new, restructured energy market will be passed on to the consumers of that new energy demand. We're happy to see that. We believe locational marginal pricing is going to be a helpful thing for our market.

I'll just step back a little bit, Mr. Speaker, because when the minister is taking issue with the fact that there's a kill switch or his ability to turn on a dime and us taking issue with it, I'll just talk about our process. This bill was introduced a week ago, and it'll be through the House today, so in one week we were supposed to discuss and debate all this. That's been almost healthy for this government, but this government has been known to bring in bills with great implications for Albertans that are brought in one day and out of the Legislature the next without debate, without discussion, without an opportunity to talk to stakeholders.

I can tell you that in the utility industry the stakeholders pay attention, they read the *Hansard*, and they want to know that there has been proper consultation, but there's been, really, little time to talk to members in the industry about what they're feeling about the changes that are coming through this. Knowing that Bill 8 adds minister regulation-making powers respecting data centres – the UCP wants to pursue this data centre strategy, and we want to encourage it. We want to make sure that we're a great place to do business, but they must at least ensure that Albertans, who already have very high electricity rates – that those won't be going up any further as a result of data centres. When it's left all to a minister – I'll just back up a little bit.

There is the concept of: what if the minister wins the lottery? What if the minister wins the lottery, Mr. Speaker, and he says, "I'm out of here; I'm not going to do this work anymore?" When we don't have the stability of an independent systems operator and utility commission who would have that ability to carry on without one individual, the minister, we are in a situation that is fragile. The minister has taken over regulation, so now investor money is on the on the outside waiting and wondering, speculating, unsure.

Of note, Mr. Speaker: Bill 8 is trying to create a shield from the cabinet and the Premier. I think the minister has recognized that when you have a Premier that comes out and tells the province that we are going to shut down renewables, we're going to have a ban on renewables, and then the minister is left cleaning up that mess, it is of note – maybe it's a feature of Bill 8 – that the minister doesn't have to bring to cabinet the changes that he's going to make. Back to expediency, he's not going to have to go to cabinet and he's not going to have to go to the Premier because we know that erratic decision-making by a cabinet and Premier is not good for the utility system. We saw that with the energy ban, and it's good to know that in Bill 8 it's probably a feature that the minister is protecting the industry from the erratic moves of the Premier.

We know that transparency creates certainty, and under an Alberta New Democratic government we will let the world know that we're open for business. We will provide stability, transparency, clear rules, a fair, equitable, open, competitive market, which are the foundations of the marketplace in Alberta. Our guiding rule for our market is to make sure that we have reliability and affordability. We've all committed now to decarbonize by 2050, so we want a sustainable energy market, and we want reasonable implementation.

That key thing on reasonable implementation, Mr. Speaker: I must say that that's the point that I'm trying to drive home, and we saw it just yesterday. This bill was brought forward, Bill 8, and the government brought forward an amendment that struck out a whole section on the opportunity for hydrogen pilot projects in this province.

Clear message to everybody: we want to be the handlebars of stability, the clutch on system overhauls, and the accelerator on investment in Alberta.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Member for Grande Prairie.

**Mr. Dyck:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a great honour to speak about Bill 8, and I look forward to just chatting here in this Chamber.

First of all, I just want to talk about the great work that the minister is doing, the Minister of Affordability and Utilities. In this bill he did a couple of things: one, he saw the opportunity that data centres could come and bring to Alberta, but number two, he listened to the people. He heard the affordability question and he took that seriously, and I think this is something that we should congratulate him for and thank him for as well. He balanced two very challenging conversations in this time and period of history.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite just spoke, and I believe I got the quote right: an erratic cabinet isn't good for the industry. Now, in 2015, prior to the NDP, there were two places in North America that offered the lowest power price across North America. You know what? It was Texas and Alberta, which is interesting. I believe it was May 5, 2015, that the NDP got in, and they changed a few things. We had power pricing for coal at 1.5 cents. They cut coal, ended contracts, cost the taxpayer \$2 billion, and they went to natural gas, and that instantly went to 3 cents, a 100 per cent increase in power price. For shame, Mr. Speaker. For shame. Now all of a sudden, since that period, they had no concept of the word "affordability." We saw struggling. Now the member opposite just mentioned that an erratic cabinet isn't good for the industry, and I think we saw that when you're looking at a 100 per cent increase during the NDP's reign. I just wanted to make a few points there on that.

3:30

Now, getting back to this bill, Mr. Speaker, we have some great opportunities here, but we also have some challenges. We have a growing population, rising electricity demand as we continue to see businesses expand here, we continue to see job growth, people and entrepreneurs wanting to see and build their businesses here, which is fantastic for us. Part of this is also AI use and data centre use. We're already seeing businesses turn towards this and utilize this here in Alberta. They're adopting AI, and through this opportunity we have an opportunity, a huge opportunity. The AESO currently has 19,000 megawatts of data centre connection requests. That's a large amount of power, but to put it in context, at Alberta's peak, we have 12,000 megawatts peak load.

We have some fundamentals that are extremely important to this conversation, and we have a balanced approach in Bill 8. We are encouraging growth while also protecting the utility grid in these things. Now, one of the key aspects in this conversation is that we need to prioritize those data centres with on-site generation. We want to be able to protect – as I mentioned before, the minister has done a great job of protecting our current grid while also building out the generation for AI data centres. This is an important key piece, as we allow them to enter into our market, for them to bring that power and be able to keep our grid and keep that sustainable, too.

Now, a couple of these priorities and key factors here are that we have some incredible natural opportunities right here in Alberta. One, we have the natural gas makeup in order to power all these generators. We have an abundance of clean natural gas. Interestingly, we have natural gas across our province. These are important aspects because even in my own backyard of Grande

Prairie I believe it's the world's third-largest natural gas field across both the Montney and Duvernay. With those come substantial opportunities. We have the space, and, Mr. Speaker, we also have the natural talent here in Alberta. We have the talented workforce to both build the data centres, be able to build the power centres, and be able to have the key aspects of being able to build out both AI use and also the data centre strategy as well.

Mr. Speaker, we've got to *carpe diem*, seize the day. Bill 8 is allowing us to do that. As we do this, just to wrap up here, this bill fits with Alberta's data centre strategy. It supports the natural gas and our incredible workforce, and interestingly it connects to our recent MOU with the federal government and CER carve-out. These work hand in hand, and I'm excited about the future of both. These connections are great news for Albertans, and we should continue to see these expanded opportunities across Alberta as well. Once again, Bill 8 is a win-win for Albertans. I would encourage all MLAs to support this bill.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

**Ms Goehring:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill 8, the Utilities Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, that I would really like to highlight is brought forward by the Ministry of Affordability and Utilities. Silly me to assume that this legislation would actually provide some sort of affordability for Albertans. That's not correct. I have to give a lot of praise to our shadow minister, the Member for Sherwood Park, who has been incredibly engaged in this ministry, is very knowledgeable, and has brought forward a lot of remarks and serious feedback and has asked some significant questions when it comes to this piece of legislation.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when I saw this piece of legislation come forward, I was hopeful that it would do something to address the cost of electricity in the province to Albertans. We have the highest electricity prices for families in Canada, and unfortunately that isn't addressed in this piece of legislation. Instead, we hear this government talk about all of the things that they are doing for Albertans and all of the things that are really making life better, which is not accurate. We're hearing over and over that Albertans are in an affordability crisis. I know that the affordability minister is hearing it, too, and he should be addressing it. People in my community of Castle Downs are talking about the high cost of insurance, the high cost of groceries, the high cost of child care, tuition, rent, and utilities, and the Affordability and Utilities minister is not doing anything to address that.

In fact, I would like to remind Albertans that this government recently increased pay to some of their members through their parliamentary secretaries they've appointed. Now 83 per cent of the UCP caucus receives additional pay on top of what they are being paid as MLAs. Instead of looking at actual affordability measures that could support Albertans, who are pleading with government to actually do something to address affordability, they gave themselves a raise; 83 per cent of the UCP caucus has a wage increase. Now, to be clear, they have the largest cabinet in Alberta's history at the time of an affordability crisis, and this piece of legislation, Bill 8, brought forward by the affordability minister, does nothing to address affordability.

It's concerning when the legislation that we've seen in this session introduced actually creates more of a cost to Albertans. We're currently debating another bill that's introducing American-style health care, which, of course, we know will create a two-tiered system that has the ability to pay for health care or access public health care. Now, this Premier promised Albertans in the last

election that that would never happen, yet here we are. You know, they promised Albertans, when they created an affordability ministry, that it would do something to address affordability. The UCP have clearly established, Mr. Speaker, that they are not to be trusted with actually addressing the needs of what Albertans want.

They talk about the capacity to draw investment into the province. Well, when I look at the rhetoric that this government is talking about with separating and all of that, that definitely is not creating a space of stability for investors. Why would they choose to come to a province that they don't know will actually be part of Canada? Why would a family want to pick up and move to a province with a new AI centre that doesn't have health care, that has the lowest student funding rate per capita in the country, probably can't get a family doctor? These are all things that this government is just completely ignoring. When they talk about, you know, "This piece of legislation will allow for investment into the province," they're actively driving investment away because it's such an unstable government in so many different areas, Mr. Speaker.

You know, again, I'm disappointed that this government brought forward a piece of legislation that doesn't actually do anything to address affordability or the high cost of utilities. With that, Mr. Speaker, I would really encourage everybody to put some sort of expectation on the government to stop paying themselves and look at ways to actually support the affordability crisis in Alberta.

Thank you.

3:40

**The Acting Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

**Ms Wright:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and to provide a few comments of my thoughts on this bill. I will say that I was around, because I am that old and ancient, when deregulation began. In fact, there was a period of a couple of summers when I was working in government offices and I was looking at all the folks who were running around trying to figure out how to deregulate what had been, of course, a regulated industry. The promise that Albertans were given at that point was that all of this would mean that we would have a reliable grid, we'd have electricity kind of, you know, when and where we need it, as it were, and that it would also be cheaper for us because market forces would be brought to bear. Competition was good, and that sort of thing.

Except that is not at all how things worked out, Mr. Speaker. Eight years ago electricity was 2.88 cents per kilowatt. By late '22 it hit 37 cents per kilowatt, 12 times higher than just five years earlier. That means in very real terms for those families who are experiencing lots of challenging times – paying groceries, paying their kids' school fees, paying for daycare – that cost of electricity and the fact that it's risen so much is making it really, really difficult for folks in Alberta.

There was a recent report by Edgardo Sepulveda, who talked about some of the effects of what deregulation has done. It means we are now consistently home to the highest consumer electricity prices in the country. It means that since 2001 Albertans have paid about \$24 billion more for their electricity than if they had paid the same prices as other Canadians. Since the early 2000s volatility of prices has increased as well, which generally, Mr. Speaker, just makes it hard, as I said, for families to plan their budget. It doesn't seem to me that it was, I don't know, the best plan forward for normal, everyday Albertans.

One of the things, though, that I do want to highlight in the time that I have is that idea of data centres. I think technology is great, I think that changes in innovation are great, but I do worry because

there is a portion, section (10), where it talks about regulations having to do with data centres. As my colleague from Sherwood Park talked about just a few minutes ago, all of the power will now of course rest in the minister's office. When I consider how new and innovative this technology is, I actually don't think that that is a good idea. I think that when we're dealing with something that is so young and so new, it is incumbent upon government to bring that debate into the House so the voices of actual Albertans can actually be heard. In fact, we don't have to go very far to find some voices that can give us some examples in terms of what could occur when data centres are essentially given regulatory – I don't know – too much welcome, if you will, Mr. Speaker.

The first thing is that there's that idea that data centres will provide long-lasting, life-sustaining jobs. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, as many, many states and many, many smaller communities in the United States are showing us these days, that isn't always, in fact, the case. It is absolutely true that there will be lots of jobs created, good, high-paying jobs that Albertans deserve, in the beginning while those data centres are being built, but the problem is that when you look at what actually happens after the data centres are built, it ends up being a fraction of folks that are employed on a long-term basis. Part of the problem, of course, is that we're not prepared in terms of our education, in terms of the jobs that are required.

Interestingly enough, if I can go on just a tiny little bit of a tangent there, what the folks down in the States have found is that it isn't just about the technology; it isn't just about the technical skills for those folks who do in fact end up with those jobs in those data centres. The folks that they're looking for right now and that they're having a really hard time finding are those folks that, for lack of a better term, Mr. Speaker, we talk of having those soft skills. In other words, they can collaborate with people, they know how to do teamwork, and they can do something that's called critical thinking. I mean, you know, if I was giving some advice to the Minister of Affordability and Utilities, I would say that that particular department might want to work with the minister of education and that particular department and perhaps put critical thinking back into our educational curriculum.

**Mr. Kasawski:** I love that.

**Ms Wright:** Right?

One of the other things – and I know that people have talked about it – is that, again, although it seems like there's great promise with data centres, much like there was great promise with deregulation all those years ago, Mr. Speaker, the reality is less than promising. We know that there are increased utility rates for everyone. We know that these centres have high resource consumption. We know that sometimes the tax incentives end up being pretty ineffective. We know – and this perhaps might be the thing that really has to underpin everything, Mr. Speaker – indeed that there are climate and energy challenges that this government, I worry, in this legislation has not thought enough about.

For those reasons and a whole bunch more I'm not going to be supporting this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Any others wishing to speak? Seeing none.

[Motion carried; Bill 8 read a third time]

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

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just before I move the

motion, I would like to rise to request unanimous consent of the Assembly to move to one-minute bells for the remainder of the afternoon sitting.

[Unanimous consent granted]

## Government Motions

### Time Allocation on Bill 9

18. Mr. Williams moved on behalf of Mr. Schow:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 9, Protecting Alberta's Children Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in second reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

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

**Member Irwin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was just over a month ago I stood here speaking against not only the UCP's use of the notwithstanding clause against teachers but also against the UCP's use of time allocation on that bill. That was Bill 2. Now here we go again – it seems like a déjà vu moment – with Bill 9.

Let's start on that second point, time allocation. What does that mean? It means that this UCP government is again limiting debate on a bill. It means that instead of allowing a fulsome discussion about the content of this bill, the UCP have chosen to cut off debate. Not surprising from a government that's so focused on centralization of power in cabinet, a government that takes every opportunity to suppress dissent and diminish the roles of MLAs in this Legislature. It's one additional example of this Premier and this cabinet wanting to control everything. It's undemocratic; it's authoritarian; whatever word you want to use. They're limiting debate again. They've now cut off debate 76 times. The UCP are responsible for 51 per cent of time allocations in Alberta's parliamentary history. Not a record to be proud of.

Speaking of proud, how proud am I and how proud are all of us to be – you know, I'm only one of 87 across the province who gets to do this job, 87 out of 5 million people. What an incredible privilege. Why wouldn't we come to this building every single day wanting to do our best? If we're sent to this Legislature to honour our constituents' voices, then we must be allowed the chance to speak. [interjection] I must say that if this Premier and this government are so confident and if the transportation minister, too, is so confident of their legislation, then let us debate it. Let us all speak. If they're so confident in this bill, Bill 9, then why do they need to invoke the notwithstanding clause, overriding Albertans' Charter rights? They're limiting our rights as legislators, and they're limiting the rights of transgender Albertans.

These are our Charter rights in our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Charter rights that protect inherent human rights like freedom of expression, religion, assembly, the right to equality, the right to life, liberty, and security of the person, the rights we have as Canadians and, in theory, as Albertans, the very rights this UCP government are attacking with the use of the notwithstanding clause.

3:50

The UCP have invoked the notwithstanding clause four times in just over a month, four times in one session. Let that sink in. It's an unprecedented use of what is an emergency lever that's meant to be

a last resort, meant to be used sparingly, transparently, and only when absolutely necessary.

I want to end by addressing those who are most hurt, those who are most impacted by Bill 9, transgender Albertans. So many of you have e-mailed us, have reached out to all of us. You've called; you've rallied; you've watched from the gallery. You've taken on so much more than you ever should have, and for that I'm so sorry. I'm sorry that you continue to be the target of a UCP government that's weaponizing your identity to score political points. You are our family, our friends. You are not the other; you are us. You are Albertans, and you deserve love, respect, kindness, and care, and you deserve your rights to be protected. You deserve so much better, and we all do.

Better is possible, Alberta. Thank you.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 18 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:51 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

For the motion:

Amery	Jones	Sawyer
Armstrong-Homeniuk	LaGrange	Schow
Boitchenko	Loewen	Schulz
Bouchard	Long	Sigurdson, R.J.
Cyr	Lovely	Singh
de Jonge	Lundy	Stephan
Dreeshen	McDougall	Turton
Dyck	Nally	Wiebe
Ellis	Neudorf	Williams
Fir	Nicolaides	Wilson
Glubish	Nixon	Wright, J.
Horner	Petrovic	Yao
Hunter	Pitt	Yaseen
Johnson	Rowswell	

Against the motion:

EGGEN	Irwin	Sigurdson, Lori
Goehring	Kasawski	Sweet
Haji	Renaud	Wright, P.
Ip	Shepherd	

Totals: For – 41 Against – 11

[Government Motion 18 carried]

### Time Allocation on Bill 11

19. Mr. Schow moved:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 11, Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2), is resumed, not more than one hour shall be allotted to any further consideration of the bill in second reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, do I have time to speak to the motion? Excellent. Thank you. I will be brief, but it has become apparent that when debating Bill 11, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2), the members opposite have chosen that, rather than take on the role of opposition party, they take on the role of the obstruction party. It is the mandate of the government to move forward with the legislation that we have been given a mandate to move forward with by the electors in the 2023 election.

Since that time we have continued to fulfill those promises that we made, including increasing access to health care and ensuring that all Albertans have access to safe, timely health care and get services that they need in a timely manner within the medically recommended amount of time.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition should look at their role in this Legislature. They take it very seriously, and I do appreciate that, but it is not to obstruct. It's to be opposition, to give meaningful feedback, something that I have seen very rarely at many times. I move the time allocation motion because there's also something to be said about quality of debate and not just... [interjections] I thank my colleagues. Quality of debate, not just quantity: there is a difference, so I would encourage the members opposite that as we continue to debate this legislation – and the members opposite have a whole lot to say about this, and they will have their time. Heaven knows.

In addition to the fact that we are extending the legislative session already by one week into a second week next week to ensure that the appropriate amount of time for debate is given, we are sitting late into the evenings to ensure that each piece of legislation gets the appropriate amount of time for debate. So while I understand that the members opposite will bemoan the move to use time allocation, as they have many times in the past, I can assure them that they have the opportunity in this Chamber to make their points across. [interjections] Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are so loud with their heckles that I can barely hear myself think. It's unfortunate because if they want their opportunity to speak, maybe they can let me finish my remarks, and they can have all the time they like, certainly, whenever I sit down.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that we are extending session two full weeks. We are sitting nights late into the evening to get all the important legislation and to ensure the members opposite have their time to oppose and propose potential changes, not to obstruct. I ask the members opposite to look inward and better understand their role in this Chamber.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Mr. Speaker, there has never been a less democratic government in this province than the UCP. There never has. The fact is that under this government bills have never been given less time to be debated. Sessions have never been shorter. There have never been fewer hours logged in this Legislature. As my colleagues have noted, this government has chosen to limit debate more than any other in the history of our province. [interjections] They know it's true, Mr. Speaker. That's why they're heckling, because they can't stand to hear it.

4:00

Of 146 time allocation motions brought in this Legislature in 121 years since Alberta became a province, nearly two-thirds, 75 of those plus two today, have been brought in in the six years under the UCP. They've been using time allocation at a rate that's over seven times above the historical average. They flood the Legislature with bills right into the final weeks of session, bills that make sweeping changes to the services and the systems that Albertans depend on, and then they limit debate on bills that do not represent anything they campaigned on because they were too cowardly to do so. They don't believe in scrutiny, transparency, or accountability.

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

**The Acting Speaker:** A point of order has been called.



## Point of Order Parliamentary Language

**Mr. Schow:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you right now that saying that we are too cowardly for anything would be unparliamentary in this Chamber under 23(h), (i), and (j). The member knows very well that throwing that kind of disparaging language at the government or any member of good standing in this Chamber is unparliamentary. Cowardly. Cowardly. Is the member serious?

As an Opposition House Leader, part of the House leader team, the member is required, or at least should be required, to elevate his level of decorum. I think that kind of language is certainly not levelling or at least not worthy of that member's position within the House leader team. I would ask that member to apologize and withdraw from using the word "cowardly" any further. Shame on that member.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Deputy Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Shepherd:** I would argue that the word "cowardly" is not unparliamentary, but in this case I did use the word "they" as opposed to referring to the government, so I will apologize and withdraw.

## Debate Continued

**Mr. Shepherd:** Mr. Speaker, they were too afraid to campaign on what they actually intended to do.

This government does not believe in scrutiny, transparency, or accountability. Despite the fact that their decisions, particularly when it comes to health care, have repeatedly backfired, creating enormous costs for Albertans – again, Mr. Speaker, these are decisions they rushed through, not through democratic scrutiny; through the back door, through political interference. Nearly \$100 million on useless Turkish Tylenol, \$125 million on their failed attempt to privatize lab services, nearly a billion on contracts in corrupt care: it's endless, and they do everything they can to hide it.

They bend, break, and twist the laws that are governing access to information. A two-year investigation by the Information and Privacy Commissioner found that this government implemented a government-wide system designed to prevent Albertans from being able to get access to public information. Then how do they respond? They changed the laws, Mr. Speaker, to make it even easier for them to deny public information and just kept on trucking.

We have four new inquiries announced just this week into their refusal to release information about surveys they ran as part of their taxpayer-funded travelling circus they called Alberta Next, a matching set to the four times they've invoked the notwithstanding clause this session alone to strip the rights of Albertans. That's the UCP's legacy on democracy.

Their legacy on health care: well, it's just as bad. I mean, there's never been a government who's done as much damage to our health care system as the UCP, and now they want to rush through even more of it. In 2019 they inherited a system that was renowned around the world, one of the top five integrated health care systems in the world. In the words of health reporter Keith Gerein, it had "enjoyed one of its most uninterrupted periods of stability under the NDPs reign" because, in the words of columnist Don Braid, we "calmed down the system, made significant improvements and provided stability for health planners, professionals and workers." Mr. Speaker, the UCP made short work of that with their campaign of corruption, cuts, and chaos. That's the record of this government.

Now, I'll give the former Premier at least some respect. He was open about what he intended to do. He actually campaigned on it. This government did not. What we've seen under this Premier is not reform. It's not an attempt to strengthen the system. We aren't seeing refocusing; we're seeing revenge. This Premier campaigned for the leadership of her party on taking revenge on AHS, on decimating our health care system.

**Mr. Schow:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** A point of order has been called.

## Point of Order Imputing False Motives

**Mr. Schow:** Again, speaking to the intent of the Premier: who campaigned to take revenge on Alberta Health Services. This, again, is a ridiculous assertion that the member knows all too well is completely false. It's a fabrication, and the more the member says it, the louder the member says it, doesn't make it more true. To presuppose or to assert that the Premier is doing something, in particular to take revenge on someone: again, choose our language better, Mr. Speaker. Let's raise the bar. Under 23 (h), (i), and (j) this certainly creates disruption, as you can hear from all members, at least on the government side, who are being sensible about this.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Mr. Speaker, there are abundant transcripts from UCP debates, candidate debates, Premier's statements, all stuff all over social media, in which she said that if she became the leader of the UCP and the Premier of Alberta, she would dismantle AHS because of the steps they took during the COVID-19 pandemic. She was quite explicit. Now, to take actions against someone because of actions you feel that they have taken is the definition of revenge. However, if the Government House Leader feels that that's going to create disorder, to tell the truth, I will apologize and withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker:** You may sit. Thank you.

It's become very evident that there's turmoil within the Assembly, both sides. I appreciate the apology and the withdrawal, but I would appreciate even more if we watch our language carefully going forward. So I will caution, as we go forward, that we choose our words better and that we can move on from this place in a relatively peaceful manner.

The Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

## Debate Continued

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the Premier committed that this is what she was going to do because she disliked what Alberta Health Services had done during the pandemic. That is not a thoughtful plan to create a better health care system. What we do know is that this Premier talked endlessly before she became Premier about wanting to see a massive increase in privatization, privately owned hospitals, people paying to see their family doctor. What we see is that has been what they have done consistently. They have passed legislation to allow for privately owned and operated hospitals, and now they are passing legislation that could lead to Albertans having to pay to see their family doctor.

Mr. Speaker, they did not campaign on this. They are not allowing the debate that Albertans deserve to see, and we will continue to stand against that. We will use the time that we have to do our due diligence as opposition, to stand for the rights of Albertans for their public health care system.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 19 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:08 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

For the motion:

Amery	Jones	Sawyer
Armstrong-Homeniuk	LaGrange	Schow
Boitchenko	Loewen	Schulz
Bouchard	Long	Sigurdson, R.J.
Cyr	Lovely	Singh
de Jonge	Lunty	Stephan
Dreeshen	McDougall	Turton
Dyck	Nally	Wiebe
Ellis	Neudorf	Williams
Fir	Nicolaides	Wilson
Glubish	Nixon	Wright, J.
Horner	Petrovic	Yao
Hunter	Pitt	Yaseen
Johnson	Rowswell	

Against the motion:

Eggen	Irwin	Sigurdson, Lori
Goehring	Kasawski	Sweet
Haji	Renaud	Wright, P.
Ip	Shepherd	

Totals:	For – 41	Against – 11
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[Government Motion 19 carried]

**The Acting Speaker:** The Government House Leader.

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What a week it has been. I would like to thank all members of the Assembly for their participation in debate and question period, but the time has come to adjourn the Assembly. I wish all members safe travels home. The weather outside is rough. Please get home to your families this weekend, enjoy your time, and I'll see everybody back on Monday.

I move to adjourn the Assembly until 1:30 on Monday, December 8.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:13 p.m.]

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

**Activity to Thursday, December 4, 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*)

Royal Assent — (*Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force November 26, 2025; SA 2025, cI-3.8 ]

### **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., adjourned*), 29-35 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

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

Third Reading — 45-46 (*Oct. 27, 2025 eve., adjourned*), 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; SA 2025 cB-0.5 ]

### **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*)

Committee of the Whole — 334-37 (*Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 371-73 (*Nov. 19, 2025 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 c17 ]

### **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*), 289 (*Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned*), 323-34 (*Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 408-13 (*Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 447-55 (*Nov. 24, 2025 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force November 26, 2025, with exceptions; SA 2025 c18 ]

### **Bill 5 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Schow)**

First Reading — 271 (*Nov. 17, 2025 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 322-23 (*Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 407-08 (*Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 589-90 (*Nov. 27, 2025 aft., passed*)

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

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

Second Reading — 252-60 (Nov. 6, 2025 aft., adjourned), 289-98 (Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned), 337-39 (Nov. 18, 2025 aft., adjourned), 341-51 (Nov. 18, 2025 eve., adjourned; amendments introduced), 455-65 (Nov. 24, 2025 eve., adjourned; amendments introduced), 504-14 (Nov. 25, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 681-86 (Dec. 2, 2025 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 713-21 (Dec. 3, 2025 aft., passed)

**Bill 7 — Water Amendment Act, 2025 (Schulz)**

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

Second Reading — 224-35 (Nov. 5, 2025 aft., adjourned), 298-307 (Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned), 351-55 (Nov. 18, 2025 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 480-93 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)

Third Reading — 536-43 (Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned), 661-63 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)

**Bill 8 — Utilities Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Neudorf)**

First Reading — 478 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 663-70 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 737-44 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed with amendments)

Third Reading — 766-71 (Dec. 4, 2025 aft., passed)

**Bill 9 — Protecting Alberta's Children Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Amery)**

First Reading — 319-20 (Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed on division)

Second Reading — 378-91 (Nov. 19, 2025 aft., adjourned), 493-501 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., adjourned), 549-54 (Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned), 676-79 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., adjourned)

**Bill 10 — Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (Nally)**

First Reading — 271 (Nov. 17, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 374-78 (Nov. 19, 2025 aft., adjourned), 514-21 (Nov. 25, 2025 eve., adjourned), 543-49 (Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned), 670-76 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 728-29 (Dec. 3, 2025 aft., adjourned), 744-45 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed)

**Bill 11 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (LaGrange)**

First Reading — 426 (Nov. 24, 2025, passed)

Second Reading — 555-64 (Nov. 26, 2025 eve., adjourned), 590-96 (Nov. 27, 2025 aft., adjourned), 637-46 (Dec. 1, 2025 eve., adjourned)

**Bill 12 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (\$) (Horner)**

First Reading — 478 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 693-98 (Dec. 2, 2025 eve., adjourned), 731-37 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 745-50 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., adjourned)

**Bill 13 — Regulated Professions Neutrality Act (Amery)**

First Reading — 404 (Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 564-73 (Nov. 26, 2025 eve., adjourned), 629-37 (Dec. 1, 2025 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 686-92 (Dec. 2, 2025 eve., adjourned)

**Bill 14 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Amery)**

First Reading — 763 (Dec. 4, 2025 aft., passed)

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

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

Second Reading — 154-65 (Nov. 3, 2025 aft., adjourned), 274-76 (Nov. 17, 2025 aft., defeated on division)

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

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

Second Reading — 276-84 (Nov. 17, 2025 aft., adjourned), 427-31 (Nov. 24, 2025 aft., defeated on division)

**Bill 203 — Energy Storage Planning for Investment Act (Al-Guneid)**

First Reading — 319 *(Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 431-39 *(Nov. 24, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 608-13 *(Dec. 1, 2025 aft., defeated on division)*

**Bill 204 — Public Interest Disclosure (Publicly Funded Health Entity Whistleblower Protection) Act (Sweet)**

First Reading — 534 *(Nov. 26, 2025 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 613-20 *(Dec. 1, 2025 aft., adjourned)*



## Table of Contents

Prayers .....	753
Introduction of Guests .....	753
Members' Statements	
National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women .....	754
School-based Mental Health Supports.....	754
Immigrants to Alberta.....	754
Federal Firearms Policies .....	755
Tim Williams and Neil MacGonigill .....	755
Government Health Policies .....	763
Oral Question Period	
Health Care System Governance .....	755
Justice System Concerns .....	756
Parliamentary Secretaries' Allowances and Expenses.....	756
Chartered Surgical Facility Contracts.....	757
Child Care Affordability.....	758
Complex Classroom Supports .....	758
Pension Fund Investment Management by AIMCo.....	759
Primary Health Care Workforce.....	759
Recovery Community Contracts.....	760
Public Health Care.....	760
Crime Prevention and Law Enforcement.....	761
Energy Development and Environmental Policies .....	761
Continuing Care System.....	762
Diabetes Supports.....	762
Notices of Motions .....	763
Introduction of Bills	
Bill 14   Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 .....	763
Tabling Returns and Reports .....	764
Orders of the Day .....	766
Government Bills and Orders	
Third Reading	
Bill 8    Utilities Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 .....	766
Government Motions	
Time Allocation on Bill 9.....	771
Division .....	772
Time Allocation on Bill 11 .....	772
Division .....	774

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