



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, December 9, 2025

Day 23

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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Boitchenko, Hon. Andrew, ECA, Drayton Valley-Devon (UC)
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Bouchard, Eric, Calgary-Lougheed (UC)
Brar, Gurinder, Calgary-North East (NDP)
Brar, Gurtej Singh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
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Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC),
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Party standings:

United Conservative: 47

New Democrat: 38

Alberta Party: 1

Independent: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: 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 prejudice, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Okay. I think we have a couple of school groups today, starting with the hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you 50 students from Muriel Martin school, and they are in the gallery. I ask them all to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly. Go Dinos.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Ms Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise and, to you and through you, introduce some grade 6 students from St. Bonaventure school. They are here with their teacher, Jenna Anderson. They're here for the week taking part in the School at the Legislature program. They now know not only what it means to be an active member of democracy but also what my two favourite bands are. If they could stand and receive the recognition of this Assembly, please.

The Speaker: The Associate Minister of Multiculturalism.

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I am pleased to introduce Mr. Arif Pervez, a respected community volunteer who has served Calgary through countless hours of community service. He's also a dedicated oil and gas engineer. He is joined today by his wife, Farhana, and their daughter Huba, who is also a lawyer. May I ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Member Irwin: I'm so proud to introduce the incredible Bernadette Iahtail, originally from the Attawapiskat First Nation. She's a mother, grandmother, residential school survivor, and an outstanding community leader who has dedicated her life to advocacy, including the last 20 years with the Creating Hope Society of Alberta, and she has just retired: so well earned. Bernadette is joined by family and former colleagues. Please all rise and accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Erick Estrada, the executive director, and Daniela Valencia, the operations co-ordinator, with the Alberta Avenue Business Association, one of the three business improvement areas

in Alberta. We got to talk about the 200 businesses they have – they're looking to grow that – and a little bit about snow removal. Please give them a big round of warm applause.

Member Boparai: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my good friend Jagjit Singh Sran Jagga Rauke from Calgary, a professional truck driver for the last 25 years and community sevdar, accompanied by his son Eshaan Singh Sran. I ask that they rise to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Edmonton-South.

Member Hoyle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you two heroic teachers from St. Thomas Aquinas, Ainsley Dillon and Eric Motut, whose quick thinking and immediate jump to action was able to save the life of one of their students in October. It is thanks to them that there wasn't an unimaginable tragedy that day, and I want to thank them for their compassion and dedication to taking care of our students. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Are there other introductions? Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Ms Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like, to you and through you, to introduce a constituent of mine, Austin Atkins, who has been here with us the last couple of days to observe democracy in action and to learn a little bit about politics. Austin, if you could stand and receive the warm welcome of this House.

Members' Statements

Daycare Investigation Process

Mr. Schmidt: A four-year-old girl in the care of Willowbrae Academy Mill Creek disclosed sexual abuse by a daycare worker in mid-June of this year. The Department of Education and Childcare launched an investigation which took nearly two months to conclude. Only after that the operator informed parents that a, quote, critical incident had occurred and provided no further information. Parents only learned the details at their own town hall that they were forced to organize in early September. Then in late September they were informed that the daycare worker charged with the crime had fled the country.

Parents should have been informed immediately and clearly so they could determine whether their own children had also been victimized and take steps to protect them. That did not happen, and it did not happen because this government's legislation does not require proper notification to parents in cases like this.

When I first raised this issue, I asked the minister to meet with the affected parents. He refused. When I raised it again, I asked the minister to change the legislation to ensure that children are protected from future sexual abuse in daycare settings. Rather than committing to do the right thing, the minister claimed he was offended by the question. Yesterday the Government House Leader announced that the government will refuse to answer further questions unless I apologize.

This issue is not about me, and it's not about the minister's hurt feelings. It is about protecting children in daycare. This government needs to stop playing the victim when it's criticized and do what is right: change the legislation so that parents receive timely and clear notice when allegations of sexual assault happen in their children's daycares.

UCP and NDP Government Records

Mrs. Sawyer:

'Twas was the session before Christmas, and everywhere around
 There's hope on the horizon for costs coming down.
 But we remember a time, with a shudder and a frown,
 When the NDP had been running our economy into the ground.
 They taxed and they spent with no fiscal care
 And plunged affordability into despair.
 One of their worst little mischiefs, the one that still stings,
 Was the hasty coal phase-out and the chaos it brings.
 They threw out dispatchable power and changed all the rules,
 Which meant higher prices for power and fuels.
 They brought in their carbon tax, a tax on the lot,
 That applied to every single thing that citizens bought.
 Albertans' bills soared so high, like reindeer in flight,
 And affordability vanished right out of sight.
 They filled all the stockings with debt and delay
 With no plan for jobs, just more to pay.
 Then the UCP came, knowing what must be done
 To restore affordability, and guess what? We won.
 We brought back common sense with leadership that stands
 To keep more money in Albertans' hands.
 We moved on utilities and acted with will,
 Bringing 32 per cent off your electricity bill.
 We've lowered costs and brought in a tax cut.
 That terrible carbon tax we decisively shut.
 We pushed back on Ottawa with gusto and glee
 So Alberta's advantage could be set free.
 The threats to our powers, so costly and clear:
 The MOU we signed halts them, banishing all fear.
 We cut red tape quickly to clear out the stack
 And get houses built faster and bring decent prices back.
 Our economy is growing, the jobs are quite new,
 And we're working for Albertans in all that we do.
 So Merry Christmas to all, and the promise we make
 Is affordability to all for all Alberta's sake.

Official Opposition Sessional Retrospective

Member Ellingson: As we head into the Christmas and winter break, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on this fall sitting, to reflect on democracy. Democracy is, as I'm sure we all know, from the Greek words "demos," meaning people, and "kratos," meaning power. Together, democracy is the power of the people. The UCP must be confused, as their interpretation is clearly power to the government, not the people but themselves.

1:40

They had made this abundantly clear over the course of the last two years but particularly this fall. We started out the fall sitting with Bill 2 whereby the UCP invoked the notwithstanding clause to send the teachers back to work and take away their Charter rights and ability to challenge that decision. When the notwithstanding clause hasn't been used in decades, it took only days for the UCP to use it again, shielding antitrans legislation from legal action. When they did so, they stated that their word in this House will be the final word, not the word of the people but their word.

They have brought forward legislation to control the actions of professional regulatory bodies, stripping those regulatory bodies from censuring members for making statements that undermine the trust of their profession.

Most dangerously, the UCP brought forward legislation undermining the Law Society of Alberta, the Law Foundation of Alberta, and the very judiciary itself. The judiciary, which stands as a critical pillar in our democracy to hold the government to the rule of law: this government just took that away with Bill 14.

As we head into the Christmas break, I hope the UCP reflect on the meaning of democracy and are ready to defend themselves with their constituents when they're asked to uphold democracy, not tear it down.

Physician Compensation Model

Mr. Lundy: Mr. Speaker, lately the NDP have been putting on quite the performance in this Chamber regarding Bill 11 and our government's plan to increase the number of surgeries in Alberta. Let me save everyone some time and summarize their dramatics: just say American-style health care a bunch of times. After all, according to the NDP America sucks, socialism rules, Mamdani for President, VP AOC, viva la revolution. Never mind that several European countries have also pursued a hybrid delivery model, but the NDP haven't found a way to weaponize that.

Oh, I almost forgot. America hating isn't the only tool in their tool box. They're also good at rhyming. Corrupt care, Turkish Tylenol, motel medicine: Mr. Speaker, do their writers get paid per alliteration? Do any of the members opposite have something to say that can't be entered into a grade 2 poetry contest? Likely not.

Let's check in with someone who did have something meaningful to say on this issue. Retired gastroenterologist Jon Meddings, the former dean of the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine, said that he's not opposed to the idea of a private-pay option in Alberta. "It's an interesting experiment to try."

Now, who exactly is Jon Meddings, you might be thinking? Ironically, Dr. Meddings served as the chair of the health policy advisory group for the Member for Edmonton-Glenora's failed NDP leadership campaign. Holy health care hypocrisy, mangled medical malarkey, NDP nonsense. Can you believe it, Mr. Speaker? The NDP's most voracious health critic's own trusted adviser thinks our idea has merit. The NDP better crank up a few more anti-Americanisms to cover up this hilarious turn of events, or maybe the Member for Edmonton-Glenora can try and work this absurdity into her stand-up comedy routine. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. We need to hear from the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Government Priorities

Mr. Gurtej Brar: Welcome to the UCP's Alberta, Mr. Speaker. Wait times are getting longer in hospital; groceries skyrocketing; electricity bills the highest in Canada; rent, insurance premiums, and tuition costs through the roof; families struggling; food banks overflowing; minimum wage the lowest in the country; federal disability aid clawed back; lowest per-student funding in the entire country. Public safety: what is that? Freedom of speech: only if the UCP approves. But that's not all of it. There is more: over 1 million deferred housing repairs, with mouldy housing for those who need them most.

While Albertans search for relief, the UCP waste their Legislature's precious time. Instead of fixing health care, the UCP is privatizing it. That's not governing; that's cowardice.

We, the Alberta New Democrats, stand for Albertans. We introduced bills and motions to hike the minimum wage, cap insurance hikes, and protect paycheques. The UCP voted them all

down, every single UCP MLA. Why? The UCP's priority is not helping Albertans; it is grabbing power.

Kids deserve safe schools in their neighbourhoods. Patients deserve the care they need whenever they need it, wherever they need it, publicly funded, publicly delivered. Our seniors deserve a retirement with dignity. All Albertans deserve better, and under the New Democratic government better will be made possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Private Operation of Continuing Care Facilities

Ms Sigurdson: Alberta's continuing care system is increasingly being operated by private, for-profit owners. This is known as financialization, where public services are increasingly treated like a commodity to be bought and sold versus a service of necessity. In short, it's an extreme focus on extracting profits.

Sadly, continuing care facilities are seen as real estate investments rather than caring homes that provide vital support to vulnerable seniors. These for-profit operators prioritize investor profits above high levels of resident care. The easiest way to increase profits in continuing care is to reduce staffing hours and labour costs or cut spending on essential health care supplies. What does this mean? Vulnerable seniors are being shortchanged. They are not receiving the care they need in private, for-profit facilities, and staff are being exploited. When there are lower staffing levels, the care of residents plummets. These operators often hire staff on a part-time basis so they can avoid paying staff any benefits, which also increases instability in the workforce.

In contrast, nonprofit operators have a mission to serve their residents. When profit motives are removed, they aren't incentivized to reduce staff or cut costs. Their sole focus is to support residents, and they do this by supporting their staff with full-time positions, paying decent wages, good benefits, and manageable workloads. Many academic reports have found that nonprofit continuing care providers result in better outcomes for residents compared with for-profit operators. Alberta's Auditor General also noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic they also fared better at limiting the spread of the disease than for-profit facilities were able to manage.

Alberta seniors deserve to be well cared for in the continuing care system. It's time for the UCP to properly fund nonprofits.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Member Arcand-Paul: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite copies of 13 e-mails from my constituents that are against the invocation of the notwithstanding clause into Bill 9 by this UCP government.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you. I rise to table a letter from independently practising psychologists, social workers, and counsellors expressing their profound concerns with Bill 9. It's not too late to kill this bill.

Mrs. Petrovic: Mr. Speaker, I rise with the five requisite copies of the Leap Manifesto, who the Alberta NDP are signatory, which is calling to keep our oil in the ground and a lot of other left-wing radical ideas.

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

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five copies of a white paper on the proposed Alberta disability assistance program by VanderLeek Law.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table five copies of an e-mail from a constituent who is concerned about the UCP's auto insurance plan.

The Speaker: Calgary-Foothills.

Member Ellingson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present the requisite copies of just a few of the many letters from constituents sent to the Premier, asking the UCP to withdraw Bill 9.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite copies of a letter that I quoted yesterday in my debate regarding Bill 9, the antitrans bill.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The member with the first question is the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Bills 9 and 14

Mr. Nenshi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has increasingly been lashing out against Albertans who think differently from them. Now they claim that the government needs to step in and make decisions for Albertans because they don't trust Albertans to make their own. Two members opposite have now said that they used the notwithstanding clause on the antitrans legislation because there are too many, quote, bad parents, unquote, out there. What does that even mean? So let's give the Premier a chance to clarify. Can she tell us who she considers to be a bad parent who shouldn't have choices over their own children?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think our policy is very clear that we want children to be able to make their own choices as adults on adult decisions. We know that the pathway for children to be medicalized early does not stand up to scrutiny. It has not been tested, and we're not going to do medical experiments on children. We believe that children need to get of an age where they can understand if they're going to make decisions that affect their ability to have children of their own one day. They need to be making those decisions as a mature minor, which is why we have put policy in place that will allow for that to happen at age 16 and older.

Mr. Nenshi: I'm happy to hear that the Premier is now admitting that this legislation takes away rights from parents and from medical providers because of the Premier's misreading of medical research, but the ease with which this government blames regular Albertans is astounding. Yesterday the Premier told us that we should all have the right to offend other people, yet this extraordinarily thin-skinned government will not book any criticism. This government often talks about the right and wrong kind of immigrants. Sometimes I wonder who they think are the right and wrong kind of Albertans. Can the Premier tell us why she is stripping away the rights of anyone who dares criticize her government?

Ms Smith: Well, it's not occurring, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I think if the member is referring to the changes that we're making to the Citizen Initiative Act, it's because we actually have a Chief Electoral Officer that is taking away the rights of Albertans. We have a judge that is taking away the rights of Albertans. We have drafted that legislation to be permissive. We believe that individuals like Corb Lund, like Thomas Lukaszuk, like others who are putting forward initiatives, should have the opportunity to convince their peers that it should go forward to a referendum, and we're going to allow that to happen.

Mr. Nenshi: We'll come back to the Premier's demonization now of civil servants, but this morning I heard a very interesting statement, quote: freedoms don't usually disappear with a big, dramatic moment; they fade away one clause or one amendment at a time. End quote. I agree with that because this is what this government has been doing from the moment they took power. But given the person who said that was the Premier's deputy chief of staff, will she now sanction her deputy chief of staff the way she sanctions other Albertans who disagree with her?

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 1:52.
The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, the professor is speaking in riddles. I'm not even sure what exactly he's referring to today, but maybe he's talking about that because he doesn't want to talk about the historic MOU that we signed with the federal government, that commits to building a new bitumen pipeline to the northwest B.C. coast. We'll be supporting the Pathways project to have the biggest carbon capture, utilization, and storage project in the world. We'll be seeing new investment across the board when it comes to emissions reduction technologies as well as new pipelines, and we encourage the members opposite to vote in favour of that motion when it comes forward.

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

Mr. Nenshi: It is fun and somewhat predictable what the Premier does when she doesn't have an answer to a question, but I suppose the deputy chief of staff is getting a call real quick.

Hospital Emergency Services

Mr. Nenshi: Now, with the Christmas season upon us, in addition to all the busy planning and excitement Albertans are getting nervous. Christmas is one of the busiest times in our province for emergency rooms, and ER closures and wait times have only gotten worse since this government has been in power. It's now common in many communities in Alberta to drive past a closed ER on the holidays. What is the government's plan to improve emergency room access, and why haven't we seen any results?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services in September was finally given the authority to start looking at alternate level of care patients, and I can tell you that we've made extraordinary progress. We now have less than 1,000 alternate level of care patients in our major hospitals in the regions. We also are on the cusp of a respiratory virus season. Influenza is very bad this year, so we have additional surge beds that have now been made permanent, and we're going to make sure that with the building of new acute-care towers and the 50,000 new surgeries, we start clearing backlogs and getting people treatment.

Mr. Nenshi: Six years in power and the minister started working on that last month. Six years in power: not a single critical care centre built, messes in Airdrie where they tried to build one, ER times getting longer and longer and longer, yet this government in health care is focused on a couple of dozen trans kids instead of fixing health care in 90 days. I suppose that's 90 days of 24 hours each starting whenever the Premier wants. We need people to work in emergency rooms. What is the province's plan to train and recruit ER doctors and nurses?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like the member opposite agrees with us that AHS mismanaged health care for over a decade, which is why we had to take four different organizations so that they could focus on each of the areas of critical care. I can tell you that it's working. Not only have we removed ALCs from our acute-care beds but we've also seen an increase in the number of doctors. We've seen an increase in the number of nurse practitioners. We have 700 new in-patient beds being built in Misericordia and Grey Nuns, a new Stollery hospital, a new Red Deer hospital. We have acute-care clinics that are also going to be built, urgent care centres. None of this would have happened without these changes.

The Speaker: When I stand, you've got to stop talking.

Mr. Nenshi: Glib promises, no funding, blaming other people: it's so predictable. It would almost be funny if it wasn't so predictable. But let me be clear. It's not working. Dr. Paul Parks said just this week that the Royal Alex emergency room filled up with more than 100 sick patients needing emergency care. People were spilling out into the hallways and the ambulance bays. There was no room, and as Parks says, "Safe and timely care just isn't possible with overcrowding like that." Does the Premier give this as an example of what is working? Does she think it's working? Who is she holding to account for this?

The Speaker: The two people best able to stop talking when the clock hits zero both need to remember that.

Ms Smith: Well, I'm going to be holding my Assisted Living and Social Services minister accountable, Mr. Speaker. Six hours after that was reported, they were down to 20 because the minister has put in a new program where we have 80 medical homeless beds that are at Hope Mission to make sure we have convalescence. We have our navigation centre, which has served more than 9,000 people. We have the ability to transport those from the hospital to be able to get them to the navigation centre to receive the care they need. We shut down the safe consumption site that they put in the middle of the hospital so that we don't end up having overcrowding in our emergency rooms. It absolutely is working.

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

Mr. Nenshi: There is not one Albertan who has had to go to an emergency room in the last six years who would agree with the Premier's statement that this is working.

Bills 2 and 14

Mr. Nenshi: Albertans should be able to trust their politicians and what they say. It should be policy that Albertans can trust what ministers are saying on this government's behalf. For example, the minister of education and the Minister of Infrastructure have now

clearly said that the government never planned on making a deal with teachers; always intended to use the notwithstanding clause so they wouldn't have to pay the teachers more. Since the ministers have now confirmed it, can the Premier finally confirm that she engineered the teachers' strike?

Ms Smith: That's not the case, Mr. Speaker. In fact, it was the head of the Alberta Teachers' Association who, all the way in May, was preparing the teachers for strike. We stayed at the table again and again and again. We came to a negotiated settlement again and again. It was the teachers' leadership who at the very last minute put another \$2 billion worth of ask on the table. We were further apart than we had ever been in negotiations. We knew we needed to get teachers back to work because they didn't bother to put money aside to pay them for strike pay. We knew we had to get students back to work so that they would not lose any of their education. And that's what we did.

Mr. Nenshi: Yet again this Premier refuses to take responsibility for anything and blames others. Now she's disavowing what her own ministers said. Can we trust ministers or not? These ministers further mirrored the Premier's language and suggested that anyone who's unelected cannot make any decisions. We just heard it again from the Premier regarding the Chief Electoral Officer. Yesterday the Premier gave us a very novel view of the separation of powers, which is that there is no separation of powers, that the Premier, not the people, she and herself is the supreme decision-maker. Does this government now believe that no one else has any role?

2:00

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'll help the professor go back to poli-sci 101 and learning about parliamentary supremacy. We have the ability to change the law, introduce new law, revise the law at any time. In fact, it was highly extraordinary for a judge to criticize legislation that was before the Legislature. That doesn't normally happen. In fact, what we know is that there are areas of provincial jurisdiction, there are policies where from time to time an unelected judge will make a decision to create new law, create new rights, and that's when the notwithstanding clause can be used. We'll continue to look at it.

Mr. Nenshi: She's right that it doesn't normally happen because even under the UCP's curriculum most people in social 10 learn about the separation of powers, and this government violates it every single day.

The ministers have not been the only ones speaking off script. The Minister of Affordability and Utilities had been telling his constituents that the government was going to recall that recall legislation, and they didn't. Now news breaks that the recall petition against this minister may well be an astroturf operation by UCP supporters to protect him. Does the Premier think this is a problem with her bad legislation?

The Speaker: Even though there is a tenuous connection between the last question and the previous two, the Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite and their pals in the union leadership and their pals in Public Interest Alberta have indeed made a mockery of our legislation. They are engaging in an abuse of process . . .

Mr. Nenshi: The legislation made a mockery of itself. [interjection]

Ms Smith: . . . and it's part of the reason why we are monitoring it to see whether there needs to be any changes. We took the same legislation . . .

Mr. Shepherd: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Ms Smith: . . . that they've had in British Columbia for the past 30 years. They've had 30 recall petitions; it's been used appropriately. It's very clear that they are weaponizing this because they disagree with the policies of government. You fight those things out in an election, Mr. Speaker, and I'm looking forward to doing that in the next election. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

A point of order was noted at 2:01 p.m.

AHS Severance Payments

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Chamber sat empty on a Monday afternoon during session, abruptly shut down by the government, too terrified to answer some simple written questions. Today I'd like to ask the question that the government ran from yesterday. What is the total amount paid in severance by Alberta Health Services from October 2022 to October 2025, including severance to executives, managers, and employees across all departments and any subsidiaries or entities for which AHS was responsible for administering or funding those severance payments?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. minister of hospitals.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's government and AHS are fully committed to a transparent and accountable health system, and we're fully compliant with the Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act. As the members opposite are likely aware, the legislation forces AHS to publicly disclose the compensation of any employee earning above the annual threshold of \$159,000. It's publicly published every June 30. This includes total compensation, salary, benefits, allowances, and severance. We can't disclose under law anybody earning less than that, but the severance is there every June 30. Maybe read.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a simple question, and as the minister just explained, a lot of this information will eventually become public, so why would the government not talk to us now about the cumulative total of severance costs? Simply because it's a lot of money that they have paid out. After they fired Athana Mentzelopoulos, it's apparent they've chased many others out the door, using more tax dollars to silence those who knew anything about corrupt care and its initial misuse of tax dollars. Wasted money to cover up wasted money. How much severance has AHS paid out because of this government?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I outlined . . . [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Start over, Minister.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I shared last time, which is clearly upsetting, this information is publicly shared every June 30, and we have an open and transparent process that we follow

every year, including when the members opposite were in government. I'm curious as to why they're not aware of that process. In terms of tax dollars I would encourage the members opposite to think about the 2015-2019 period, where through their actions, through their policies, tens of billions of dollars of investment left Alberta. We had record unemployment, record business closures, and obviously our ability to generate taxes was diminished. Members opposite should think about that before commenting on taxes.

Ms Gray: Countless millions of dollars wasted on a health care reorganization where health outcomes are plummeting, people are dying looking for health care from this government, yet an option to talk about policy is being denied by this government. The list of organizations with new CEOs keeps growing. AHS has been in chaos, a continually rotating cast of leadership, all hand-picked by the Premier. Never a steady moment in Alberta's vitally important health care system, job number one. Why is the government so afraid of accountability?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to again share that we are making significant investments in our hospital system in Alberta. This includes the recently announced stand-alone Stollery hospital. It includes the massive Red Deer regional health expansion. It includes three hospital bed towers – two in Edmonton, one in the Calgary – and eight urgent care centres in communities all across Alberta. And we're not done there. We're also putting funds in to do 50,000 more surgeries to reduce those surgical backlogs for Albertans. We're committed to a world-class public health care system. We're going to continue to build it.

The Speaker: We are at the point now where there is no preamble on supplementaries.

Eastern Slopes Protection and Coal Development Policies

Ms Al-Guneid: When it comes to coal mining, people do not want to see mountaintop removal, people do not want to see strip mining; they're concerned that when you do that, it exposes the rock face when it rains and selenium gets into the water system, so we put the policy into place that you can't do these things: this was the Premier back in May, which sounded nice, but now an Australian billionaire is pushing an open-pit mine in the eastern slopes. Why is the UCP protecting coal companies instead of the Rocky Mountains?

Mr. Jean: I appreciate the member's question because I think that many Albertans understood, after the NDP made a mess of the coal issue here in Alberta and such a big mess in B.C. next door, that maybe – just maybe – somebody could get it right. Mr. Speaker, we are getting it right. We've heard clearly that Albertans want their waterways protected, they want the air protected, they want to make sure that flora and fauna and animals and humans are protected. That's what we're going to do every single step of the way. As we do that, it's true that we are modernizing some of the laws.

Mr. Nenshi: Protect the Australian billionaires.

The Speaker: Opposition leader, you had several chances. Carry on, Minister.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, it is true that the NDP screwed up this file. We're not going to let that happen. We're going to protect Albertans and do the right thing.

Ms Al-Guneid: Given that Grassy coal mine was rejected by the federal and provincial regulators because it offers peanuts in government revenue and a mountain of environmental damage for Albertans to clean up, given that businesses innovate with technology, allowing steel to be made without coal, and coal royalties are among the lowest in Alberta, given that the UCP is so desperate to bulldoze ahead with a mine that Albertans don't want, regulators reject, and the market doesn't even need, Albertans are asking: are there government kickbacks? Who is this project serving? It isn't the people of Alberta.

Mr. Jean: Given that the NDP screwed up this file so badly, Mr. Speaker, I understand the member's doubt, but we're going to do it right. We're finalizing new regulations to protect everything that Albertans have clearly indicated need protection. Seventy-two per cent of Albertans and more across Canada are seeing how important coal is, especially metallurgical coal. Europe has identified it as a critical mineral. So has the United States. The world sees how important this product is, and we're going to make sure the product is done properly, protecting Albertans' interests and keeping the economy going.

Ms Al-Guneid: Given that Corb Lund filed a citizen initiative to stop coal mining on the eastern slopes, given that Bill 14 is a bill that just happens to conveniently change the rules after the fact to wipe out this citizen initiative, given that Albertans are asking, "Why is the UCP constantly moving the goalposts? Why is there so much backroom scheming, rule changing, and power grabbing?" and with this track record, why should Albertans trust the Justice minister to fairly approve Corb's citizen initiative? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, it's like the NDP. They would rather buy coal from China and burn it in the factories across the world and pollute the world than save the planet with great Alberta technology and great Alberta coal and at the same time employing tens of thousands of Albertans, making sure the environment is protected, exporting this technology and all the great things we do in Alberta to the rest of the world. This is important, and we are doing it right.

The Speaker: The next set of questions belongs to the hon. Member for Airdrie-East.

2:10 Affordability Measures

Ms Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2019 the Alberta NDP became the first government in history to fail to secure a second term, thank God. Albertans soundly rejected the NDP for putting a tax on everything with their disastrous carbon tax and tax policies that drove up fuel, food, and energy costs, not to mention jacking up taxes and fees 97 times. Will the Minister of Affordability and Utilities assure all Albertans that we won't repeat the NDP's mistakes and focus instead on making life more affordable?

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

Mr. Neudorff: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to that member. Unlike the members opposite, we believe in keeping more money in the pockets of Albertans and their families. That's why we fought so hard and won against the failed NDP carbon tax and the Liberal clean electricity regulations. It's also why we've

delivered on our promise to cut taxes for Albertans, saving individual Albertans up to \$750 every year from now on as long as it's in place. We will not be taking any lessons from the NDP and their failed attempts at affordability.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the one-term wonder NDP rammed through their reckless coal phase-out, creating volatility and driving up electricity costs and transmission fees for all Albertans and further given that their renewable energy program is costing Albertans \$82 million per year this year alone, to the minister: what is our government doing to erase the costly legacy of the NDP and address electricity affordability for Albertans?

Ms Sweet: Six years later.

The Speaker: I didn't see your name on there, Edmonton-Manning, but I'm sure it's an honest mistake.

Go ahead, hon. minister.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member. On top of that \$82 million, the NDP also put Albertans on the hook for a further \$2 billion for their coal phase-out. Conversely, our government has brought down local access fees by 35 per cent, saving Calgarians more than \$27 million this year alone. We've also brought down the default rate by 63 per cent, and both variable and fixed rates have come down by 32 per cent. We're doing the work that they failed to do. We're addressing distribution, transmission, regulations, and fees, serving Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the NDP's failed record of housing saw the wait-list for affordable housing increase by 75 per cent during their very short-lived government and further given that it's now evident that the NDP struggled to grasp the basic economic concept of supply and demand, to the Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services: what is our government doing to keep housing affordable for Albertans?

The Speaker: Even though the third question was only tenuously connected to the other two, hon. minister, if you want to give an answer.

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's about affordability. That's how it's tied. What the hon. member is asking about is what we're doing to be able to maintain affordability inside this province, unlike the NDP, who built net no new homes the entire time that they were in power. This province, responsible for 12 per cent of the population, is building 25 per cent of the homes in Canada. We're the only jurisdiction where rent is going down, and why is that? Because we removed red tape. We rejected the NDP's rent control plan and we've moved forward, having the most success in Canada. We're going to continue to do that. We see what the NDP say to do; we do the opposite. We succeed every time. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Cultural Competency Training for Professionals

Member Arcand-Paul: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier called training for lawyers about Indigenous peoples "woke training." Might I remind the UCP that this training was a result of call to action 27 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In Bill 13 and Bill 14 the UCP is removing cultural competency training for

lawyers while also relying on referendums that will violate treaty. To the Minister of Justice: what part of the path training is woke? And pinpoint exactly: is it treaty rights, the horrors of residential schools, or Indigenous people simply existing?

The Speaker: The hon. Justice minister.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What a ridiculous notion. Our government remains firmly committed to working alongside Indigenous people all across Alberta in support of advancing reconciliation all across this province. We've made significant progress on 24 of the 29 truth and reconciliation calls to action relating to this particular province. Bill 13 simply restricts mandatory training for regulators to competence and ethics. That's what our professionals need. That's what they're asking for.

Member Arcand-Paul: Given that competence for professionals will deal with the Indigenous people who are overwhelmingly represented in carceral systems like child welfare and prisons, representing 75 per cent and 55 per cent respectively, and further given that the Premier refers to cultural competency training as "right-think" instead of its extreme opposite, wrong-think, to the Minister of Justice: what kind of wrong-think does this government want to uphold? Is it anti-Indigenous bias or racism, homophobia, xenophobia, ableism, or all of the above?

Mr. Amery: Well, again, Mr. Speaker. The NDP needs to . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Start again, Minister.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Look, the NDP need to stop looking for ways to divide Albertans. Bill 13 does none of what the hon. member is alleging. It restores fairness, it restores neutrality, and it forces regulators to focus on what they should be focusing on: professional competence and ethics. Nobody in this province should be policing the thoughts of our professionals, and nobody in this province should lose their licence or their livelihood because of a personal opinion that they express online. Bill 13 is not going to allow that to happen. [interjections]

The Speaker: Members, especially those that know better.

The Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Member Arcand-Paul: Given that the UCP is dividing Albertans and the minister is shielding himself and his predecessors from any scrutiny by the Law Society under Bill 14 and given that our oath to this profession is that we must "not pervert the law to favour or prejudice anyone" and conduct ourselves "truly and with integrity" and given that lawyers in this big House are held to a higher standard, since the minister himself used to practise Indigenous law, is the UCP government happy now standing behind the death of reconciliation in Alberta?

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order was noted at 2:17.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, what a shameful position to take by NDP members. This government stands proudly beside our Indigenous communities. We support them. We're working with them very closely on a number of different issues. Albertans in general, Albertans as a whole, in fact, value the right to free speech and expression. The whole concept of

Bill 13 is neutrality, and that's exactly what I think the hon. member was mentioning in his question. It's about allowing regulated professionals in Alberta to speak freely, to express themselves, to be able to do their work without fear of consequence. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The next set of questions goes to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Government Policies and Cost of Living

Member Irwin: Canada's Food Price Report is warning Albertans to brace for huge increases of over a thousand dollars to their grocery budgets in 2026. Happy New Year from the UCP, Alberta. The fact is that people are already struggling, and this government is actively making it worse. Not only does this UCP government refuse to give minimum wage workers a raise; they also refuse to even name what's causing grocery prices to rise, like shrinkflation, climate change, or ballooning corporate profits. Albertans are already on the brink when it comes to making ends meet. How much more does this government think that they can take?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, a typical question from the NDP. They don't want to talk about the great news of the day, which is the job numbers here in this province. You saw the biggest increases on job numbers in the country here in Alberta. We're responsible for those job numbers. You know what the NDP did when they were in charge? They told everybody to move to B.C. and get a job. Again, we're not going to be lectured by those members when this side of the House continues to lead over unprecedented success. We listen to what the NDP say, we do the opposite, and Alberta succeeds each and every time. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Only the hon. member we should hear.

2:20

Member Irwin: Given that grocery costs aren't the only thing hurting Albertans, with so many folks facing sky-high utility prices, and given that this UCP government has singlehandedly driven out booming wind, solar, and renewable industries that could have helped lower costs for families and given that you'd have to be a UCP best buddy or a billionaire to not actually notice how expensive things have become under this UCP government, when will the UCP stop punishing working people with sky-high power prices and out of control grocery bills?

The Speaker: Only the Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Where were the NDP when we stood up to Ottawa and all their policies that drove up food prices in the first place? What about the methane tax, the fed fuel tax, the fertilizer tax, the carbon tax? Oh, yeah; the NDP were the godfathers of the carbon tax in Canada, and they drove up food prices in the first place. All we've been doing for six years is undoing all the messes they left behind. That's why electricity prices are coming down. That's why prices for food are coming down. That's why we're serving Albertans, and that's why we're bringing ... [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Gosh, we're in the same room, and I can't hear the minister.

Finish your answer.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Everything the NDP does: we do the opposite, and that's why we win every single time. [interjections]

The Speaker: One more time, Minister. Let's hear the end.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, everything the NDP does: we do the opposite, and that's why we succeed for Albertans. [interjections]

The Speaker: You know, it works better if only the person recognized we hear from. Let's try that.

Member Irwin: Given that parents are also paying so much more for child care since this government eliminated the low-income subsidy and given that I'm hearing from so many of my constituents hit hard by this UCP cut, with child care costs increasing some \$227, and that's just for one kid, and given that these changes leave many parents facing impossible choices between paying for food and other essentials – groceries, utilities, child care – when will this government start tackling the affordability crisis rather than making it worse?

The Speaker: I didn't have any trouble hearing the question, and hopefully we'll hear the answer from the Minister of Education.

Mr. Nicolaidis: Mr. Speaker, ensuring affordable child care for all Albertans is a priority of this government. We're working within the context of the agreement with the federal government to work towards a \$10-a-day daycare. We do have some concerns, as I know other provinces do, about the sustainability ... [interjections]

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

Mr. Nicolaidis: ... of working towards a \$10-a-day daycare model, but we are continuing conversations with them, and in fact I will be making an announcement very shortly with respect to child care operations in Alberta.

The Speaker: A point of order was noted at 2:22 p.m.

Now we should only hear from the Member for Airdrie-Cochrane.

Bill 14

Mr. Guthrie: Mr. Speaker, Bill 14, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, strips away the word "conservative" from future political parties. Let's be clear. That is the UCP changing election law to block political competition while an application sits before Elections Alberta and while UCP lawyers sue their opponents, strike injunctions, and delay the courts just to get their legislation through on time. That is not democratic or conservative; that is legislating away political competition. To the Premier: you scared? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can assure everybody in this Assembly that the Premier is not scared of that member whatsoever. The bottom line is that we believe that election ballots and party choices must be clear, and our changes are going to create transparency and limit the ability for groups like the longest ballot protest to take over our elections, to create disruption, and to create serious problems for the electoral process. This is simply a housekeeping methodology, and we're going to ...

The Speaker: Member, asking how someone feels isn't really about government policy, but I know you can do better.

Mr. Guthrie: Okay. Mr. Speaker, let's talk about why this is happening. Given public polling already shows the UCP collapsing, with a renewed PC party running neck and neck with the NDs and the UCP relegated to third place, and given we all know the Premier's office lives on polling – they know the numbers; they know the trends – and given election rules are being rewritten, names are being banned, and the UCP is closing up shop on Mondays, to the Premier: you kind of sound scared.

The Speaker: That wasn't about policy at all, and if you want to finish your third question, we'll hear some evidence at that point, something about government policy.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that the Premier is never scared. On this side of the House I have no idea why the member even continues to try to go on this line of questioning because, frankly, one, it's not about government policy, and two, what he doesn't want to talk about is some of the great news that this government has seen in the past several months, particularly about job creation. Last month Alberta created more than 50 per cent of the jobs across the entire country. That's a huge win for the government of Alberta. It's a huge win for the people of Alberta, and I wish the member opposite, whatever party he's in, would get onboard.

The Speaker: Please don't make me shorten your question. Policy.

Mr. Guthrie: Mr. Speaker, given the Wildrose are stacking up infractions with the use of the notwithstanding clause before the courts have even ruled – they remove Albertans' rights to claim losses, they sue political opponents, they give immunity to themselves, they interfere with Elections Alberta, and now they move from banning books to banning words – and given this isn't competence or leadership; it's a government building a wall and given this isn't about fear of losing power; it's a fear of being found out, to the Premier: oh, yeah; you're scared. Call the election. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. That's three in a row: no government policy asked about. I'll be less patient in the future, hon. member. Hon. member, I will be less patient in the future.

If the Government House Leader wants to answer, he can.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm happy to rise in this Chamber and reassure all members in Alberta and the Chamber that the Premier is not scared of the Member for Airdrie-Cochrane and whatever party that he's part of.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do find it interesting that the member addressed banning books in schools because there was explicit content of a profane sexual nature illustrated and being exposed to kids, and I'm wondering: why does the member support that kind of content in schools? Does the member actually think that children in elementary should be exposed to graphic sexual images? I'd love an answer from that member.

Mr. Sinclair: Mr. Speaker, in this week's episode of Rules for Thee, Not for Me, the Premier told the media: I challenge you to show me any jurisdiction that has two conservative parties on the ballot. Challenge accepted, I suppose. Given in 2019 the Freedom Conservative Party was on the ballot right here in Alberta alongside the United Conservative Party and Albertans were not confused and given there was no legal crisis and we certainly didn't see conservatives suing conservatives, to the Premier: how can your government pretend Bill 14 isn't a desperate attempt to cling to power and an insult to democracy?

The Speaker: The hon. Justice minister.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again the independent member is incorrect. We've said it time and again that the changes will create transparency, they'll create clarity, and they will avoid the abuses of process that are happening in our elections. The NDP backed long ballot protests that flooded the last federal by-election with more than 200 candidates. The former CEO of Elections Canada has called this an abuse of process. Bill 14 will prevent those types of practices from happening.

Mr. Sinclair: Given Bill 14 is banning words and essentially banning serious competition because the UCP had no issues with two Wildrose parties and the Freedom Conservative Party and given this Premier has chosen fear, lawsuits, control, and is now ordering legislation against democracy with a side order of immunity for the Minister of Justice, to the Minister of Justice: how can Albertans ever trust the UCP that passes laws to give immunity to a minister and a government embroiled in the middle of multiple investigations, especially when they involve a member of their family?

Mr. Schow: Again, Mr. Speaker, very little in that question about government policy, but among all the things that the member mentioned, I'm grateful to hear that he didn't go ahead and call every member on this side of the House "racist," as he has done on multiple occasions . . .

Mr. Sinclair: Point of order.

Mr. Schow: . . . in this Chamber, as if that's parliamentary. Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that the personal attacks that continue to be levied from the two members in the independent caucus, whatever they want to call themselves, are frankly below the decorum of this Chamber, and I hope the members, rather than continue to throw personal insults, would use this time productively to represent their constituents properly.

2:30

Mr. Sinclair: Given that the UCP are using Bill 14 to ban anyone else from using the word "conservative," ironic since they should really change their name to the USP, the United Separatist Party, and further given that with bloated budgets, lawsuits against political opponents, sketchy immunity deals and cover-ups, massive increases in spending, popping up government Crown corps like lemonade stands, and globe-trotting on useless trips on taxpayer dollars unless, of course, they're cashing in their MH Care points and taking the family jet, to the Premier: are you sure you guys are conservative?

The Speaker: A point of order was noted at 2:30.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, it seems like every once in a while you have a team that has that player who never gets on the ice but sure has a lot of things to say from the bench. It seems that the members opposite in the independent caucus have found that teammate. I would tell you that that's not a good teammate to stand behind. On this side of the House we do missions to go across the world to sell Alberta's advantage and attract record new investment, things like De Havilland, Lufthansa Technik. The Leader of the Opposition has nothing to show for it. It's billions of investment of this government. On that side of the House, when they were in government, they drove it out of the province. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. It can all stop.

The only one we want to hear from right now is Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

2026 Alberta Winter Games

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we find ourselves firmly within the grasp of winter, many young athletes across the province are training hard for their perfect chosen winter sports. The 2026 Winter Games are being held in Bonnyville, Cold Lake, St. Paul, and Glendon next year, and this UCP government has been working hard to make sure they're a success. To the Minister of Tourism and Sport. Investments are being made to prepare for the Winter Games in Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul. Can you please update us?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Tourism and Sport.

Mr. Boitchenko: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for such a great question. Our UCP government is proud to support Albertan athletes, and that is why we're investing \$1.3 million to help Lakeland region to host the 2026 Alberta Winter Games. This funding will support over 1,800 athletes and over 500 coaches, giving Alberta athletes the opportunity to compete and showcase their talent right here at home in our beautiful province of Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Cyr: Wow. That's good news. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Alberta Winter Games are a classic event that brings competitors, families, and spectators from across the province to the Lakeland region and further given that investments are being made for sporting facilities and other infrastructure to accommodate the games and all visitors for this event, to the same minister: what are the benefits of hosting the Alberta Winter Games for the good people in my constituency?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Boitchenko: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and I want to say thank you again to the member for advocating for the region and standing up for the community. He's doing such a great job. Hosting major sport events like this one boosts the local economy and sees families and friends dine, shop, stay, and play in the community. The 2026 Alberta Winter Games are estimated to drive \$5.4 million in economic activity for the Lakeland region and attract 6,000 visitors.

The Speaker: You've got to stop when I stand up, Minister. Go ahead.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to that minister for the response. Given that this venue for the games will be in the Glendon Arena, where talented young hockey players will take to the ice and further given that this arena was a recipient of the community facility enhancement grant to perform maintenance and improvement work, to the minister of arts and culture: how will improving this arena benefit the community of little Glendon within my constituency?

Ms Fir: Mr. Speaker, since 2019 we've awarded nearly 5,000 community grants to support nonprofits across Alberta. This year as part of our almost \$93 million investment in nonprofit supports our government proudly awarded Glendon Arena \$1 million through our community facility enhancement program, or CFEP grant, in the member's community. These upgrades will benefit

Albertans and allow them to host Alberta Winter Games activities, driving tourism, stimulating local economies, and fostering community spirit, a prime example of how our community grants build stronger communities and an even stronger Alberta. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Alberta Disability Assistance Program

Ms Renaud: Bill 12 shreds core safeguards in AISH and forces tens of thousands of disabled Albertans to move to a new, precarious program they call ADAP. Bill 12 cuts core benefits for disabled Albertans by 10 per cent, weakens inflation protection, and removes the right to appeal. The UCP marketing department says it will be great for AISH recipients because they can work. Other than throwing money at generic employment prep programs, what is this government's plan to create or locate thousands of inclusive jobs for AISH recipients once they're tossed off AISH?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, this government has increased AISH payments to the highest anywhere in the country, the highest in the history of the province. When that member was part of a government, they were paying \$1,588 a month. This government is paying \$1,940 a month. That's a 22 per cent increase in those rates, double the rate of inflation underneath the leadership of this government. So really, to them: why didn't they do that when they were here? We're not going to go back to what they've done. They continue to ask us to take NDP policy like places like B.C., that pay \$600 less a month. Absolutely not. Not going to happen. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member.

Ms Renaud: Thank you. Given that 27,000 AISH recipients live outside of Alberta's major cities and face significant barriers to employment and given that rural and remote communities often lack accessible transportation and inclusive work sites and given that the UCP is reducing AISH benefits by \$200 and clawing back the \$200 federal low-income benefit from disabled Albertans, Minister, where will rural Albertans who are losing \$400 because they've been moved to ADAP find accessible jobs to make up the difference?

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, it's hard to take that member seriously when she gets up and says things like that. AISH is not being reduced by \$200. In fact, AISH is going to go up by almost \$40. AISH is \$1,901 right now. It will be \$1,940 shortly in the next fiscal year. Now, that member doesn't know where rural Alberta is, so I'm not going to go to her for advice.

Ms Gray: Point of order.

Mr. Nixon: This government is investing \$185 million in serious income supports. We're proud of the work that the disability community does. They are one of the biggest contributors to GDP in this province, and unlike the NDP, we believe they can continue to do it.

The Speaker: A point of order was noted at 2:38.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we're going to use this for fact checking time. Now, I don't know if the minister has not checked his own website, but the facts are there. In July of 2026 all AISH recipients are being moved, and that benefit is being reduced by \$200. Now, some will be given the opportunity . . .

The Speaker: You're doing preambles right now.

Ms Renaud: Given that many of them will be moved back to AISH, people that are palliative or people that are now profoundly disabled, given that we don't know what that means – we know ADAP is \$200 less, we know they're clawing back, yet they're saying that it's all great – why don't . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, we are in agreement that they don't know what anything means. We got that down pat. We have the highest payments in the country, and we're going to continue to do it. We have not clawed back AISH. In fact, we're going to increase AISH payments in this province. We are the only government that indexed it, including the NDP, who did not index payments, and we're investing the highest amount of income supports in the history of the province. Unfortunately, the NDP left behind thousands of disabled people who were not eligible for AISH. This side of the House is fixing that, and we're going to continue to have the two best disability programs anywhere in Canada.

2:40

The Speaker: Hon. members, that ends question period. In the next 30 seconds we will continue with the daily Routine.

Statement by the Speaker

Remarks off the Record

The Speaker: Hon. members, yesterday when the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake and I had an exchange and he did the proper thing, I think that some doubt was expressed to me about whether I believe the hon. member about what he did or did not say. Let me say this. I assume all members here are honourable, and I believe the hon. member, as I would any, and assume he was telling the truth.

Tabling Returns and Reports

(continued)

The Speaker: I have a couple, and we'll get to it if there are any other ones after that. The first tabling is Speaker's Directive 01/2025 from the Legislative Security Officer Directive.

The second one is letters received from the hon. Member for Airdrie-Cochrane saying that he's now a member of the Alberta Party, a member from the Alberta Party confirming that, and a letter from my office saying they've accepted the correspondence.

Any other tablings? Seeing none. It's a little hard to tell because some people are standing up to leave. I'm not complaining; I'm just saying.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Acting Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk: on behalf of hon. Mrs. Sawhney, Minister of Indigenous Relations, Premier's Council on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit Plus People 2024-2025 annual report; on behalf of the hon. Ms Schulz, Minister of Environment and Protected Areas, pursuant to the Alberta Land Stewardship Act proposed amendments to the South Saskatchewan regional plan.

The Speaker: Okay. Now we are at points of order. Give me a second here. The first one was called at 1:52 by the Government House Leader, I believe.

Point of Order Parliamentary Language

Mr. Williams: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. I do rise on 23(i). At the moment that you said, at 1:52, the Leader of his Majesty's Opposition was speaking towards the Premier and named the Premier's role personally and said that the Premier is demonizing public servants or the Premier is demonizing civil servants. I'll leave it to your reading of the Blues for the exact quotation.

Mr. Speaker, this is a personal attack, implying that the Premier herself demonizes civil servants, not a government as a whole demonizes, without question a negative association associated with the demon, the Devil. It's obviously an attempt to try and personalize an attack. The same argument could be made without personalizing it.

There are multiple instances. "He has shown such disdain and disrespect for the life-saving workers," April 11, 2024, page 1039 of *Hansard*, was found to be a point of order. I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to have the member or someone on his behalf apologize and withdraw so we can continue with the substantive debate.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I disagree with the Deputy Government House Leader in this instance. I know that this was not a personal attack. This is absolutely a matter of debate. I think the context is important. Now, I do not have the benefit of the Blues, but I believe that the Premier had just said that they are changing the Citizen Initiative Act because we "have a Chief Electoral Officer that is taking away the rights of Albertans. We have a judge that is taking away the rights of Albertans." In the Premier's own comments she's absolutely talking about two civil servants and portraying them as something wicked or threatening; again, part of the definition of the term "demonization."

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the idea that the Premier cannot be held accountable for words she had just said and doesn't have a role as the head of our government and a responsibility for the language that is being used is ridiculous. I think it's incredibly important that the Official Opposition is able to in the moment talk about the back and forth. We're continuing debate, which I don't intend to do, but I believe that's the scenario and the context here.

The final thing I will mention is Speaker Cooper's ruling on November 5, 2024, where he specifically said, "The Premier's record is a matter of debate on which members . . . have a variety of opinions." In this case the Premier's words and how they are interpreted, especially when she so deliberately criticizes public servants, and then referring to that as the demonization of civil servants: I believe this is a matter of debate. Were this to be ruled a point of order, I think that's changing the lines a little bit, Mr. Speaker, but I look forward to your ruling.

The Speaker: Well, thank you.

I would say that the Premier's policies or any member's policies are subject to debate. I'd say the use of the word "demonization" is not helpful. The Premier's record or any member's record is a matter of debate, but the words we use in describing that record matter also. "Demonization" is not strictly speaking a point of order and I won't make it one today, but I will ask the Opposition House Leader to talk to your party leader and say that doesn't mean it will remain not unparliamentary because the words we choose are sometimes just as important as the context in which we choose them. Could have said a lot of other things; could have said, for example, the poor way in which people are treated, or whatever, but

demonization has sometimes other context. It's not a point of order, but I still issue a caution not to make that particular phraseology.

I have it. A 2:01 point of order called by the Member for Edmonton-City Centre, if I saw it correctly.

Point of Order Insulting Language

Ms Gray: You did, Mr. Speaker. On his behalf this is specifically about a heckle. I do not have the benefit of the Blues, but at the time the Leader of the Official Opposition was speaking and referred to something along the lines of legislation making a mockery of itself. At that time the minister of community services was heard to have yelled: kind of like you. Under 23(h), (i), and (j) that is clearly to me very much a direct insult as well as language likely to create disorder, so we rise on this point of order and ask the member to apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: Government side.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear that. I'd be interested to know if it was caught on the Blues. Happy to leave this in your capable hands.

The Speaker: Well, it doesn't make out what the government social services minister said. It does pick up that the Leader of the Opposition does say, "The legislation made a mockery of itself." The Blues say, "[interjection]." I didn't hear it, so I can't call it a point of order. But let me just say this. The opposition leader's interjection when it wasn't his turn to speak is not helpful, and the government minister's volley back when it wasn't his turn to speak is also not helpful. We should just try to avoid all of that in the future. This matter is concluded.

Point of order 3, I think at 2:17 or close to that, called by . . .

2:50

Mr. Williams: We'll withdraw that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: That is withdrawn, so that's dealt with and concluded.

Next point of order is at 2:22, called by the Government House Leader.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Williams: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I do rise on a point of order here. From a sedentary position the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was heckling at 2:24 and shouted, quote: learn your file. Similar heckles and on the record comments have been ruled out of order in the past. For example, April 8, 2024, a member shouted, "You have no idea what you're doing." Withdrawn. "You don't even know . . . Oh my [goodness]. Embarrassing." That was also withdrawn on November 26, 2024. "The same Premier has spoken with extreme ignorance," April 11, 2024. There are multiple other examples. This is language unbecoming of the Chamber and, obviously, under 23(j) is language that is likely to cause disorder within the House. I just ask the member to apologize and withdraw, and we can happily move forward on the debate.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Opposition House Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You can't win for trying. In this case the member heckled something that I would have considered parliamentary. As a former member of the government caucus I have heard "learn your file" a number of times in this place.

In using language that has been commonly used in this Chamber – and if I search *Hansard* for "learn your file," we will have many results. If I search LASR for "learn your file," there are no points of order on this language. I believe it's parliamentary. I commend the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud not using unparliamentary language. That is my interpretation based on reviewing the history of this language. I truly believe that those of us who have been in the Chamber for a very long time may recall hearing the language "learn your file" once or twice.

The Speaker: Well, the first thing, hon. Opposition House Leader: you need to leave the Speaker out of debate, directly or indirectly.

Anyways, let me just say this. It's a gentle warning. I don't have anything here. It says "[interjections]" in the Blues. Let me say that "learn your file" is probably a matter of debate if indeed it was said, but the fact that it was said when it wasn't that person's turn to talk is a problem. It's not a point of order, but that's the trouble you get into when you're speaking when you're not recognized; you can get accused of a point of order, and sometimes you're going to have to take it back. It's not the case this time. It might be different depending on what the Blues picked up, if they did pick up anything. This matter is concluded.

On we go to the point of order called at 2:30 p.m. by the independent Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Point of Order Allegations against a Member

Mr. Sinclair: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today under 23(h), (i), and (j). Sometime between 2 and 2:30-ish, I believe you said, the Government House Leader accused me of calling him a racist for the third time in this House, in this Chamber. That's never been true. It's a serious allegation. It should never be used as a part of his chirpy responses and funny-type chirps. I like to heckle as much as anybody in here, but that is a serious allegation that doesn't belong in here. I know this government leader has a job to do defending this government and I understand that's probably a pretty stressful one recently, but he's walking a pretty fine line here. He's already had two points of privilege lobbed at him. That's not a record or a hat trick, if he wants to use a hockey analogy since he likes those today, that he wants to have. I don't believe this is parliamentary language, and he should apologize.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Okay. All right. You should stick to what was talked about today.

The Deputy Government House Leader.

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

The Speaker: That's what I would call the proper thing to do. This matter is concluded.

Which takes us to 2:38 called by the Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order Parliamentary Language

Ms Gray: Thank you very much. At 2:38 the Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services – and apologies; I think I got his ministerial title wrong earlier in proceedings – said in response to the Member for St. Albert, "That member doesn't know where rural Alberta is." Under 23(h), (i), and (j) and also just the principles of let's not be ridiculous in this place, I believe this is unparliamentary, and the member should apologize and withdraw.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Opposition House Leader's argument; however, it's a bit of the kettle calling the pot black here. This is reasonable debate. This is reasonable idiomatic language. It is not a personal attack in nature. The point is that the member opposite that the minister is referring to doesn't understand rural Alberta. It's idiomatic language. It's not personally attacking in nature, and I'll leave this in your capable hands. We agree, largely, that the members opposite say that we need to have robust debate. I will do my part as Deputy Government House Leader to call legitimate points of order. This one, however, we don't believe is.

The Speaker: Well, this is what the Blues say was said. "Now, that member doesn't know where rural Alberta is, so I'm not going to go to her for advice." Had the hon. minister said, "I doubt if the member knows where rural Alberta is," that would have been a legitimate complaint or if he had said, "The member shows no sign," or whatever, but the fact is that when he actually states what's in another member's mind, that's a clear point of order. None of us gets to say what someone else thinks and try to project their inner thoughts on the world on behalf of another member, so I will look for an apology and a withdrawal.

Mr. Williams: I apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Orders of the Day Government Motions

Mr. Williams: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Government House Leader I wish to request the unanimous consent of the Assembly to move to one-minute bells for the remainder of the afternoon sitting, including the first bells in Committee of the Whole.

The Speaker: Hon. members, a motion has been made by the hon. deputy House leader to have one-minute bells for the complete afternoon session. That's until 6 p.m. It's not a debatable motion, and it does take unanimous consent.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Alberta-Canada Memorandum of Understanding

16. Ms Smith moved on behalf of Mr. Schow:
 - A. Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly recognize
 - (a) that the memorandum of understanding signed by the government of Canada and the government of Alberta: agreement to strengthen energy collaboration and build a stronger, more competitive, and more sustainable economy, dated November 27, 2025 ("MOU"), is a critical step towards building a stronger and more vibrant Alberta economy, and
 - (b) that the MOU is a result of the continued advocacy by the Premier and the government to promote the interests of Albertans;
 - B. And be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly
 - (a) express its full endorsement of the commitments contained in the MOU, and
 - (b) urge the parties to the MOU as well as other interested parties, including the government of British Columbia, to take all necessary steps to

ensure these commitments can be achieved as quickly as possible.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What does this memorandum mean for Alberta? What does it mean for Canada? It means that after 10 years of the members opposite and their constitutionally connected members in Ottawa waging an ideological war on Alberta's economy and workers, there is a potential pathway to prosperity. It means that after talks of phasing out the oil sands, of three cancelled pipelines, of innumerable delays and job-killing strangulation through red tape and regulation, Alberta and Canada overall can become the energy superpower that it should have been long ago.

I think that Alberta has always embraced that old adage: go big or go home. Well, rest assured that when it comes to oil and gas, we go big, because Alberta is certainly not going home. Where we are going and where we intend to go with more frequency is east, west, north, and south, across oceans, and around the globe because we have the energy the world needs and will continue to need for decades to come.

If Canada wants to lead global energy security efforts, build out sovereign AI infrastructure, increase funding to social programs and national defence, and expand trade to new markets, we must unleash the full potential of our vast natural resources. This is a massive first step that will provide us with more export capacity and allow us to increase production. Our reserves now amount to 1.8 trillion barrels of oil, of which 167 billion are recoverable with today's technology, and 1.36 quadrillion cubic feet of gas, of which 144 trillion cubic feet is recoverable with today's technology. At today's prices Alberta's proven oil and gas reserves represent trillions of dollars in value. This is wealth that belongs to the people of Alberta. It's not just a number; it's a generational opportunity to secure prosperity, fund public services, and invest in the future of our communities.

3:00

But to unlock the full potential of this resource, we need the infrastructure to match our ambition. That means building more pipelines to tidewater, especially one to the Pacific coast, like we have announced, so Alberta's energy can reach the global markets that need it the most. Asia, in particular, is calling for more heavy oil. As countries across the region expand their petrochemical industries and seek reliable long-term energy partners, Alberta is uniquely positioned to meet that demand. Our heavy oil is not only abundant but responsibly developed, geopolitically stable, and backed by decades of proven supply. More than 3.5 million barrels of oil come out of our oil sands on a daily basis with nearly 890,000 barrels per day now flowing through the Trans Mountain expansion to key Asian markets.

The Alberta-Ottawa energy agreement is the first step in accomplishing all of these critical objectives and unleashing the power and promise of Canada's energy sector in a way that has not ever been seen before in this country. This new energy agreement includes a clear path to the construction of an over 1 million barrel a day, Indigenous co-owned bitumen pipeline to Asian markets so that our province and country are no longer dependent on just one customer to buy our most valuable resource.

We have been clear since day one that Indigenous co-ownership, partnership, and perspectives will be critical at every stage of project development and execution. Indigenous co-ownership of a pipeline to the northwest coast will also provide millions in revenue to communities along that route, ensuring long-lasting prosperity for their people. We've started conversations with Indigenous

communities in Alberta and British Columbia, and by involving Indigenous communities from day one, we're building a foundation for continuing relationship building, trust, and shared leadership. We are ready to support meaningful opportunities for Indigenous partnership and ownership. Indigenous communities will have opportunities to lead and benefit financially.

This agreement also recognizes that we can increase oil and gas production while also reducing emissions. The solution to reducing emissions is not to cap growth. It is to innovate. Full stop. Alberta will show the world that resource development and environmental stewardship are not in conflict or opposing forces but align priorities essential to the future success of Alberta's energy sector and energy security around the world. The removal of the oil and gas emissions cap will allow our energy producers to grow and thrive again, and the suspension of the federal net-zero power regulations in Alberta will open doors to major AI data centre investment.

It also means that Alberta will be a world leader in the development and implementation of emissions reduction infrastructure, particularly in carbon capture, utilization, and storage. This agreement will see Alberta work together with our federal partners and the Pathways group of companies to commence and complete the world's largest carbon capture, utilization, and storage infrastructure project. This will make Alberta heavy oil the lowest intensity barrel on the market and displace millions of higher emitting barrels around the globe.

Now, I know that at least some of the members opposite and their federal counterparts don't like the energy sector. They punished it. They celebrated the emissions cap, and they demanded that our industry stop growing and told Albertans to move to B.C. to get a job. Mr. Speaker, there's always been a better way than the NDP would take us down. There's a way that creates prosperity and wealth for Albertans. We can bring good-paying jobs to anyone who is willing to come to Alberta and work hard. Let's create a path to get our resources to market, to ensure the best price for them, and to lower emissions while doing it. Then let's take that money and fund health care and education and social services and roads and hospitals, schools, bridges, transit, and everything else for decades. There's a way to fulfill the promise that we've always made to future generations that life will be better for you than it was for us.

That is not the direction that the NDP would have taken us. They would have had Canadians freeze in the dark. They would have had us eliminate hundreds of thousands of jobs in the resource sector, forgoing trillions of dollars in wealth and opportunity for Albertans. The NDP would have phased out and capped and demolished our economy, to be replaced with global energy poverty and full societal reliance on government handouts that would eventually bankrupt this province and everyone in it.

I would like to briefly go back to comments made in this very Chamber 52 years ago. Premier Peter Lougheed raised many of the concerns that our government has when he said:

When we evaluate the history of Confederation, we look at tariff protection in terms of jobs in central Canada, profits in central Canada, the cost of automobiles to western Canadians. The fact [is] . . . for Montreal and the Maritimes, that they are bringing in today – saving pennies over the past ten years, and it is pennies at the pump – utilization of crude oil sources from Venezuela, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Is that security of supply? Is that Confederation? So for those who suggest that a favour is done, I suggest that is so in no way. It is a minimum position for Canada.

He went on to note that even 50 years ago the position of the NDP was to reduce the demand for Alberta oil, heedless of the destruction to Alberta jobs and prosperity.

So I ask again: what does this energy accord with Ottawa mean for Alberta? It means a new start, a solution to the problems that we have faced for decades, and a way to get our products to market. It means that we are finally finding solutions to concerns that have been raised for five decades by Premiers of this province. This energy accord will set the stage for Alberta to be the economic engine of the nation, a role we have consistently held for a long time, but without federal interference and more access to tidewater we will truly be an energy superpower. That means that we can supercharge the heritage fund, which has already nearly doubled since we formed government, it means helping Canada reach our NATO commitments, and, above all, it means that Alberta will remain forever strong and free.

I ask all of the members in this Chamber to endorse this new chapter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: On Government Motion 16, the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to something that, at least in part, we agree about, which is pretty rare in this place these days. This MOU is a hopeful sign, and Alberta's New Democrats support it. It's an opportunity for both action on climate change and economic growth, but the devil is always in the details, and some of them are lacking here. I say it with caution, but in a time with so little opportunity for optimism this does make me optimistic.

It's not dissimilar to the bargain that Rachel Notley struck. Now, that came with a real pipeline, the only one to tidewater in half a century, that is now delivering 800,000 barrels a day, and it came with real action on climate change, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that this Premier is willing to demonstrate some much-needed humility and take a lesson from former Premier Notley, but in order for this to work, that can't be the only lesson the current Premier takes from the past Premier. She has to roll up her sleeves and get the work done. This isn't about rhetoric or political posturing or picking fights with anyone for political purposes. It's about real hard work to the benefit of Albertans, and I hope that this is a sign that this Premier has finally learned that lesson.

The details of this are going to be critical in how they're filled in, so I have a few notes. It has to be about jobs, not about rhetoric, not about cheap political points; about Albertans and their jobs. We know that construction jobs will come with major projects like a pipeline, but that has to be the beginning of the story, not the end. It needs to be a piece of a major economic strategy, a strategy that is about good-paying jobs and all forms of energy.

Climate change is real. It's honestly a bit weird, Mr. Speaker, that I have to come into this place and state that on the record, but given the statements from some of the members in this place I think it needs to be said explicitly. I think the other thing we need to see here is for this government to start demonstrating a little bit of consistency. We have the minister of environment taking a victory lap on methane reductions that we have Shannon Phillips to thank for. Then we have the Minister of Affordability and Utilities saying that methane reduction is awful and destroys the economy. I'm going to side with the environment minister here, Mr. Speaker. This is a massive opportunity both for action on climate change and for economic development. The Premier has consistently said that she believes in net zero but has had no single action that would get us there.

3:10

If this pipeline is to create long-term wealth, it must come with serious action on climate change. This government has not shown

any indication that they are interested in that, and it absolutely has to be a “yes, and” strategy. The UCP drove away billions of dollars in investment from renewables, investment which would not only have created jobs but reduced electricity prices. We cannot have any more of this ideology over progress, Mr. Speaker. Now, I expect my hon. colleague from Calgary-Glenmore will speak extensively to this point, so I will move on from there.

My biggest concern, Mr. Speaker, is about how Indigenous rights will be handled under this MOU. I will have much more to say there, but I also think that it’s worth noting what this is and what it isn’t because this is important to Albertans, and they deserve to know. Recognizing that some of the details are yet to come, some things have been worked out. I hope, in an effort to demonstrate to Albertans that on some points all sides can agree, I as a former NDP minister and current NDP MLA will quote Ken Boessenkool, noted Conservative adviser. “Smith and her spinners have been saying that the MOU cancelled Trudeau’s . . .”

The Speaker: Member, we don’t use names of people in the House.

Ms Ganley: Oh, sorry. It was in the quote. My apologies, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I know it was. You still can’t do it.

Ms Ganley: Yes. Sorry. Well, I’ll put those in square brackets.

The Speaker: You need to say “the Premier.”

Ms Ganley: Yes. The current Premier and her spinners have been saying that the MOU cancelled Trudeau’s oil-and-gas production cap. But like so much of what they are saying, this is not technically correct. Carney has not promised to eliminate the cap. He has promised to make it “unnecessary” . . .

In other words, Alberta has agreed that the end of the oil-and-gas cap will require an industrial carbon price beyond 2030 that renders the cap “unnecessary.” Now, I don’t know exactly what the price trajectory is, but carbon prices must at the very least hit Trudeau’s \$170/tonne by 2030. And rise further beyond that.

I’m still quoting, Mr. Speaker.

It’s the same story for the Clean Electricity Regulations . . . that Alberta says have been killed, cancelled or carved out. Not quite.

I think the point here, Mr. Speaker, is to put on the record the fact that this does have a lot of potential, not just for the creation of jobs but also for action on climate change. That makes me hopeful.

The last point that I think is worth noting is concerns about how treaty rights will be treated here. There has been a lot of rhetoric around this sort of thing in this House recently, but I would remind the members that, at the end of the day, the basics here are fulfilling our obligations. We made a deal. Maybe it wasn’t us; it was our predecessors. But contracts need to be honoured, and we still get the benefit of that deal. We’re here on this land. We have what we contracted for.

That means we need to fulfill our half of the bargain, and we need to ensure that we are respecting treaty rights. That means real consultation, Mr. Speaker. It means serious consultation moving forward. It means including Indigenous communities, bringing them along all throughout the country, here in Alberta certainly but also in British Columbia. It means that we respect all of those rights from all of those people. I believe firmly that that actually gets us further ahead. I don’t believe this is us fulfilling our promises versus the economy. I believe that a path can be charted that generates prosperity for everyone. We’ve seen it done. It is possible. But if we don’t do that, if this government isn’t able to respect those rights

appropriately, it will have disastrous consequences for both the economy and the environment and our ability to move forward. I hope that this government will take it seriously and do the work that needs to be done.

In conclusion, this MOU is a good sign, and Alberta’s New Democrats support it. I’m thrilled to see the Premier learning some much-needed lessons from Rachel Notley and Shannon Phillips, and I hope that she can continue to focus on getting the job done rather than picking fights. I hope it’s a sign of things to come, but we will be watching. We need to grow our economy and create good-paying jobs, and we must take real action on climate change. We will be watching this government closely to ensure that they manage these things in Albertans’ interests.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today it is an honour to rise in this Chamber on Motion 16. Thank you so very much. I just want to thank the government and also the Premier for bringing this forward. This is a fantastic motion. Now, this motion and everything in it and the MOU are in regard to the work that our Premier has been doing across the world and also what our ministers have been doing across the world. Thank you to each one of them for the work that they have done in building this out. It is significant work.

Now, Mr. Speaker, why would you be doing this? Well, I just want to talk a little bit about OPEC here for a second. This year’s publication sees that the world will require more energy in the decades to come, with global energy demand set to expand by 23 per cent by 2050 – and that’s a minimum – with global demand for continued robust growth reaching almost 123 million barrels a day by, once again, 2050. Now, this amount is also engaging in the conversation of CCUS, clean electricity, and also the challenges of energy security, which this MOU embraces, and this is what we’re talking about here today. This opens the doors for Alberta and for Canada to be able to grab hold of the leadership that we have in this Chamber on this side of the House in our AI strategy, our CCUS strategy, in data centres, and innovation as well.

Also, why would we be doing some of these things? Well, we had 10 years of the opposition partnering with their bosses in Ottawa, and we must not forget that this decade drove out – drove out – jobs, it drove out innovation, it drove out investment both in Alberta and across Canada. Their policies drove our cost of living through the roof, and it is this government on this side of the House that has put affordability back on the table, been able to give electricity an opportunity to be affordable, and to have significant carve-outs for major projects here. Not only that, but once again the opposition had an incredible – they drove jobs out of this province, as I’ve said.

Now, let’s compare the record just for a moment, even just this last month, Mr. Speaker. Our unemployment rate dropped by over a percentage just in November – over a percentage – because of the work of this government. Not only that; we had over 29,000 jobs in Alberta just this last November, roughly half of the jobs in Canada, and we have seen incredible job growth here in Alberta across everything.

The future of what this MOU does is significant. It gives us a prosperous opportunity, it gives a strong opportunity, and gives Albertans the opportunity to be free and be able to work, bring their creativity, bring their can-do attitudes, their work ethic, and entrepreneurial spirit to the table to get the job done, Mr. Speaker. This is what Albertans are about. This is what they expect from this government: leadership on a global scale, on a provincial scale, and

on a country scale. This is what we are doing on this side of the House by building these relationships and making sure that we can get access to tidewater through pipelines and also major projects across the line.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this relationship with Ottawa took a lot of work, so thank you to the Premier and also to all of our government for doing so. This took collaboration. It took an opportunity to see a future built strong for Alberta and also for us to continue to push through on our jobs and economy to continue to build an excellent and vibrant economy. This MOU is a result of our strong advocacy with the federal government in order to bring this about.

I would encourage the entire House to vote yes for this motion. Thank you so very much. I look forward to continuing to advocate for this in the future.

3:20

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

Ms Al-Guneid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This MOU in Government Motion 16 resets the relationship with Ottawa, and that's a step in the right direction. Albertans have been tired of the UCP fighting with Ottawa and Canada, so this is a welcome change in tone. Full credit to Prime Minister Carney for extending the olive branch to Alberta.

Now, I find intriguing elements in this MOU, and I'm left with some questions. The gist of the MOU is about Alberta decarbonizing oil sands production through the Pathways project in return for a new pipeline to Canada's west coast. Pipelines are a critical infrastructure of Alberta's economy, Mr. Speaker. That's why the Rachel Notley government made a deal with the federal government to build TMX. The TMX expansion has increased Alberta's shipping capacity by almost 300 per cent, which reduced Alberta's dependence on the U.S. and strengthened Canada's energy sovereignty. This quarter alone Trans Mountain reported \$127 million revenue from this Crown-owned pipeline. The Premier can thank the hon. Rachel Notley and her Alberta NDP government every day and twice on Sunday for her leadership on TMX. [interjections] The members are heckling. I'm not too sure what they don't like about TMX.

TMX is almost at capacity with 87 per cent utilization, but it can be still further upgraded, twinned, and expanded to enable Alberta's industry to export more oil quickly. While the government explores this new pipeline with Indigenous nations and B.C., it would make sense to expand the TMX pipeline further. The route exists, the relationships with Indigenous communities already exist, and it is the most amenable project with B.C., Mr. Speaker.

While TMX was a successful project, it was also an expensive project. It's important to acknowledge that. It was \$34 billion from taxpayers. Taxpayers from Nova Scotia, Ontario, Alberta, and Quebec funded TMX, Mr. Speaker. So if the Alberta government is going to be a proponent of a whole new pipeline, are Alberta's taxpayers going to pay for this pipeline in full? Is the government capable of securing a private proponent?

To further understand the context for this MOU, or grand bargain 2.0, it's important to understand grand bargain 1.0, which Rachel Notley's government sealed with the federal government nine years ago. In return for TMX expansion increasing Alberta's oil exports, the Alberta government would create the climate leadership plan that achieved three things: strengthening Alberta's industrial carbon pricing, converting coal plants into natural gas plants, and launching the renewables sector. Yes, the federal approval of TMX was concurrent with Alberta converting coal plants to natural gas plants and compensating coal power plants \$1 billion, and the industry phased out coal six years early. When the environment

minister talks about 50 per cent emission reduction in electricity, it is because of converting coal into gas, thanks to the first grand bargain.

Now, grand bargain 1.0 was not documented in an MOU. The deal was settled on a handshake between the former Prime Minister of Canada and the former Premier of Alberta, and the rest was history, Mr. Speaker.

A big part of the success of grand bargain 1.0 was due to strong Indigenous partnerships. Rather than imposing a predefined agenda or presupposed outcomes, TMX as a company and the Alberta NDP ensured early, transparent, and ongoing engagement with Indigenous nations. The private sector plays a crucial role in earning the trust of Indigenous communities. TMX CEO Ian Anderson said, Mr. Speaker: "Every community we touch is different, and they all have different aspirations, different levels of capacity, different environmental conditions, different infrastructure. We had to do it on a case-by-case basis and stay very principled."

Mr. Anderson tried to take the high road, the place where no environmental conditions were put unnecessarily at risk. Mr. Anderson describes a situation where TMX had over 100 biologists working on environmental protections, secured support from over 60 Indigenous nations, hired more than 1,000 Indigenous individuals, and awarded contracts valued at \$2 billion to Indigenous businesses. There are no shortcuts to the Crown's duty to consult, Mr. Speaker. It is imperative that the UCP gets Indigenous consultation right in B.C.; otherwise, they risk the erosion of community support to the Alberta LNG project under way right now in B.C.

Now, while we often talk about oil pipelines, we don't talk enough about the electricity pipelines. In the last two years I asked the utilities minister many times about expanding and fixing interties with B.C. to not only export energy and increase revenue but to import and provide more affordable energy for Albertans. Finally, we see the inclusion of electricity interties and energy storage in this MOU.

Mr. Speaker, we put forward an energy storage bill that the government shut down. The minister got up and told us he's already doing an FFR contract. The FFR procurement is a separate, top-down government contract. It is not a market-based mechanism. Our energy storage bill is about creating the right economic conditions for storage and not government contracts that are happening because of poor planning over the last few years.

I also saw nuclear energy in the MOU, and nuclear is interesting, Mr. Speaker. It is energy dense, it's low emissions, and the International Energy Agency sees nuclear power as part of the future electricity mix. But we need to address the elephant in the room, which is the cost, the project overruns and financing issues that face the nuclear sector. Nuclear projects are difficult to complete without taxpayer support. Ontario's taxpayers are now committed to \$3 billion to construct small modular reactors, or SMRs. Who is going to pay for nuclear power in Alberta?

With a quick conservative pricing on this MOU – a new pipeline at \$34 billion, nuclear energy at \$21 billion, Pathways CCS at \$17 billion, thousands of megawatts for AI data centres at \$40 billion, and electricity interties with B.C. and Saskatchewan at \$3 billion – this shows a \$115 billion price tag attached to this MOU. Again, who will pay for all this, Mr. Speaker?

I have to say that what caught my attention was the industrial carbon price in this MOU. I would say that the timeline is unclear, but I was pleasantly surprised to see the Premier's commitment to increase industrial carbon pricing from \$95 to \$130 per tonne in the

MOU. To date, TIER has helped to reduce emissions and create jobs, so the Premier needs to instill confidence in Alberta's carbon market. When will she review the stringency in order to fix the price crash and the credit oversupply that we have now? If credits are trading at a significant discount, low-carbon projects, including the Pathways carbon capture project, are much less investable, which is a risk for this MOU. Fixing TIER is critical after the secretive and flawed TIER consultations that became a media story, Mr. Speaker.

At the end of the day, these grand bargains must be about Alberta's prosperity, Mr. Speaker. I'm still thinking of the 900 Albertans losing their jobs following Imperial's layoffs, which is a big blow for Calgary, losing a big head office, and 900 families are impacted by receiving a pink slip. Really, my thoughts are with my former colleagues in the energy sector. This Imperial layoff is not the exception; it is part of an increasing pattern. The 2020 merger of Husky and Cenovus resulted in the loss of 2,150 jobs, and Suncor also cut 1,500 jobs in 2023. Recently ConocoPhillips laid off Albertan employees.

3:30

With more mergers and consolidation in the oil sands along with increased automation and technology, Alberta's mining sector is in a pattern of job losses, increased efficiency, and cost-saving measures. This is the reality. The oil sands sector has become a mature sector, and the break even price is \$27 a barrel. This is an incredible achievement in lowering cost, but it does not translate into new jobs. So what is the government's plan to create sustainable long-term jobs?

Mr. Speaker, this MOU is a step in the right direction, as I said initially. However, there are so many questions. Who's paying for all the costs? Again, a conservative estimate here is \$115 billion. How does the government build trust with Indigenous nations without risking Alberta LNG? Where is the private proponent for the new pipeline, and what's the government's plan to create sustainable jobs in a highly automated and mature industry?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wright: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great honour to rise and speak to Motion 16, representing something Albertans have been waiting a long time for. Now, much to the chagrin of the Member for Leduc-Beaumont my speech will have quite a few alliterations in it, and we will continue on.

An Hon. Member: Not rhymes?

Mr. Wright: Not so much rhymes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about how this is a long time coming and a tangible step forward for Alberta's economy and for the future of the province. I do want to talk a little bit about the last pipeline which Canada had built. You know, this was the Kinder Morgan private-sector originally funded program that the Liberals and the socialists blocked with all sorts of unnecessary red tape and burden. They were originally going to build it for \$5.4 billion dollars. The cost ran up because of red tape. They then forced the private sector out of the equation. The federal government stepped in to buy it for \$7.4 billion, already more than what the whole proposed cost was going to be. Then the final cost, with the unnecessary burden of the socialists and Liberals, was \$34 billion. Thirty-four billion dollars, so almost \$30 billion more to get the federal government's hands

and control all over it. This is a prime example of failed economics, the failed Liberal policies.

This memorandum of understanding, November 27 between the feds and Alberta, is honestly more than just a piece of paper. It seems to be an unwinding of that previous nonsense that cost Kinder Morgan their pipeline and forced it onto Canadian taxpayers from St. John's to Vancouver. It's a signal that collaboration is possible, that progress can be achieved, and that Alberta's voice matters in shaping Canada's energy future, so much so that Steven "Boo Hoo" Guilbeault cried and quit over the fact that this pipeline is moving forward, that the wedge is now forming between the Trudeau eco loyalists and the Carney carnival.

With that being said and done, let's get back to the motion. This cannot be the last step, and I will agree with the members opposite on that. This must be the first step. If this agreement is going to deliver on its promises, the federal government must keep its word with working with us not just today but in the months and years ahead.

For too long Alberta has faced uncertainty due to these failed Liberal and socialist policies: projects delayed, regulations imposed without regard for the realities of these jobs, and the lack of meaningful dialogue. This MOU changes that tone. It shows that we can sit down together. When we focus on a shared goal we can find common ground. That's good for Alberta, and that's good for Canada.

Personally I believe the biggest win in this entire agreement, and really the only true win for our energy future, is the unconditional and immediate suspension of the Guilbeault era clean electricity regulations. It's not to underestimate any of the other wins in this project, but for me we cannot underestimate just what this means. Those regulations would have forced Alberta's grid into unrealistic timelines, risking the reliability and affordability for families and businesses. By removing them Ottawa is finally acknowledging what we've been saying all along on this side of the Chamber. Alberta needs flexibility to manage its own grid responsibly. These decisions give us room to breathe, to plan for the future without jeopardizing the present. This is going to open up an already projected \$5 billion to \$18 billion of private investment. Now, Mr. Speaker, this allows us to keep power affordable and secure while still moving forward in a way that makes sense for our province.

Earlier this week I tabled a *Wall Street Journal* article titled Europe's Green Energy Rush Slashed Emissions – and Crippled the Economy. I feel that there are a few key points that are relevant to this, one of which says that

European politicians pitched the continent's green transition to voters as a win-win: Citizens would benefit from green jobs and cheap, abundant [electricity].

However,

Two decades on, the promise has largely proved [to be] costly to consumers and damaging to the economy ... the rush to renewables helped drive electricity prices up for much of the continent.

Germany now has the highest domestic electricity prices in the developed world while the U.K. has the highest industrial electricity [prices] ... [and] Italy isn't far behind.

When we take a look at this, the U.K. has a 33.8 cent per kilowatt hour, with their industrial one being 38.6, an average of 36.2. Italy is 34.2 average; Germany, 34.6 average. Where do Canada and the U.S. rank? Canada ranks 11.25; the U.S., 12.25. If we continue down this road without this carve-out and immediate suspension of the clean energy regs, that is the picture of our future: 34.2, 34.6, or, even worse, 36.2. To quote, the economic policy professor at Oxford University advertised that "we are hemorrhaging industry" at the benefit of green energy policies.

Mr. Speaker, job creation is important. That's what pays the bills. That's what builds prosperity and creates opportunity. This agreement is more than just one win. It signals that Alberta was right. It proves that Alberta's voice matters, and it reminds those in Ottawa that common-sense solutions can be found. We can build an economy that is competitive, sustainable, and strong.

Now, let's talk about what this means for Albertans. First, it provides certainty for industry. For years companies have faced mixed signals on federal regulations pushing one way and provincial priorities across this country pulling another. That uncertainty costs jobs, it costs investment, and it costs confidence. The MOU provides clarity. It sets out a shared vision for electricity and energy development as well as infrastructure expansion. That clarity is exactly what investors need to put their dollars in Alberta projects, projects like data centres. I'll go back to a CBC article from September 26, 2024, where the province tells U.S. data firms that if they want to bring data centres, bring your own power. That carve-out on the clean energy regulations, the immediate suspension, allows for this.

Secondly, it creates opportunity. If it's one thing Albertans' innovation knows, it's how to capitalize on opportunity, how to adapt with new technology. We're talking about thousands of jobs here, jobs in construction, engineering, technology, and trades; jobs that pay well; jobs that support families; and jobs that keep communities strong. It's about building prosperity for future generations to come. These aren't just short-term jobs; they're part of the long-term strategy to make Alberta a global leader in energy innovation, creating opportunity, and driving private-sector job creation, just as we have done since taking office.

Now, let's not forget the importance of market access. For years we've been talking about the need for Alberta resources to get to Asian markets. This agreement moves us closer to that goal. It supports infrastructure that connects Alberta to the world. That's how we get better pricing for our product. That's how we reduce our dependence on one single market to the south, and that's how we make sure Alberta's energy continues to drive prosperity for decades to come, but as I said at the start, this is and must be only the first steps. One agreement does not solve everything. We need to continue to collaborate on market access, on reaching ports, and on infrastructure that connects Alberta to global markets. We need Ottawa to keep listening, keep respecting provincial jurisdiction, and keep working with us, not against us.

3:40

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, this MOU is a significant shift in tone from Ottawa. It's also, however, a bit of a wedge we're starting to see form in the Liberal caucus. For too long the conversation between Alberta and Ottawa has been adversarial. That hasn't worked. That hasn't delivered results. This agreement shows that co-operation is possible, much to the dismay of the eco cultists within the Liberal government. It shows that when we focus on what unites us like jobs, growth, sustainability, we can achieve more for Albertans.

Supporting this motion doesn't mean we agree with Ottawa on everything. Frankly, I think we still disagree on the lion's share of them, but it does mean that we are standing up for Alberta's interests. What it means is that we are recognizing progress when we see it, acknowledging that this agreement is a step in the right direction, and we on this side are committed to building on it, to keep pushing for policies that respect Alberta's jurisdiction and strengthen Alberta's economy. That is the number one priority for us.

To the colleagues in Ottawa: don't stop now. Dropping the clean electricity regulations was the right call, but it's only the beginning.

Keep listening to Alberta's needs. Keep respecting Alberta's jurisdiction. Keep partnering with us on infrastructure, technology, and market access. Alberta is ready to lead, and we need our federal government to be ready to work with us, not against us. If this spirit of collaboration continues, all of Canada will be stronger for it, not just Alberta. If it doesn't, we risk sliding back into the gridlock of uncertainty that fed the flames of western alienation since 1905.

This government is committed to economic progress, and we will do everything in our power to keep that commitment for all of Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 16 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:43 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Al-Guneid	Glubish	Pitt
Amery	Gray	Rowswell
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Hoffman	Sabir
Batten	Horner	Sawhney
Boitchenko	Hoyle	Sawyer
Bouchard	Hunter	Schmidt
Brar, Gurinder	Jean	Schow
Brar, Gurtej	Johnson	Schulz
Calahoo Stonehouse	Jones	Sigurdson, Lori
Ceci	Kasawski	Sigurdson, R.J.
Chapman	LaGrange	Singh
Cyr	Loewen	Smith
Dach	Long	Stephan
de Jonge	Lovely	Turton
Dyck	Lunty	Wiebe
Ellingson	McDougall	Williams
Ellis	Nally	Wilson
Eremenko	Neudorf	Wright, J.
Fir	Nicolaides	Wright, P.
Ganley	Nixon	Yao
Getson	Petrovic	Yaseen
Totals:	For – 63	Against – 0

[Government Motion 16 carried unanimously]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Time Allocation on Bill 14

24. Mr. Schow moved:

Be it resolved that when further consideration of Bill 14, Justice 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.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now . . . [interjections] I hear the members opposite have something to say about this motion, and I imagine that they will have comments in just a moment when it's their chance to respond.

What I can say to all members of this House is that the government has made an effort multiple times and will continue to make an effort to ensure members get a chance to debate this very important legislation, multiple bills. Now, in days of past we have ended on the

scheduled date of the Legislature. We are now sitting into the second week of extended time to ensure that these pieces of legislation get proper time for debate in this Chamber. But the time has come, Mr. Speaker, to get progress on these bills so that we can complete them through the process.

I've often said and I will repeat again that in this Chamber it's not just about quantity of debate; it's also about quality of debate. A perfect example was yesterday when in Committee of the Whole the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar stood in this Chamber absolutely silent for what seemed like about five or six minutes. Now, Mr. Speaker, if that's how we're going to use the people's time, that's how the members opposite are going to respect the people's time in this Chamber and the debate time they have, we as a government will take steps, including time allocation, to ensure we move through these bills in an efficient manner, respecting the quality of the debate.

I can tell you that standing in this Chamber and saying nothing for several minutes is not quality debate. If that's going to be how we continue to use time in this Chamber, the members opposite should look inwards about how they use this time. Mr. Speaker, I would say it is not respectful of Albertans, but I would also say that not respecting Albertans is par for the course for the members opposite.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

3:50

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in absolute opposition to this government's latest attempt to choke off debate through yet another time allocation motion. Let's be clear. Contrary to what the Government House Leader said, it is not about scheduling. It's not about efficiency. It's not about good governance. It's a legislative brute force and a heavy-handed tool the UCP is deploying to shut down the elected members of this House and to silence Albertans who sent us here to speak on their behalf.

This motion is shutting down debate on a major piece of legislation. This is not a housekeeping bill. This is not a technical amendment. This bill has far-reaching implications for the rule of law, for how elections are conducted in this province, and for how democracy works in this province. This is a major, consequential piece of legislation which impacts Albertans, and they deserve to know how their members have examined this, how their members have debated upon this bill. Instead of allowing that process to unfold, the government has chosen to curtail the debate on it.

Mr. Speaker, time allocation is not a tool used by a government confident in its ideas, confident in its policy, confident in its proposed legislation. It is the tool of a government afraid of scrutiny. When a government reaches for time allocation, it is admitting something. It is admitting that it cannot defend its legislation in open, public debate. It is admitting that they are unable to justify its decision to the people who will be impacted by this legislation.

This should alarm every single person in this Assembly, government and opposition alike. It should alarm every single Albertan, regardless of their political stripes, because the UCP has normalized the notion that debate can simply be shut down when inconvenient by way of time allocation motion. That is not okay.

Mr. Speaker, free speech and debate in this Chamber is not something to be managed, muted, or minimized at the Premier's will but something to be protected. The repeated use of closure motions curtails debate in this Chamber. It erodes the very foundation on which this Chamber stands: a check on executive

power, not a rubber stamp for it. It is the job of this House to ensure that no law is passed lightly, thoughtlessly, or without proper scrutiny.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans are watching. They see a government that is running away from debate, running away from accountability, and running away from transparency and has no regard or respect for their democratic institutions. To rush a bill of this magnitude through this Legislature, before the members and public can understand what's actually in it and how it impacts Albertans, is patently undemocratic. Albertans deserve better than this. They deserve a government that listens, not one that silences.

Let me say to all the backbenchers on the government side: if your legislation cannot withstand . . .

The Speaker: Through the chair, please.

Mr. Sabir: If your legislation cannot withstand the test of debate, then it's not the debate that must be cut short; it is the legislation that must be reconsidered.

I urge every member of this Assembly, especially those on the government side, to vote against this motion. Show Albertans that you care. Show Albertans that you value their voices. Show Albertans that you value the institution you're elected to serve.

Mr. Speaker, time allocation may shorten this debate today, but it will not stop the conversation happening outside these walls. It will not stop us from standing up for Albertans, their priorities, and what matters to them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I urge every member of this House to reflect on your role and vote against this motion.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 24 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:55 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker 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	Smith
Dyck	McDougall	Stephan
Ellis	Nally	Turton
Fir	Neudorf	Wiebe
Getson	Nicolaides	Williams
Glubish	Nixon	Wilson
Horner	Petrovic	Wright, J.
Hunter	Pitt	Yao
Jean	Rowswell	Yaseen
Johnson	Sawhney	

Against the motion:

Al-Guneid	Dach	Hoyle
Batten	Ellingson	Kasawski
Brar, Gurinder	Eremenko	Sabir
Brar, Gurtej	Ganley	Schmidt
Calahoo Stonehouse	Gray	Sigurdson, Lori
Ceci	Hoffman	Wright, P.
Chapman		

Totals:	For – 44	Against – 19
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[Government Motion 24 carried]

4:00 Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading
Bill 14
Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

[Adjourned debate December 8: Mr. Schow]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Fourteen? I'm good.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to Bill 14, and I will talk about a few things that this Bill 14 does. It's the most heavy-handed, undemocratic bill that this Legislature has ever seen, and it's doing a number of things.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

It's making changes to the Citizen Initiative Act, and also this bill tried to void a case reference that was sent by the Chief Electoral Officer to the Court of King's Bench to rule on the constitutionality of one of the citizen initiative referendum questions. Madam Speaker, that decision was handed down on December 5, 2025, and it's an important decision, an important read. I urge all members of this Legislature to take time to read that decision, but for the benefit of everyone I will quote a few things from that decision. Para 15 of the decision clearly tells us that section 2.1(1) gives the Chief Electoral Officer the authority to refer a special case to the court seeking court opinion whether a proposal conforms with the requirement of section 2(3) or (4) of the Citizen Initiative Act. Section 2(4) essentially says that no proposal can contravene Charter sections 1 to 35.1 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Madam Speaker, that is the UCP legislation. They passed it in 2021. They amended it last year. They cannot blame anyone for what is in this legislation. They cannot rail against the courts that they are gatekeeping, that they are unelected, that they are somehow interfering in executive powers or functions. The Chief Electoral Officer did exactly what this Legislature authorized that officer to do and pursuant to the provision that's contained in the legislation that was passed by this UCP government. Not only is it disingenuous and dishonorable for this government to criticize the courts; it's dishonest because legislation exactly asked the court to do what they did.

When government was making changes to the Citizen Initiative Act, my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud at that time asked two relevant questions to the government. The first was whether citizen initiative proposals that contravene Charter sections 1 to 35.1 would proceed or not. The second: if there's a determination to be made whether a petition contravenes sections 1 to 35.1 of the Constitution, who decides? That's also noted by Justice Feasby in para 94 of this decision. At the time the then Justice minister said in no uncertain terms that no citizen initiative proposal that contravenes sections 1 to 35.1 of the Constitution will be able to proceed and also said that if there is any concern, the Chief Electoral Officer will be able to send a reference to the court. That's in the legislation. The UCP didn't like what they passed in this House because somebody didn't do their homework or the circumstances may have changed. Then the UCP even tried to pressure the Chief Electoral Officer to take its reference back from the court and let this separation referendum proceed. They argued against their own bill, against their own explanation.

Madam Speaker, in para 155 this is what Justice Feasby has to say about government intervention in this case and the argument they made with respect to these provisions.

Alberta's argument is not just wrong, it is dishonourable. The Justice Minister cannot stand in the Legislative Assembly in May citing CIA [section] 2(4) as a protection for Treaty rights and then send his lawyers into Court in November to make a technical argument that CIA . . . 2(4) is not protection for Treaty rights. Reconciliation demands that governments do better than this.

The UCP needs to do far better because their record on Indigenous rights, on treaty rights, on Charter rights is not a good one.

Justice Feasby said in no uncertain terms that a referendum on separation of Alberta from Canada will violate the Charter, will violate sections 35 and 35.1, and Alberta cannot hold this referendum without violating the Constitution. At para 186 Justice Feasby quoted Professor Nigel Bankes, one of my favourite professors from law school, who talked about the Grassy Narrows decision and said, "Grassy Narrows stands for the proposition that a province like Alberta only has the power to take up lands under one of the numbered treaties by virtue of being part of the federal State of Canada." In other words, the treaties existed before Alberta became a province, and any claim that Alberta has on these lands is by virtue of these treaties and by being part of the federation. Without violating those treaties, without violating Charter rights, Alberta cannot hold these kind of separation referendums.

A few other things that Justice Feasby also was critical of: the government's move to try to end this case before him after it has been heard, after Indigenous communities have made submissions and used their resources, time, and money to make those submissions. The government thought that they could use or abuse their legislative authority and end this case. Para 250 of the decision says:

The legal consequence of discontinuing this proceeding prior to a decision would be to silence the Court. Legislating an end to litigation is extraordinary. Even the Referendum Proponent who stands to benefit from Alberta's actions wrote to the Court last night expressing concern that "the Legislature is interfering in a duly convened judicial process."

That is shameful. Every member on the government side should think about whether that's their role.

4:10

I will also quote a couple of more paragraphs, in particular 252 and 253. In 252 the justice says:

To be clear, Alberta has the legislative authority to change the CIA as it appears intent on doing so in the [Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025]. But attempting to change a new law that was amended earlier this year after the many participants in this matter have made significant expenditures of time and money to litigate on an accelerated basis is contrary to the rule of law.

It further says:

The rule of law plays a critical role with respect to the democratic process where stability of the governing legal regime enhances legitimacy and public confidence in the outcomes of elections and referendums. Changing legislation to circumvent a valid legal process commenced by the independent officer of the Legislative Assembly responsible for administering democratic processes is the antithesis of the stable, predictable, and ordered society that the rule of law contemplates, and democracy demands.

The last quote is paragraph 253 of Justice Feasby's decision. Legislating to pre-emptively end this court proceeding disrespects the administration of justice. We are in an age of scarce government resources that is as evident in the court system as it is anywhere. Alberta set up a process pursuant to CIA [section] 2.1 that conscripted the Court to determine a question

of public importance and this case was given priority over the needs of other justice system participants. Only after the parties, intervenors, and the Court invested many days inside and outside of the courtroom to bring this case to an expeditious conclusion, did Alberta decide to change the law. Alberta's cavalier disregard for court resources and lack of consideration for the parties and First Nations intervenors who participated in this proceeding in good faith is disappointing to say the least.

That's coming from Justice Feasby, who heard from everyone interested in this decision. Here we have a government who thinks that they have authority to override even the court system. That is dangerous. That is undemocratic. That runs afoul of the rule of law.

Here is one more thing. Today the Chief Electoral Officer also sent a letter to all members of this Legislature and clearly said that these amendments can significantly harm Albertans' trust in the integrity of our constitutional democratic process. He also goes on to say that the Chief Electoral Officer remains tasked with making the determination of whether an application for citizen initiative may proceed. However, the discretion of the determination rests wholly with the minister. That is absurd. He's asking them: either stop interfering in the functioning of an independent officer of the Legislature, or keep this all-citizen initiative proposal to yourself and decide as you see fit. Again, members should read this letter. He's asking to amend or pull Bill 14.

Then there are changes with respect to the Law Society. The minister is giving himself the ability to determine the education and training for the lawyers and how trust funds should be handled. Again, not the government's job. Then the poor Alberta Law Foundation: now the minister will make them bylaws for administration of their funds. Again, government is just stealing money from the Law Foundation they are not entitled to.

There is one more thing. They're also legislating copyright on "conservative." This is a government so afraid of competition. This is a government so afraid of scrutiny, whether it comes from independent officers, whether it comes from the court.

This bill is quite dangerous, and government should not have curtailed debate on it. Government needs to pull this bill, listen to everyone concerned about it, be that the Chief Electoral Officer, Indigenous communities, and Albertans at large who care about the institution of democracy in this province.

Also, the Law Society and the Alberta Law Foundation: these are independent organizations.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for Calgary-Acadia.

Member Batten: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and join debate in opposition to Bill 14, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025. We spoke about this a little bit yesterday, which is that public life, service is not just something you do in passing. It is a standard. It is the job. It is the responsibility. Service should be what actually dictates our decisions. That is how the Assembly is judged. We are judged on the outcomes of this space. When we talk about service to Albertans, you know, we're talking about a number of things. We're talking about putting the public interest above personal or partisan gains – and that includes your besties – protecting democratic institutions so they can protect people, the key word there being "protect." Stay in your lane; do your job.

It also talks about exercising power with restraint, transparency, and accountability. We've heard the expression a number of times, something to the effect of that absolute power equals absolute corruption, that type of thing. When we look to judge these different bills, to debate these bills, what we're looking for are bills that add value to Albertans, that have principles and show service. But when

bills do the opposite, well, that's something entirely different, Madam Speaker.

I certainly don't want to repeat myself, but of course service means that you do the job the public entrusted you to do, not the job that makes your path easier. Just like great leadership, service isn't about you. It's about building a system that outlasts you. It's about elevating those around you. It's not about wearing the crown or giving yourself more power. Madam Speaker, service means humility in power and not indulgence. Real service is often inconvenient for those of us doing the work, and that's precisely why it matters. Integrity is vital for service.

Yesterday I made reference to the government picking up their toys and stomping out when they didn't want to debate a submitted question. Well, Madam Speaker, Bill 14, a.k.a. the Get Out of Jail Free for the Attorney General bill, not only centralizes power into the government; it goes further. It provides immunity to the minister. This is much worse than what we were debating yesterday. This is much worse than the government refusing to engage in debate. This bill eliminates future debate that Albertans are entitled to by protecting, by giving immunity to the Attorney General. That's zero accountability. Zero.

Now, the Justice minister and Attorney General referred to this bill as a housekeeping bill. Well, I don't know what your definition of housekeeping is, but housekeeping doesn't mean centralizing power, it doesn't mean erasing accountability, and it doesn't mean creating barriers for Albertans. That's certainly not my definition of it. The professionalism that a public office demands is more than just decorum. There needs to be respect for established rules and boundaries, deference to independent offices whose levers were put in place by prior governments so that we would avoid this very debate that we're having right now.

Now, I want to recognize that elected officials are temporary, but the institutions should be durable. I'll repeat that. Elected officials, all of us in this space, are temporary. The actions we take in this House will affect the next generation to come and the one after that.

4:20

Now, as professionals we should not be redesigning the rules to suit our purposes. We should certainly not be redesigning them to shield anyone from accountability. Professionals do not take powers that have belonged to impartial independent offices for decades and then centralize them around themselves. That immunity piece, Madam Speaker. When I think back to debates we've had in this House, especially when we're discussing things like professionalism and integrity, holy bananas, to give yourself immunity – the hubris that is required to put bills like this forward is impressive in all the wrong ways. It's just wild. Like, oh, my goodness.

Professionalism as an elected official requires and demands responsibility, and responsibility means that not only are you held accountable and responsible; goodness, you want to be. You expect to be. The higher your role, the more scrutiny you invite. That just makes sense, Madam Speaker. Responsibility is not what we're seeing in Bill 14, where we have expanding ministerial authority over citizen initiatives, granting, again, the Attorney General the unilateral ability to stop court actions, and restricting political parties, party names in ways that, you know, might just benefit the current sitting government but not Albertans. These measures are not responsible. They are not protective. Well, not for Albertans, anyway.

Let's just call this what it is. Bill 14 is not about Albertans. It is not about service to Albertans. It is a self-serving bill of this government. It is about improving the government's leverage over Albertans, but you don't have to take my word for it. I'd love to

share with you some of, you know, what my constituents have shared. Here's one:

I am very concerned about the authoritarian and non-democratic actions of the UCP Government. Bill 14 is just the latest example. I have never written to my MLA before, but I am increasingly incensed by their actions. I would describe myself as a "liberal conservative." However, I did vote NDP in the last election.

Thank you.

The latest statement that "Judges should not be gatekeepers" is very troublesome. It is completely wrong. The judiciary needs to be independent.

And they close with:

I suspect there will eventually be a court case where this will be tested.

Madam Speaker, I agree. Every time this government puts forward legislation that they know is bad, they know is going to be challenged, they know is going to cost taxpayers so much extra money, so much of our hard-earned taxpayer dollars in defence of their actions, it's like a double whammy for Albertans. The solutions this government has come up with are things like: "I don't know. Notwithstanding clause? Immunity in bills?" Jeez.

This bill shields the most powerful legal office in the province from consequences. Is that a joke? Like, times are weird, Madam Speaker, but holy bananas. This bill weakens independent checks, it restricts political choices, and it interferes with the processes that belong to citizens and not ministers. I do not understand how anyone could possibly claim that this is service, well, to Albertans. This is a concentration of power and not a stewardship of it.

Madam Speaker, is the job of the government to make everything more difficult for Albertans? Bill 14 puts unnecessary restrictions around anyone seeking to become a political candidate, and it restricts the names of future parties. Like, restricts. On this side of the House we understand the importance of being at that table and having your voice heard. It is a privilege and it is a huge responsibility to be debating this in the House today. With Bill 14, like, well, most of the other 13 bills that have come forward this fall, the government continues to focus on the wrong priorities. Bill 14 does nothing for Albertans; it does everything for the government. That is not how government is supposed to serve their electorate. Albertans need stable housing, public health care, strong public education, and the ability to pay their bills and feed their family. They do not need more centralized power within this government.

I want to share another e-mail I received this morning, another constituent.

I am strongly opposed to Bill 14 – Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025. Who and/or what organization is next? It is extremely important that a democratic government have checks and balances in place. This Bill will transfer power to the Justice Minister from organizations that work independently from the government, the Chief Electoral Officer and the Alberta Law Foundation. The use of the Not Withstanding Clause took away civil rights from individual groups. Bill 14 is a power grab and [it removes] civil rights [from] Albertans.

Now, they go on to speak strongly about the immunity for the Justice minister.

This screams I am not going to follow the rules of this position I'm going to do whatever [name of the Premier] wants me to do [and I'll] take no responsibility.

And, bonus, I have immunity. Yeah, Albertans are paying attention, Madam Speaker.

They also go on to say:

I hope [the government] is not suggesting that [Albertan] supporters only look for the word "conservative" in order to mark their ballots. Do you not trust their ability to differentiate one conservative party from another?

How stupid do you think Albertans are? I have the same question, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Williams: Point of order.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Williams: Madam Speaker, I hesitate to rise as I've only just re-entered the Chamber, but to hear the member opposite ... [interjections] I'm present.

It's unfortunate the member opposite asked: how stupid do the members on this side of the aisle think Albertans are? It's certainly language, under 23(j), that is likely to cause disorder in the House. There are many other ways of trying to communicate that point that are not inflammatory, that are not accusatory, and can contribute to meaningful debate. I know the member was making a substantive point. I ask the member to withdraw and apologize for the comment, continue on the substantive point that was being made.

The Deputy Speaker: First of all, hon. member, you cannot say that you are here or that you're away. That is a point of order in this House ...

Mr. Williams: I do apologize.

The Deputy Speaker: ... as you are calling a point of order.

I'm happy to hear your arguments, but I tend to agree with the Deputy Government House Leader that this is a point of order. Would we agree, and we can apologize and move on?

Mr. Sabir: If you've already made the decision without hearing, there's no point to argue, then.

The Deputy Speaker: Fair enough. Let's apologize and move on.

Member Batten: I apologize and withdraw.

Debate Continued

Member Batten: As I was saying, Madam Speaker, quoting from a constituent's concern, which I'm sure has hit many of the government's inboxes, so I welcome the members to read it for themselves, they do continue to basically – well, not basically say.

I strongly disagree with Bill 14 and the power grab that it is. What are you afraid of and why?

I have the same question, Madam Speaker.

4:30

This government continues to put up barriers, not transparency, as they claim. This bill: oh, my goodness. Albertans deserve a justice system and a democracy that is insulated from partisan manipulation. Again, that is why previous governments have put these levers in place and used independent offices. Bill 14 unwinds it all. This does not modernize anything. It's not efficient at helping Albertans. It might be efficient at pushing forward some other agenda that is not what Albertans have asked for. It's like removing the brakes from a vehicle and just telling everyone: it's okay; totally cool; just keep driving. The consequences for Albertans are huge.

If this government cannot see how Bill 14 is absolutely inappropriate and disrespectful to every single Albertan that voted us into this space, well, I'm really hoping they'll take our advice and call the darn election so that Albertans can have that beautiful option of making better choices. They are currently recalling a lot ...

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others to join the debate? The hon. Member for Calgary-North East.

Member Gurinder Brar: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In a small village residents started a soccer league, and they had one simple rule: whoever referees a match cannot play in it. But the referee – let’s call him Mr. UCP – one day announced new rules. Rule number one, the referee can now play as striker. Rule number two, any foul on the referee is no longer a foul. Rule number three, the referee may change the rule again whenever he feels the vibes are off. When players objected, he wrote a fourth rule: complaining about the rules is against the rules

[Mr. Rowsell in the chair]

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the members opposite to raise their hand if they believe the referee did the right thing. I thank the members opposite for their collective silence because their silence reminds me of what happened next. The referee gathered all the players and asked: does anyone here support my new rule that the referee can score all the goals? The players looked at each other. No one raised a hand because they knew it was unfair. Silence in this Chamber tells me the exact same thing. Even the members on the other side know that when someone makes the rules, changes the rules, and protects themselves from accountability, it is wrong. The silence also tells me people know unfairness when they see it. They may not speak. They may not raise their hand, but they feel it in their bones.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans value fair play, honest rules, and level fields, and Bill 14 does the exact opposite. It tilts the field, meddles with the rules, and massages the ego of this government. Albertans deserve a government that plays by the rules, not one that rewrites them mid-game. But, unfortunately, the UCP is not that government. The UCP has done everything in their power to give them more power, and this is the trend of this government.

The UCP fired the independent Election Commissioner in 2019. Mr. Speaker, do you know who that Election Commissioner was? The one who was investigating UCP leadership race wrongdoing. Not only did they fire the Election Commissioner; they folded the role into Elections Alberta. The UCP attempted to control the budgets and operations of officers like the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and the UCP reduced the access to documentation that would otherwise be made publicly available. The UCP blocked the members of the opposition from making the letter sent to independent officers regarding government breaches public. In Bill 22 in 2019, the Accountability Reversal Act, the UCP fired the Election Commissioner, merged agencies, reduced oversight from independent bodies. The UCP introduced Bill 10 in 2020, which gave the ministers power to rule by decree, allowed the cabinet to pass new laws without going through the Legislature, and with this bill the UCP entirely bypassed democratic debate. Instead of sitting at the table with municipalities, the UCP has handcuffed them, prohibited them from dealing directly with the federal government.

In 2022 the Premier claimed to be in touch with the Crown prosecutors and then retracted that claim when she was criticized for exceeding her authority. In 2023 the Premier breached the conflict of interest laws while attempting to interfere in the justice system to help a street pastor, Artur Pawlowski, with his criminal charges. In 2025 the UCP government under this Premier now introduces a law to force Elections Alberta to withdraw its reference to the court under the Citizen Initiative Act. The UCP has weakened the institutions that were meant to keep the government honest.

Mr. Speaker, power corrupts, and more power corrupts even more. Then comes the UCP-level corruption. Enough of power grabbing. Enough of power-hungry politics. Enough of the UCP threatening democracy. Albertans are tired of the UCP dismantling

the checks. Albertans are tired of the UCP ignoring the safeguards. Albertans are tired of the UCP betraying the democracy.

We must stand up for democracy. We must restore checks and balances. We must commit to the values of justice, integrity, and fairness. Albertans deserve a government committed to values of good governance, values of democracy, values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, to build a province where power is a service, not a weapon, politicians are accountable, not power hungry, and democracy is protected, not threatened.

We as elected representatives must address key questions. Do we want to build a province where people with power accumulate more power, or do we want to give this power back to people? Do we want to build a province where government is of the people, for the people, and by the people or a province where the government is of the power, for the power, and by the power? Do we want to build a province where there is a level field or a province where the field is slanted in the favour of politicians? Under Bill 14 the UCP is tilting the field in their own favour.

They do three things to tilt the field in their favour. The first one is by giving the Justice minister immunity. Mr. Speaker, let me take you back to the famous village where the soccer referee keeps inventing new rules whenever and wherever he feels like. One day the players said to the referee: “You keep calling fouls on everyone except yourself. If you make a bad call, who holds you accountable?” The referee straightened his whistle and said, “From today I’m introducing a new rule, that the referee cannot be wrong.” The players asked, “What does that even mean?” He said: “It means that whatever I do is always correct. No arguments. No questions. No consequences.” One player said, “This is not a rule; this is immunity.” The referee nodded happily: “Exactly. A referee must be protected from the players he is refereeing.” This is precisely what the UCP is doing in Bill 14.

The UCP’s Minister of Justice is granting himself immunity from professional standards that all of the lawyers in the province are held to. It is not just about unfairness; it’s about the gross abuse of power. Mr. Speaker, instead of governing for Alberta, the UCP is focused on protecting themselves.

The second way this government is tilting the field is by controlling the Law Society. Mr. Speaker, let me take you back to the same village and the soccer league. One morning the referee called all the players together and made a big announcement. He said, “From today I will be in charge of training all the players.” The captain objected: “But you don’t even play. You just blow the whistle.” The referee replied: “Exactly. That’s why I know best.” Then he unveiled his new training program: no passing unless I approve the direction, no shooting unless I like your form, and no learning anything that makes me uncomfortable. The players looked at each other and said: “This man doesn’t want fair play. He wants power over how we learn the game.”

4:40

This is exactly what the UCP is doing with the Law Society. The UCP is giving themselves power over the legal profession and power to set the training lawyers go through. The UCP is banning the Law Society to train the professionals about Indigenous cultural sensitivity. The UCP is insulting the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Mr. Speaker, Albertans don’t want a referee who rewrites the rules, and they don’t want a Justice minister who controls the training of the professionals while giving himself full immunity.

Then there is the third thing that the UCP is doing to tilt the field in their favour. Mr. Speaker, let me go back to the same village soccer league, where the referee had already changed half the rules. One day the players said: “Mr. Referee, this is getting out of hand.

Let's hold a vote to decide the next rule, a fair referendum." The referee smiled and said, "Excellent idea, but I will be in charge of checking the question." The players asked, "What does that even mean?" He pulled out a notebook and explained: "If the question is something I like, it goes ahead. If the question is something I don't like, it goes straight to the garbage. If anyone wants a court to check if the question is fair, well, only I can decide if the court gets to look at it." The frustrated players looked at him. "What kind of referendum is this?" The referee proudly replied, "A very safe one, safe for me." That was the day the players realized the referee didn't just want to control the match; he wanted unlimited and ultimate control.

That is exactly what the UCP is doing in Bill 14. The UCP strips the Chief Electoral Officer of the authority to review citizen-initiated referendum questions to ensure they are constitutional. The UCP allows the Justice minister to decide whether a question gets sent to the court or for review or if it proceeds without any legal check. The UCP concentrates power in cabinet rather than allowing arm's-length officials to do their job. This is not democracy, Mr. Speaker. It is a referee deciding which votes count and which don't. Albertans deserve fair referendums, not the ones where government referees the questions, the process, and the final scope.

Mr. Speaker, the minister says that the bill is about housekeeping. If housekeeping means giving him immunity, Albertans don't need this housekeeping. If housekeeping means giving him more power, Albertans don't need this housekeeping. If housekeeping means insulting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and recommendations, Albertans don't need this housekeeping.

Albertans don't want a government that keeps tilting the field in their favour; they want a government that believes in a level field. Albertans don't want a government that holds on to power; they want a government that gives power back to the people. Albertans don't want a government that changes the rules in their favour; they want a government that sticks to fair rules. Albertans know the rules of fairness. They practise those rules standing in grocery lines, stopping at traffic signals, and shovelling snow for their neighbours. The only one who doesn't know the rules of fairness is this UCP government.

Mr. Speaker, in that village soccer league I spoke about earlier, there came a day when the referee pushed things too far. He changed the rules, controlled the training, controlled the votes, and finally declared himself immune from all fouls. The village finally said: enough. They fired the referee and hired someone who respected the game and the players. That is the heart of democracy. When leaders forget who they serve, the people remind them. Albertans are ready to do exactly that because this province believes in values of fairness, values of good governance, values of democracy.

Mr. Speaker, the choice before us is simple. Do we want a government for the people, of the people, and by the people or a government of the power, for the power, and by the power? Albertans already know their answer, and just like in that village, when the next election whistle blows, they will fire the referee and choose leaders who respect the game, honour the rules, and serve them.

With an Alberta New Democratic government we will build a future where democracy is a level field and not a tilted one. Mr. Speaker, this is the Alberta New Democratic vision, a province where fairness is guaranteed, not negotiable; a province where transparency is mandatory, not optional; a province where accountability is a responsibility, not inconvenience; and above all, a province where the rules belong to the people, not to whichever

minister happens to be holding the pen. Albertans deserve a government that plays by the rules, not a government that plays with the rules.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that, I request and urge all members of the House to vote against this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Are there other speakers? The Member for Edmonton-South. Go ahead.

Member Hoyle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, as I rise here to speak on Bill 14 in absolute, clear, and firm opposition to this bill, a piece of legislation that completely overrides the rule of law. The UCP clearly in this bill appears to be governing to protect themselves rather than governing to protect Albertans. This bill appears as if this government is trying to entrench itself through rewriting the rules of democracy, undermining the courts, disabling oversight, and weakening the public's ability to hold this government accountable. That's because Bill 14 dismantles the very foundation of our legal system and marks the second time the Citizen Initiative Act will be amended this year.

It also grants the Minister of Justice immunity from sanctions from the Law Society of Alberta when acting in their role as Attorney General. It is, as one justice put it, antithetical to the rule of law. Bill 14 seeks to silence the courts mid-proceeding and strip away constitutional safeguards. This is unprecedented in Alberta's history, and it proves that this government thinks they're above the law. If we allow this Bill 14 to pass, we are telling Albertans that the government can change the rules whenever it doesn't like the outcome. That should alarm every single Albertan that the government can change the rules however, whenever they want, including the members opposite, who need to acknowledge that every day this government steps closer and closer to an authoritative-style government.

Courts exist to interpret legislation and to protect constitutional rights. Bill 14 undermines that principle by preemptively ending judicial review. The UCP's Minister of Justice, the top lawyer in the province, is granting himself immunity from professional standards all other lawyers in this province are held to. Just even saying that is shocking. This is a gross abuse of power, especially given the track record of two former UCP Justice ministers and the complaints they have faced by the Law Society of Alberta.

I don't think it's outrageous to say that all ministers should be held accountable for their actions, and it's not lost on me that this bill was introduced less than 24 hours before an Alberta judge said that a referendum proposal on Alberta separating from Canada goes against Charter and treaty rights. That's despite the fact that the Minister of Justice said that this legislation, quote, has nothing to do with separatists. End quote.

As we've seen so many times before, this UCP government is trying every trick in the book to solidify their control and absolute power. Bill 14 is right out of the same playbook because it would effectively end court action on the issue, if passed. This is appalling, Mr. Speaker, because, as one judge noted:

The public is entitled to the fruits of this process that has been conducted largely at their expense so that if they are asked to vote on Alberta independence, they have a tool that may help them make sense of the legal dimensions of the secession of Alberta from Canada.

Never before have we seen a government introduce legislation to shut down an active court case because it didn't like where the decision was headed. This sets an absolutely dangerous precedent, and this government should be ashamed to even bring forth legislation like this.

4:50

Not only that, but it also transfers powers from the Chief Electoral Officer to the minister when deciding whether a citizen petition initiative should proceed. This means that only the minister would be able to refer a citizen referendum question to the courts, and the minister would also be allowed to recommend changes to a constitutional referendum question before it's put to the voters. It sounds like the UCP Minister of Justice is quickly becoming the most powerful person in Alberta because he's given himself an incredible amount of authority. As the Chief Electoral Officer said in a letter to the minister today:

The separation of powers between the legislative body and the executive is fundamental to our system of democratic government, and to ensure each part of government plays their proper role.

If enacted, the result of Bill 14 is an erosion of the separation of powers, one of the core tenets of our constitutional democratic order, and an essential element of free and fair elections.

Mr. Speaker, if the government could do this today on separation, what stops them from doing it tomorrow on property rights, health care, education? I mean, the list could go on. Albertans should be deeply concerned about this slippery slope, and they see Bill 14 for what it really is: a political tool to satisfy an extremist base by sowing even more seeds of division and mistrust in our institutions.

Bill 14 removes the requirement that citizen initiatives comply with the Constitution, and it's not surprising that this UCP government is choosing this path given its willingness to use the notwithstanding clause to override Charter rights. That means Albertans could be asked to vote on questions that violate their Charter rights and treaty obligations. I mean, what kind of province is this government wanting? Are they even listening to Albertans? Are they even focused on Albertans? I say absolutely not.

Indigenous leaders and advocates intervened in this case because their rights are at stake. Numerous First Nations in Alberta were granted intervenor status in the case: Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Samson Cree First Nation, Mikisew Cree First Nation, and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation. If constitutional protections can be passed for political convenience, then no one's rights are safe.

I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that the UCP is playing fast and loose with the future of our province because the more they stoke sentiments of separatism, the less likely businesses will want to open their doors here as they begin to view our province as a liability. Top business leaders have been warning that the prospect of Alberta independence is raising too many questions for companies to feel confident making big investment decisions here in Alberta, which isn't at all surprising since we know businesses don't like uncertainty, political uncertainty, instability; yet this UCP government keeps putting Alberta in this place economically.

For most businesses, especially those that have to attract capital from outside of Alberta, or even companies that are kind of on the fence of whether or not they should be investing in Alberta or Ontario or B.C., it can be a deciding factor in terms of whether or not investment happens in this province, an absolute disaster. That puts potentially thousands of jobs at risk. It shuts the door on future generations of Albertans who are just entering the workforce. Instead, this government should be focused on increasing and having our youth stay here in this province.

This government is passing a bill that nobody wants, that nobody cares about in this province, and they're trying to distract from their terrible, terrible, terrible record thus far.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

It's laughable, Madam Speaker, and the Premier has the gall to point fingers at other orders of government supposedly trampling on provincial autonomy, when we just saw her and her government trample the rights of thousands of educators and vulnerable children mere days ago, and this bill will do the same. Shame on this government.

Albertans are sick and tired of this government's performative politics. They want real action to tackle the real challenges that Albertans are facing. They want to be able to trust that those in power have good heads on their shoulders. Right now all they see is a government that feels emboldened to make a mockery of fundamental rights and freedoms, and this coming from the most, quote, freedom-loving Premier in Canada, is truly the pot calling the kettle black, Madam Speaker.

Alberta's New Democrats are focusing on Albertans' priorities: affordability, health care, education, and ensuring that they have good-paying jobs to take care of themselves and their family.

With every bill we're seeing introduced in this House, we're seeing how little this government really cares to act in Albertans' best interests. This UCP government has the wrong priorities, and they continue to show just how incompetent they really are with Bill 14. This government is not focused on Albertans' priorities. They aren't focused on jobs and affordability. They ignored the highest inflation in the country and stagnant wage growth, and they waste taxpayers' dollars with bloated contracts; instead, Albertans want improvements to public health care, to education, protecting the eastern slopes from coal mining, and investments in housing.

I'm not sure why the UCP thinks that this Bill 14 will be helpful to Albertans. My office has been inundated with e-mails and phone calls from constituents and Albertans across this province who are absolutely fed up with this government and the Premier's actions, with her refusal and the government's refusal to stand up and defend Albertans' interests as part of a unified Canada.

I'd like to end off with an e-mail that I received last week. It says:

You can't vehemently deny something when we have the actual evidence of you committing treason, because that's what this is. You committed treason against Canada. You're fighting against the rest of us to serve a U.S. President, even your garbage referendum about Alberta leaving Canada, which cannot happen and is illegal. You are not fit to lead Alberta, and right now we need strong leadership that is willing to stand up for Canada. We need to be united, and we're going to fall, and your leadership is going to do nothing but drag Alberta through the mud.

End quote.

That was an e-mail I received from an Albertan about this government's lack of leadership. [interjections] If members over there have something to say, you can stand up and speak, okay? This is an Albertan speaking about your poor leadership, so it's good that you listen.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt, but you need to direct your comments through the chair.

Member Hoyle: More and more we're seeing the Premier legitimizing conspiracy theories and undermining our democracy. Let's be clear, healthy disagreement is important for democratic process . . .

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Government House Leader, point of order.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Schow: Rising on 23(h), (i), and (j), the member clearly just said the Premier is legitimizing conspiracy theories. We have been through this a number of times, talking about tinfoil hats and legitimizing conspiracy theories and entertaining conspiracy theorists and separatists and so on and so forth. It is becoming a lengthy list of things that the members like to walk this line and frankly stumble across this line of things that are unparliamentary. Madam Speaker, to suggest that the Premier is legitimizing conspiracy theorists: that is absolutely not the case. It is creating disorder in this Chamber. The member knows better. It's not the member's first day in this Chamber. I ask the member to withdraw and apologize and do better.

The Deputy Speaker: This will be interesting.
The hon. Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do not believe that it's a point of order, and the reason for that is that I think the member . . .
5:00

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry. I hesitate to interrupt. This is very bizarre. We'll come back to this point of order situation after we move to vote.

Pursuant to Government Motion 24, agreed to on December 9, 2025, one hour of debate has now been completed, and I am required to put to the Assembly all necessary questions to dispose of Bill 14, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, at second reading.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for second reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:01 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

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

Against the motion:

Al-Guneid	Chapman	Hoyle
Batten	Dach	Sabir
Brar, Gurinder	Ellingson	Schmidt
Brar, Gurtej	Eremenko	Sigurdson, Lori
Calahoo Stonehouse	Guthrie	Wright, P.
Ceci	Hoffman	

Totals: For – 42 Against – 17

[Motion carried; Bill 14 read a second time]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: We will finish the point of order. The hon. Opposition House Leader was making remarks.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think my colleague said something on the lines that the Premier has been seen legitimizing conspiracy theories. At that point the Government House Leader rose to raise a point of order, but I do not believe that it's a point of order. The words used by my colleague were: seen as legitimizing. I would argue that it's a matter of debate. The reason for that is that we have seen the Premier talk about chemtrails and how U.S. defence is involved in some kind of conspiracy and the chemtrails on Alberta. That was the first time I heard about chemtrails. Then the Premier has also talked about the health benefits of ivermectin. Prior to that, there is a widely circulated newspaper article where the Premier talks about the potential benefits of moderate smoking. Those are the kinds of things that are in the public record and are a matter of debate, and they could be interpreted as legitimizing some of these conspiracy theories.

I don't think that anything falls within 23. It was not any false or unavowed motive towards any member or allegations, and it's not the kind of insulting language. We are just quoting from the public record, and that's what the member was referring to. It's not a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

I think that I'm not going to find this as a point of order right now. I think we're going to end up in a situation where this is going to be a conversation about a point of order because both sides have made this argument when it comes to conspiracylike language in this House. Perhaps maybe we all should stop doing that in the best interest of order and decorum in this House. So not a point of order, but caution to all members as we move forward.

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Pitt in the chair]

The Chair: Hon. members, I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 12 Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2)

The Chair: I see the hon. Minister of Finance rising to speak.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise to move an amendment to Bill 12, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2).

The Chair: Hon. members, this will be known as amendment A2.
Hon. member, you may proceed.

Mr. Horner: Madam Chair, the government is proposing an amendment to Bill 12, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2). This amendment makes a change to the Alberta Corporate Tax Act addressed in Bill 12. We felt it was important to clarify when a data centre would pay zero per cent and when they would pay 1 per cent. In simple language: zero per cent if they are completely disconnected from the grid during the year; 1 per cent if they have self-supplied power generation that is still directly or indirectly connected to the grid. This clarification ensures a fair, consistent approach for all operators and protects Alberta taxpayers

by ensuring companies pay their fair share for the provincial services they use. At the same time, the amendment maintains a stable, competitive environment that supports investment, encourages innovation, and keeps Alberta attractive to major data-driven industries.

5:10

Madam Chair, this is a straightforward, clarifying amendment that strengthens the intent and application of Bill 12. I move this amendment and encourage all members to support it. Thank you.

The Chair: Are there members to join the debate? The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Member Ellingson: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for the amendment. We do appreciate the goal of attracting investment, but many of these data centre investors are large global corporations that are quite used to manipulating the jurisdictions in which they operate. We know already that the goal of the government is for them to bring their own power and establish themselves with their own power. With this amendment bringing their own power and not being attached to the grid brings them to zero, which potentially means that from many of these investments the government would not receive any direct fiscal benefit at all, only from ancillary activities. This is interesting in that, you know, let's say, if we had a food processor establish themselves in Lethbridge and they brought their own power, that food processor would then not be paying any direct fiscal benefit to the government. We're confused why some investors and corporations would be contributing to the people of Alberta and others would not, so we are going to be voting no for this amendment.

The Chair: Any other members to the amendment? Seeing the hon. Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just to clarify for the member opposite why we have these different distinctions. Every data centre that is now known globally connects to a grid or has some sort of redundant power. For that redundancy within Alberta, to protect our ratepayers, we do expect them to follow the same principle here. In some way, shape, or form they will connect to our grid for redundancy, which is why we have the three tiers of taxation, to clarify for them to invest here. In fact, the ability to be completely off grid and receive the zero per cent taxation would mean they would have to provide triple redundancy of their own generation, which is not economically viable for any known data centre globally at all. We think this is a very wise move, and it helps attract investment and develop further industry.

We look forward to members joining the debate later on and for this amendment to support the Minister of Finance with his work here. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members to the amendment?
Seeing none.

[Motion on amendment A2 carried]

The Chair: On the bill as amended, are there members wishing to join the debate?

Seeing none, I will call the question on Bill 12. [interjections] Sorry.

Are there speakers to the bill as amended? Okay. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thanks very much, Madam Chair. I'm happy to rise and speak to Bill 12, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

(No. 2). I'm going to keep my comments focused on three main areas within the bill. First, I'll talk about Bill 12 and its amendments to the legislation that governs AIMCo. I want to start by saying that this is government's attempt to create distance between significant liabilities that AIMCo has imposed upon pension plan holders. This is after the government forced certain pension plans into AIMCo against the desires of those pension plan holders, and now the government is trying to say that the government is not responsible for any of those losses.

It is incredibly risky to tell people that the government's agencies, boards, and commissions, which were created and had people appointed by the government itself, are not responsible for what the agencies, boards, and commissions then do. It creates risk for the business markets as well because if you can't trust the government to follow through on addressing the liabilities that they've created for any counterparty within their control, then it imposes concerns that other impacts will happen in other areas of the economy as well. If a government has created other agencies, boards, and commissions – for example, postsecondary institutions – and they face liabilities, that the government won't secure those or that the government won't offer guarantees to those is not good for the economy. It's certainly not good for those pension plans either.

If passed in its current iteration, I have significant concerns that this will impact commercial relationships between the Alberta government and its agencies that could be compromised under similar provisions with other entities as well. So that's the first thing I want to raise as a concern.

The second one that I want to raise as a concern is the impacts on some of the most – nobody ever wants to have to rely on government programs, Madam Chair. For those who live off AISH, AISH is a lifeline and it is absolutely necessary. Even to get on to AISH is not usually an easy process. I know that I represent many folks who survive off AISH and that it is often through multiple applications, multiple doctor's appointments, multiple specialists before one has been able to qualify. Under this there will be changes to absolutely make it more difficult for people to make ends meet.

At a time when our Official Opposition has been calling for increases to the minimum wage to address the affordability crisis and other measures that the government could take to drive down costs for people, the government is more focused on clawing back \$200 from those who are living on AISH and trying to direct them into other means of income, when you're on it because you're severely handicapped and it is often very difficult to secure any additional income. That's the second thing I wanted to raise.

The third one I'm going to touch on is around the Legislative Assembly amendment act, amendments which are happening in this act. Sorry. I have a number of different tags here. That one is on page 52 of our bill. It's 11(1), and there are specifically references to allowing for "the payment of allowances to Members appointed [to] parliamentary secretaries by the President of Executive Council." So for everyone who's struggling on AISH or everyone who's struggling to live on minimum wage when we have now the lowest minimum wage in the whole country, the government has decided that their priority is to let the Premier pay some of her caucus members more money. Not the people who barely are making ends meet but those who already have salaries in this place, who already have, if they live a certain distance away from the capital, accommodation allowances for when they're here.

People who live off AISH don't make as much money per month as the government has awarded their out-of-town MLAs to live in Edmonton as their second residence. It is a huge hypocrisy, at a time when the lowest income folks in our province are struggling to

make ends meet, that the government has decided to prioritize a handful of their own MLAs.

Some might be asking: why is that? Why is this the biggest priority right now for the government? Well, I don't want to assume any motives from anyone in this place, but there have definitely been a lot of people asking questions around the party once known as united and if they are truly united or not. What they appear to be united in is a desire to allow the Premier to pick certain people to get paid more money. That is not what any of us were elected to do. It is certainly not why I ran, and I doubt it's why any single member of this place ran, to give the Premier powers to make certain MLAs who haven't been given cabinet positions a nice hefty Christmas bonus before they go home for the holidays.

Madam Chair, it is with disappointment that this bill comes forward. Again, the impacts to AIMCo and those who are impacted by the pension holdings is an issue, the AISH question is a significant issue, and then the government's misguided priorities. It certainly speaks to a lot of entitlement when they're, in this bill, taking \$200 away from people surviving on AISH, creating more instability for pension plans and those who are investing in the province of Alberta by trying to take no responsibility for losses imposed by the government, and then at the same time giving themselves increased salaries.

Madam Chair, entitlement is something that I know has taken down conservative governments before, and something that I know the now Premier had campaigned against quite successfully, but it certainly seems to be alive and well in the governing party today.

I will cede the remainder of my time to my colleagues. Thank you.

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

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise today in fierce opposition to Bill 12, a bill so sprawling and so cynical, so cruel, that it can only be understood as what it truly is, a blueprint for abandonment of reasonable responsibility. This bill is deliberate harm dressed up in legalese language. AISH to ADAP: really, it should be called cruelty by design. The attack on Albertans with disabilities: I mean, who does that? Who attacks vulnerable citizens? I'll tell you who: this government. The UCP is trying to save money on the backs of people who already live in poverty. It's utter and pure disgrace.

5:20

Under Bill 12 they are replacing assured income for the severely handicapped, AISH, with a new program called ADAP. The cut to disability income is \$200 a month, from \$1,901 to \$1,701. That is over \$2,400 a year stolen from people who already cannot afford groceries, rent, medicine, basic dignity. Imagine, this comes after the UCP already clawed back the federal \$200 Canada disability benefit. This government took federal money meant to help disabled Albertans and pocketed it. That's not fiscal responsibility in my books. That's theft.

I spent many years as a young woman working in many different organizations in Calgary and rural communities supporting folks with dual diagnoses, persons with cognitive and developmental disabilities. Let me tell you, Madam Chair, this makes me sick. It is vile. It is beyond cruel. These are folks who already face stereotypes, sometimes abandonment from their families because of their disabilities. Some have speech impediments. Some have walking challenges, and we expect these people to pull up their bootstraps and get a job. It's disgusting. It's deplorable.

You know what, Madam Chair? In my family we look after children and adults with disabilities and special needs. We make

sure there are supports and accommodations when necessary. I don't know what kind of values this government was raised with, but this bill demonstrates it certainly was not grace.

Madam Chair, this is happening during a time of the cost-of-living crisis, with the highest inflation, the fastest growing rents, the highest auto insurance in the country, yet this government finds money to give themselves a raise. We're going to force our vulnerable citizens – let me remind you again what it means to be vulnerable. Some of these folks are in wheelchairs. Some are homebound. Some are on feeding tubes. Some have cognitive delays. Some have senior citizens as caregivers, their parents, and we have the audacity to expect and assign reassessments, reapplications, barrier on top of barrier. It's ridiculous. Bill 12 forces every single AISH recipient to be automatically transferred to ADAP in July of 2026 unless they beg for an exemption. I'm going to reiterate: our citizens with disabilities are going to be forced to be reassessed, reapply, and they're going to spend what little money they have on getting transportation to a doctor, if they can even see a doctor.

They have to live with this uncertainty. The definition of eligibility in this bill goes from weaker "permanently prevents employment" to "substantially impedes employment." The softer the language, the easier it makes for the UCP government to deny people, to downgrade them, cut their supports. This UCP cabinet will be able to set benefit levels in regulation, meaning they can cut supports without even coming back to this place and space and talk about it. And an appeals process? There is none. In some cases, imagine, the UCP cabinet can exempt decisions from being appealed at all, so disabled Albertans lose their income and their rights. It's disturbing.

I'm not the only one who thinks this. Stakeholders have spoken and are being ignored. Disability leaders from across our province, including the Premier's very own advisory council, signed an open letter saying that this is costly, chaotic, and destined to push people over poverty. Inclusion Alberta has said that this will thrust thousands of people with disabilities into deeper poverty. MS Canada has warned that these reforms threaten the stability of thousands of Albertans, and advocates are telling us that some disabled Albertans are considering MAID, medical assistance in dying, because they feel abandoned by their own government.

I have read e-mails, answered phone calls, gone for coffee where people weep and cry out of desperation, where they've had to surrender their pets because they can't afford the only companion that loves them unconditionally. It is disgusting. Madam Chair, I don't know how to say this in parliamentary language except that it is utterly a complete moral collapse.

Bill 12 has other failures embedded at AIMCo, the legal immunity for billion-dollar failures. Now, let's talk about AIMCo. You know, back in 2019 this government forced billions of dollars of public pension money into AIMCo against the will of Albertans. The plan members said no. The UCP government went ahead and did it anyways. They lost over \$2 billion. Now instead of accountability Bill 12 gives AIMCo and this UCP government Crown immunity. It blocks pension plans including LAPP, PSPP, and SFPP from recovering \$1.3 billion that they are trying to reclaim. This bill doesn't protect workers. It protects politicians and their friends.

Alberta pension holders pay the price while this government rewrites the law to rewrite all accountability. This immunity extends to former directors and officers of AIMCo. People who have already left cannot be sued. They cannot be held to account. This is conservative governance, the new governance. You actually know what it is? Authoritarian financial shielding.

While people with disabilities are being cut by \$200 a month, this bill quietly gives cabinet the power to pay parliamentary secretaries a new allowance. Lord knows we needed more parliamentary secretaries in this building. This is a reward system. The Premier has given nearly every caucus member a title to manage the unrest she's created, and now this Premier will pay extra for loyalty. After this bill passes, only five will not receive extra money; they'll have regular MLA pay. While disabled Albertans lose income, while pensioners lose their protections, while families struggle with rent, this government gives itself a raise. What kind of government does that? I'll tell you. This UCP government does that.

Bill 12 also creates legal shields for corporations who make or don't make climate disclosures. This is about protecting oil and gas companies and investors from lawsuits, not protecting the public, not protecting the land, not protecting the waters. After complaints were filed about misleading net-zero claims, this government chooses not transparency but corporate immunity. This bill expands liability backstops for the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation without meaningful consent, without transparent partnership, and without true respect for Indigenous sovereignty. Economic participation cannot be forced through Crown-controlled mechanisms while stripping us away from real decision-making power.

This bill has one line about the government of Alberta protecting investors. You know, it's kind of like how we're protecting Australian investors with the coal mines. There is no mention of protection for Indigenous communities, no mention of protection of the environment, no mention of protection of the water. If these projects fail, what are the protections for anybody? We don't know because Bill 12 makes an amendment with no mention of Indigenous peoples, just the opportunities act, you know, the Money Mart clause. Treaty rights are not for sale.

I'll tell you what. Bill 12, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2), cuts disabled people. It's legal immunity for billion-dollar failures, politicians paying themselves more. It's really failure after failure after failure. The UCP is the most irresponsible government Alberta has ever seen. All I have witnessed in this gallery is cuts, chaos, corruption, and cruelty, and this bill is all of those things.

Gitchi Manitou. My God, I pray for those who are struggling because Lord knows this bill will only deepen the wound and the burden for people with disabilities, the pension holders, the workers, Indigenous communities while giving carte blanche of damage and destruction to Alberta's ecosystems, Alberta's biodiversity, and our sacred waters.

You know what, Madam Chair? All Albertans deserve dignity. Our citizens with special needs deserve to be loved. They deserve to feel protected, not cruel punishment because they have disabilities.

Bill 12 is an insult. I vote against it loudly and clearly on behalf of the land, on behalf of the water, and on behalf of the people this government has chosen to abandon.

Hay-hay. Nanaskamon, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: Thank you very much. I will vote against Bill 12 as well. Thank you very much to the previous speaker and Edmonton-Glenora, too, for touching on all the egregious parts of Bill 12 that are before us.

I'm going to speak to two of those egregious parts, but first, just like my colleague before me who spoke, I too worked in the field helping people out, trying to get on government assistance because they were severely disabled, because they needed to get on supports

for independence if they had no other source of income. The people who were trying to get on disability supports took an incredibly long time to get there. They had numerous medical appointments. They had numerous costs, uncertainty, appeals after appeals sometimes. And when they did finally get on AISH, they could relax a little bit, but they weren't rolling in anything, particularly money. They would have to continue to meet with their workers and advocate for themselves and get other advocates to go along with them. It was difficult, but they thought that once they got there, they were on Alberta's income for the severely handicapped for the rest of their life because they were severely handicapped.

5:30

Now, essentially, 70,000 Albertans are being thrown off that program and they have to reapply. I have a gentleman who comes to my office a couple of times a week. When we had that break a couple of weeks ago, he was there two or three times, and his stress level is through the roof. He's been applying. He's on AISH, but he knows that he has to reapply through this other program, and he's unable to work. But his stress level is through the roof. He is looking for ways that he can tell this government that they need to recalibrate, stop their ADAP approach, and go back to what he needs, which is long-term support until he's potentially not going to be able to work, but he would like to work. He is trying to find that work.

Now, that's another thing that the ADAP program kind of indicates, that there are all these jobs out there that people who are on AISH will be able to get. I'm just looking at some of the comments by different stakeholders who say, you know, this is not going to work. For instance, MS Canada says, "These reforms threaten the stability of thousands of Albertans, including people with MS who already navigate an unpredictable and progressive disease and barriers to employment."

There are barriers, real barriers to employment. Employers don't want to hire people who have disabilities for fear that, you know, that disability will cost them time and energy in the workplace as an employer and not be able to go further and do a better job in terms of the kinds of programs and products they want to disseminate for or sell.

I don't understand why we're not talking about grandfathering the current people who are on AISH, the 70,000 Albertans who, through no fault of their own, applied to AISH, got on AISH, and believed that they were going to be on that government program for the rest of their lives. Why aren't they being grandfathered, and everybody else who comes, say, after July 2026 has to go through the ADAP program first? Giving some security to the people who are currently on AISH does not seem like a bad thing to do or a big leap, but the cynic in me and other people would say that the government is only doing this to reduce costs to the people on AISH.

They're looking to cut back, and cutting back on the most severely handicapped people in our province is not something that's laudable, is not something that speaks well to the government members and backbenchers there. It is harsh. It's a terrible thing to do to people who are severely handicapped. But that doesn't seem to enter into the argument. What enters into the argument is just, you know, if you're a current AISH recipient, you'll have to get reassessed and reapply for AISH following the transfer if you are allowed to get back on to AISH. It's backwards thinking, it's not humane, in my estimation, and it really shows what this government is all about.

The second thing I briefly wanted to point out is – I wonder who the five backbenchers on that side are? I could probably go through the pictures we have of all the members here and figure out who

they are. But what did they do that, you know, was so egregious that they're not getting a bump in pay?

Ms Hoffman: To be paid the same as us.

Member Ceci: Yeah, to be the same as us.

Twenty-five ministers, two associate ministers, nine parliamentary secretaries, and then – let's see – the committee chairs and the Speaker's team all get bumps, all get more money than those five on the other side and this side, who are not getting those things. Madam Chair, it's out of step with, I think, where Albertans are. To cut back on severely handicapped people but to give your own self more money is the wrong thing to do.

I remember there was this union leader one time in Calgary who said of Calgary council, you know: you feed yourself first, but you're not willing to feed the union members. Well, I could say the same thing over there. You feed yourself first, but you're not willing to feed the severely handicapped in this province. That's wrong, and it should be stopped. Stop it.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Beddington.

Ms Chapman: Thank you, Madam Chair. Some really great points from my colleague from Calgary-Buffalo. It's really interesting that we have this bill here, Bill 12, Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2), where, on the one hand, we're talking about reducing income for people who make \$23,000 a year, and then a few pages later in the bill we're figuring out ways to increase the salaries of people who make \$120,000 a year. It's actually a ridiculous thing.

The main point that I really wanted to make sure I had a chance to talk about on Bill 12 is my main question about this bill. Where are the jobs? Where are the jobs for all of these disabled people, severely handicapped people? Of course, AISH is a program of assured income for the severely handicapped. Where are the jobs that these people are meant to go out and get to support themselves with the reduction in the income that they're going to be seeing from AISH? Right now an AISH recipient makes \$1,940 per month – that's around \$23,000 a year – and this government is going to, as they force Albertans on to the new program, ADAP, reduce that income support. So now they're not going to be living on \$23,000 a year; they'll be living on \$20,000 a year.

Now, I was reviewing the comments that the Member for St. Albert had made when she spoke to this bill. She made a really interesting observation, which was that, you know, there were possibly members of this Chamber who charge more than that in mileage every year, which I thought was interesting. So I did a quick check. The Member for Drayton Valley-Devon, \$31,817. That's what he claimed just for mileage last year. This is a government who expects somebody to live, to pay for all their expenses, rent, food – are they allowed to have streaming services? I don't know; maybe that's a luxury that only nondisabled people are allowed to have – for \$10,000 less than what the Member for Drayton Valley-Devon charges for mileage each year.

The Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, the minister who is responsible for this new program, for the change from AISH to ADAP, not only did he claim \$25,000 in mileage, \$24,000 for his accommodation, \$3,800 for his meals; that member feels that \$23,000 a year is too much for somebody to live on, to cover all of their expenses. It's absolutely ridiculous.

5:40

But the jobs. I am all for disabled people having opportunities to work, and there is a real issue with real opportunities being available for disabled people to work. If you look at federal statistics, the labour force participation rate for disabled people is

53.5 per cent; that's compared to 75 per cent for folks who aren't disabled. Let me put it a different way. Let's look at the unemployment rate. The last time this survey was done, it was 6.8 per cent for nondisabled Canadians, and for disabled people it was an unemployment rate of 10.4 per cent. Those are people who are actively seeking employment and who are unable to find opportunities.

I met a constituent a couple of months ago. I was out door-knocking. For members on the other side, that's where we go out to our constituents and we ask them, you know, to give feedback, to talk to us about priorities they want to see represented. I know – don't worry – it's a different concept for you guys, but for us that's a thing we do. The constituent that I met – and I'm terribly sorry, Constituent; I have tried to rattle your name out of my foggy, middle-aged brain and I couldn't dislodge it there, although if I saw you in the street, I'd know exactly what you and your mom look like, so I hope that covers for the sin of forgetting your name. I'm going to call her Becky.

Becky is a young disabled woman, and she was one of the lucky few who had managed to find a job. She was working for Loblaw's. She was a merchandiser in a store. Now, she lost her job during COVID. A lot of people lost their jobs during COVID. She didn't take her COVID money, you know, to eat Cheezies. Actually, I can't remember the offensive things the members opposite said about people on COVID benefits so I'll leave it, but the key here is that once COVID had settled down and the workforce was staffing back up again, that exact same job that Becky had held for years, with nothing but good reports from her boss, nothing on her employment record that suggested there were any issues with Becky's performance at work, came available. And, boy, was she excited because now she was going to be able to get back to work. This was a job that was going to be understanding of her limitations, it was going to provide the kind of hours that she was capable of working, and she knew this. She felt confident about this because, of course, she had held this job. Becky applied for this job, and guess what happened? She didn't get it. They hired a nondisabled person instead of Becky.

This is the kind of story that I hear from disabled constituents who come to me with concerns about this change to ADAP, that talk about employment supports. Government employment supports look like workshops. Oh, let me help you write your resumé, right? Let's tweak up your cover letter a little bit. Like, let's sit down and do a bit of interview prep. That is not actually going to create any jobs that are going to welcome in disabled people. I have seen nothing in this bill and nothing in this government plan that shows any real intelligent thought about what it is going to take for the labour market in Alberta to be able to have the kinds of jobs available for disabled people to apply to.

When my colleague from Calgary-Buffalo referred to grandfathering, my thought was: how about you move people when they get the job, right? Go ahead, encourage people towards employment. There's no problem with that; opportunity for everyone. This is meant to be the province of opportunity. Of course, we should be encouraging people to seek out opportunities. Great. Seek out the opportunity; once you secure employment, now you know what kind of money you're making; sure, then maybe you transfer on to another program. But it is absolute cruelty by this government to upend the lives of tens of thousands of Albertans who are already living well below the poverty level and trying to sell them that this program, ADAP, is going to be some kind of benefit for them. It's utterly disingenuous, and it is a disgusting way to treat disabled people.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I will not be supporting this bill, to be clear.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Member Eremenko: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to just take a few minutes here to speak to Bill 12, Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2). I had the privilege of being able to speak to the AISH to ADAP changes that the bill contains, and my colleagues certainly have done a beautiful job of, you know, laying out just how incredibly problematic that is and how deeply, deeply concerning and scary it is for AISH recipients when they just don't really know when the hammer is going to drop next. I won't be talking about AISH to ADAP further, but I do really want to point out the absolutely bizarre components of this bill that are in regard to the parliamentary secretary pay raise.

Now, I find it so fascinating, just so interesting, that conservative parties for, like, time immemorial, Madam Chair, have spoken about small government. When I think about this a little bit further, I think that maybe they benefit from interchanging both capital "S" small government and small "s" government. When I think about small "s" government, I think about, you know, kind of government with minimal interventions, libertarian, laissez-faire, free market, individual freedom kind of stuff while capital "S" small government is quite literally a smaller government, a smaller budget, a smaller cabinet, a smaller bureaucracy.

What I have come to learn in the two and a half years of being in Chambers is that the UCP government is neither small "s" nor capital "S" small government. In fact, I would say that they get a big, capital "F" fail on both of those fronts. They have been pulling the wool over the eyes of Albertans, I believe, when they talk about small government, whether it be in campaign platforms or at the doors, because what we have here is anything but.

There is a cabinet of 25 ministers, two associate ministers, and nine parliamentary secretaries. As my colleague from Calgary-Buffalo just earlier mentioned, that leaves only five members in the caucus opposite that don't have some kind of additional title. I'm sure that their letterhead is lovely, but whether or not there is actual benefit to some of those roles, I would really beg the question on whether or not that is, in fact, achieving better outcomes and impact for Albertans.

Under the Rachel Notley government of 2015 to 2019 the largest that the NDP cabinet ever was was 18 ministers. We have now utterly blown that out of the water, so I would love to hear the case that the members opposite make with their constituents in their celebration of small government, of fiscal prudence, of fiscal responsibility, when here we are with Bill 12 giving raises to nine additional members of their caucus because they have "parliamentary secretary" behind their name.

Let's just look at what some of those parliamentary secretaries are. We have a parliamentary secretary for Affordability and Utilities. Weird, because I'm pretty sure we also have a Minister of Affordability and Utilities. We have a parliamentary secretary for Indigenous and rural policing. We have a Minister of Indigenous Relations and a Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services. We have a parliamentary secretary for economic corridor development. Pretty confident that job is already being taken by the Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade, and Immigration. I wonder if, in fact, this is the small government that conservative parties are constantly patting themselves on the back for.

Those nine parliamentary secretaries couldn't be left out of the mix. They needed to be bought by their leader, which is a question I think all of us here on this side and many Albertans watching are wondering: why did these parliamentary secretaries that in my mind seem awfully redundant to members of the Executive Council already deserve and earn the raise that they claim to have

received in Bill 12 should it be voted through, and what's the benefit for Albertans? What does it show? That in my mind strikes me that if the minister is already doing their job, then MLAs who do not have the privilege of sitting in cabinet can also simply do theirs with the very generous salary in which all of us are already earning.

On that front, Madam Chair, I will end debate. Right?

Ms Chapman: No, no, no.

Member Eremenko: No. I'm not ending debate?

Ms Chapman: No.

Member Eremenko: No.

Ms Chapman: Just sitting down.

Member Eremenko: I'm just sitting. Thank you.

The Chair: Are there others to join the debate on Bill 12? Seeing none.

[The remaining clauses of Bill 12 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

The Chair: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Any opposed? That is carried.

5:50

Bill 9

Protecting Alberta's Children Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair. It is a pleasure to rise and speak about Bill 9, which in my view is a vital piece of legislation that safeguards the well-being of our children. It empowers parents, and it ensures fairness in sport.

Madam Chair, in an era where rapid social changes can create challenges for our youth, Bill 9 invokes the notwithstanding clause to protect three essential laws here in this Legislature: Bill 26, Bill 27, and Bill 29. It's important because those bills guide a number of important things that our children require, those guiding school names and pronouns; preserving parental rights in education, making sure that parents remain well informed about what is happening with their children; of course, upholding the integrity of the fairness in sport for women and girls; and also making sure that our young children do not make decisions that they may not have the full capacity to make at tender young ages.

Madam Chair, of course, this isn't about exclusion; it's about protection. Our children deserve better. They deserve safe and inclusive spaces, and parents must always, of course, have a voice in their children's upbringing. They must be free from ideological overreach. It must be free from outside influences, and our kids need guidance. They need guidance rooted in not only biology but in common sense, not on fleeting trends or ideologies from the left. By passing Bill 9, we affirm that Alberta's commitment remains absolutely strong and sound when it comes to family values, to child safety, and, of course, to true equality within this province.

With that, Madam Chair, I move to adjourn debate on Bill 9.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

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

The Chair: Any members to join the debate? The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Thank you again, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to rise on Bill 11, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2). It's a pleasure to rise this evening because this is a forward-thinking bill that creates reform that will absolutely revolutionize Alberta's health care delivery and ensure that every Albertan receives access to timely, high-quality care in this province.

The bill modernizes a number of things, but it certainly addresses physician practice rules. It expands coverages and certainly creates a more equitable system for all Albertans. It adopts some of the most cutting-edge practices that are done in other places in this world. We know, Madam Chair, that this creates a model that I think we are striving to emulate here in this province, a made-in-Alberta approach that will create a better health care system in general. It'll allow surgeons to balance public and private procedures, and most certainly it will result in significantly reduced waiting times and the attracting of top talent here into our great province.

Madam Chair, imagine shorter surgery queues, innovative treatments funded efficiently, and a system that rewards excellence without abandoning our universal principles. That is what Bill 11 strives to do, and it is a bill that I think this province will be so much better with.

With that, Madam Chair, I am certainly very much in support of the hard work of our ministers on this bill, and I would certainly encourage all members of this Assembly to support this.

With that I move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 14
Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

The Chair: Are there members wishing to join the debate? The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again it's a pleasure to rise on Bill 14, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025, to speak about this omnibus bill which fortifies, I think, at its core our democratic foundations and enhances access to justice for all Albertans. Now, there's been a great deal of debate in this Assembly, good, robust debate, and I thank all members of this Assembly for engaging in it.

One of the most important components, I think, of Bill 14 is the codification of the strong relationship that we have developed with

Legal Aid, the creation of a governance agreement that is now enshrined in statute, which will create a very, very long and, I think, fruitful and productive relationship with our partners at Legal Aid Alberta. It will create a system that allows for members of the public to come forward with important questions that they can put to other Albertans. That is by way of citizen initiatives, Madam Chair, which streamlines the referendum processes. It creates clarity and consistency in the rules, and it makes for a system that is simply better and more aligned with what we've always been saying, which is that citizen initiatives should be easy, they should be citizen led, and they should come forward by the people of Alberta.

There are a number of other changes in Bill 14. Certainly, we don't have the time for that this evening, but I suspect that we'll have much more to talk about when we reconvene after our short break.

Madam Chair, with that I move to adjourn debate on Bill 14.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I move that the committee rise and report progress on bills 9, 11, and 14 and report Bill 12 with amendment.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill with some amendments: Bill 12. The committee reports progress on the following bills: Bill 9, Bill 11, Bill 14. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed, please say no. So carried.

Hon. members, the clock strikes 6-ish. The House stands adjourned until 7:30 tonight.

[The Assembly adjourned at 6 p.m.]

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