



Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, December 10, 2025

Day 24

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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Boparai, Parmeet Singh, Calgary-Falconridge (NDP)  
Bouchard, Eric, Calgary-Lougheed (UC)  
Brar, Gurinder, Calgary-North East (NDP)  
Brar, Gurtej Singh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)  
Calahoo Stonehouse, Jodi, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)  
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Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)  
de Jonge, Chantelle, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)  
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)  
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Dyck, Nolan B., Grande Prairie (UC)  
Eggen, Hon. David, ECA, Edmonton-North West (NDP)  
Ellingson, Court, Calgary-Foothills (NDP)  
Ellis, Hon. Mike, ECA, Calgary-West (UC),  
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Elmeligi, Sarah, Banff-Kananaskis (NDP)  
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Kasawski, Kyle, Sherwood Park (NDP)  
Kayande, Samir, Calgary-Elbow (NDP)

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Loewen, Hon. Todd, ECA, Central Peace-Notley (UC)  
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United Conservative: 47

New Democrat: 38

Alberta Party: 1

Independent: 1

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Chelsae Petrovic	Parliamentary Secretary for Health Workforce Engagement
Jason Stephan	Parliamentary Secretary for Constitutional Affairs
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Justin Wright	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health (South)
Tany Yao	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Northern Development

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Wiebe  
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### **Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future**

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

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Batten  
Getson  
Haji  
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Singh  
Tejada

### **Standing Committee on Legislative Offices**

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### **Standing Committee on Private Bills**

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Cyr  
Ip  
Petrovic  
Rowswell  
Yao

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

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

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Is there anybody with guests here today? The Member for Edmonton-McClung.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Laura Penner, who is our EDA secretary, dedicated volunteer, and door-knocker extraordinaire. She's here to witness the Assembly today. Please rise.

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

**Mr. Dyck:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce to you and through you and to the Assembly Sean and Jamie Gillis along with their children, Olivia and Connor, all who are a wonderful family from Grande Prairie. I'm very thankful for their commitment to our community and the positive example they set for all Albertans. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly the RamLeela performance organizing committee. RamLeela has been presented for over 20 years at the Bhartiya Cultural Society of Alberta. The production by Arvind Aery and his team have worked tirelessly to preserve cultural heritage. I would ask our honoured guests to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

**The Speaker:** Any more introductions? The Minister of Tourism and Sport.

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity and introduce to you and through you the wonderful new team from the all-season resorts branch, who have committed their time and expertise to ensure the success of this new program. I would like to ask Paul, Rob, Andun, and Erin to please stand up and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Any more introductions? Do you have an introduction, Lesser Slave Lake?

**Mr. Sinclair:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to introduce to you Danny Gray, who's kind enough to act as my avatar today. Danny is holding a picture of my mother-in-law, Sandie, who I'd

like to honour. She passed away suddenly 16 years ago tomorrow, December 11. If she were here, we'd all get to see her beautiful smile, that made everyone around her feel welcome. It was like a superpower. Everyone who knows her misses her. Whether you believe in spirits or not, Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that in the spirit of Christmas we could all clap loud enough that maybe she could hear us.

Thank you.

### Members' Statements

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

#### Hanukkah

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and speak to the celebration that we're going to have this weekend. Happy Hanukkah to everybody. I know that the Jewish community will be lighting the menorah on Sunday afternoon right here on the Legislature Grounds. I invite everyone to come to the Legislature Grounds to participate in that menorah lighting.

The lighting of the menorah represents the symbolic light that refused to go out. The light that was expected to last only a day lasted eight days. It's a symbol of the hope and praise that we all should have for our general humanity, when we look forward to all the trials and tribulations that we face on this journey of life and realize that there is hope and light for all. I invite everybody to come to the menorah lighting on Sunday at the Legislature Grounds to participate in that together.

Thank you. Happy Hanukkah.

### Government Record

**Mr. Dyck:**

Well, gather all 'round. It is time for a story.  
It might make a ruckus, and for that I am sorry,  
But Alberta is thriving, and for that I am not.  
Twenty thousand new jobs: our province is hot.  
Where did they come from? You must want to know.  
Well, I'll tell you very soon. It's part of the show.  
The Grinches atop on their mount called Strathcona  
Look down on Albertans with an angry persona.  
Come one, come all, we must celebrate.  
New jobs for Alberta: isn't that great?  
You'd think they'd be happy – it's basically Christmas –  
But no, not today; it's nothing but business.  
Albertans are cheering, even CBC,  
Albertans, that is, except the NDP.  
Oh, well, Mr. Speaker, perhaps if they listen,  
By the time I'm done, perhaps they'll be happily  
grinning.  
Eight-one thousand new jobs in three months alone.  
If you listen real close, you'll hear them all groan.  
Moaning and groaning at all the success:  
It must be exhausting; just give it a rest.  
The kids are back working, the numbers are growing,  
And the bad unemployment? Well, it's happily slowing.  
Restaurants and health care and hotels and more:  
They're all making jobs. Our economy soars,  
But we are not stopping. There's much more to come.  
Let's build a pipeline. Let's have some fun.  
Now, Rachel looks back with her can of Who hash,  
So shocked and upset it gives her whiplash.  
The polling, the polling, the polling it reads:  
Build us a pipeline all the way to B.C.  
Now airplanes are built to fly like a sleigh.  
AI and tech: for some that's the way.

Construction and trades, manufacturing, more:  
 Albertans work hard all the way to the core.  
 So tell us, dear Dippers, what is the problem?  
 You left us with issues. Don't worry; we'll solve them.  
 Albertans trust us to make all things right.  
 Now Merry Christmas to all, and all a good night.

**The Speaker:** Please go ahead.

### Christmas Reflections

**Member Tejada:** Okay. Thank you. As a person of faith raised in Catholic traditions, December has always been a time of anticipation, joy, and reflection on Jesus's entry into the world. I think about His love for us and His call for us to love each other.

I recently visited a church in my constituency that puts this call into practice. They provide a spiritual sanctuary but also address food insecurity and do the important work of community care for our neighbours. They are not alone. Many places of worship representing our beautiful cultural and religious mosaic are doing the same this season, and it is more necessary than ever, as we see Albertans falling through the cracks and struggling to survive.

The Nativity story tells of Jesus's arrival into humble circumstances. His parents fled persecution into Bethlehem and sought to spare their son from certain death during turbulent times, not unlike they are now, sadly. Many say that Jesus chose to enter this way, among the poor and the marginalized, to align with them, to be their voice, and invite us to centre their voices and seek change.

This Christmas and holiday season while we cherish time with our loved ones, let's also commit to a new year of seeking justice and dignity for all. Let's think about those without housing, the underemployed, the underpaid, new Canadians who are our neighbours, and all vulnerable communities. Let's commit to a courageous future where we work to remedy the structural injustices within our power to change.

I wish everyone here a very Merry Christmas and happy holidays.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Calgary-Klein.  
 Now it's time for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

### Cypress-Medicine Hat Constituency Update

**Mr. Wright:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker.  
 'Twas the season of progress in Medicine Hat town,  
 When visions of growth were swirling around.  
 Our community gathered with pride in the air,  
 For investments and milestones we're eager to share.  
 In Cypress-Medicine Hat great news we recite,  
 A substantial commitment that's truly a sight.  
 With collegiate funding now soaring with cheer,  
 We're shining bright for futures year after year.  
 And, look, like a present wrapped up like a bow,  
 The new Yuill school of agriculture is ready to grow,  
 A gift to our region where innovation will sprout,  
 Nurturing talent the whole world will talk about.  
 Our urgent care centre will stand strong, shining bright,  
 A beacon of healing through day and through night,  
 Providing care to our families with comfort and speed,  
 A promise upheld for those most in need.  
 And yes, oh yes, water flows strong thanks to funds  
 we've supplied,  
 With \$5.5 million keeping infrastructure fortified.  
 For a future that's steady, resilient, and clear,  
 We're building lasting foundations that will strengthen  
 for years.  
 For shelter and safety we proudly stand tall:

One million we invested to support Medicine Hat's  
 women's call.  
 At the women's shelter compassion grows deep,  
 A refuge of hope when the mountain seems steep.  
 For our youth there is hope; there is support close at  
 hand  
 As the Kickstand program grows across our land.  
 With mental health supports, connection, and care  
 We lift up our young people to show we're there.  
 As winter winds whisper, a fresh new year in sight,  
 Let's celebrate progress with hearts warm and bright,  
 For together we rise, just like the seasons before,  
 A thriving community, stronger than ever before.  
 And, Mr. Speaker, I'll say this while I can:  
 Much to the federal Liberals' C-9 chagrin,  
 Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

1:40

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

**Member Irwin:** We've already had that.

**The Speaker:** Had that.  
 Let's try Lesser Slave Lake.

### Member for Lesser Slave Lake's World View

**Mr. Sinclair:** Mr. Speaker, the only promise I made to the people of Lesser Slave Lake during the election was that I would try my best. I campaigned on a simple idea, that when I spoke, I hope I sounded like you, or when you see the way I treated people, you could see a little bit of yourself. I've made plenty of mistakes, some easy to see now, some I'm sure I'll notice later, but I don't regret my actions. At least the people from Lesser Slave Lake know that someone finally speaks for them, speaks for the north, for the underserved, the underprivileged, for underdogs because that's who I am.

Like other people from the north, I've been told my whole life all the reasons I can't be something or I don't belong or I'm not enough. The irony since I've had this job is that my past failures, my humble background, my struggles seem to be all the things that people seem to resonate with. It makes me relatable or normal. I think the world could use a little normal right now.

To me, Mr. Speaker, integrity is trying to do the right thing all the time, not just when people are watching. It's how I try to live my life. I choose to try and find the funny or simply be the reason somebody smiles. Tim McGraw says, "Hold the door, say please, say thank you . . . always stay humble and kind."

Mr. Speaker, I love the show *Ted Lasso*. I watch for the funny, but I stay for the heart. There's a scene I love of him playing darts and he references a quote from Walt Whitman: be curious, not judgmental. Four words that can have endless impacts: listening to people you disagree with, finding common ground, losing a little to win a lot. Positive politics is possible. I don't mind being called a compassionate conservative; I've been called worse. I'd much rather people remember me as a good guy and a funny Native than a skilled politician.

If I had one regret, it's giving too much of myself to win over strangers in this job and sometimes not saving my best for my family. Making the world better or your life better is meaningless if you can't share it with your family and friends. My daughters still think I'm a good dad, my wife still thinks I'm funny, and they still want to hang out with me at the end of the day. This is the only bull's eye we should be aiming for, Mr. Speaker. That's not just the secret sauce; that's barbecue sauce.

Thank you.

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

### Hunting Policies

**Dr. Elmeligi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The holidays draw near, and this government has been making a list and checking it twice but only for their friends who've been extra nice. Albertans are worried about conflicts of interest, corruption, and this government's ethics have gone the way of last year's fruitcake: hard to swallow and left out in the cold.

Santa has his eye on the Ministry of Forestry and Parks, who have been handing out special licences to foreign friends like candy canes at a Christmas parade and increasing quotas and limits, even for species at risk. And let's not forget about allowing questionable hunting techniques; apparently the other thing endangered is common sense. These changes seem to favour a small group of hunters, trappers, and outfitters: his friends. People question the ethics of this, Mr. Speaker, and what's the minister's response? Silent night, holy fright.

While Albertans are tightening their belts for the holidays, the minister has been jingling all the way to international hunting expos, costing taxpayers nearly \$40,000 this year. Talk about decking the halls with trophy heads of our wildlife in far-off lands and with our dollars.

Without consultation hunting allocations have been changed to favour big outfitters who cater to international clients. Smaller Alberta businesses who serve Albertans? Well, they are left out in the cold like Frosty without his hat. How does the minister justify spending tax dollars to sell Alberta's wildlife to the highest bidder? Is this about spreading Christmas cheer or just spreading hunting gear? And here's the real holiday crumble: these decisions seem to benefit businesses owned by the minister's family and friends. It's starting to look less like governance and more like a holiday gift exchange.

Albertans deserve assurance that the minister is following the rules, not just making them up like a kid writing a last-minute letter to Santa. When it comes to ethics, we want more than milk and cookies. We want accountability under the tree.

### Presenting Petitions

**Mr. Cyr:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition by the residents of Fairview which received a total of 4,187 signatures. The petition urges the government of Alberta to:

- (a) take all necessary steps to immediately impose a moratorium on the removal, relocation or reduction of assets, programs and staff positions from the Fairview campus of Northwestern Polytechnic,
- (b) undertake a full and public review and consultation process with community stakeholders, students and staff of Fairview campus before making... decisions that would result in permanent changes to campus operations or resources, and
- (c) affirm its commitment to the long-term stability and development of [access for] postsecondary... in rural northern Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** Are there tablings? The Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising to table two articles from the *Calgary Herald*, one from January 24, 2012, where the

then mayor said he would be donating a salary bump to charity with the quote: "It does make sense for me to reduce my base salary."

Another one from January 14, 2015, describing how the then mayor donated his raise to charity.

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

**Mr. Wright:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table a *Global News* article titled Before Joining Cabinet, Public Safety Minister Wrote Immigration Support Letters [to support a terrorist].

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

**Member Irwin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table an e-mail from one of my constituents named Kyla Fisher. She's just really flushing out the five main issues that she feels the UCP is dropping the ball on, and that includes using the notwithstanding clause, coal mining, abortion rights, and two-tier health care among others.

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite copies of an interview given by the Leader of the Opposition where he says with regard to fairness and safety in sport: "The minister wants to wander [in] every school, see who's playing, I suppose – wander into..."

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

**Member Arcand-Paul:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite copies of a letter to the Minister of Justice from the Chief Electoral Officer of December 9, 2025, who warns that Bill 14 is an erosion of the separation of powers and of our core constitutional democratic order.

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

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of tablings today from health care leadership regarding Bill 13. I have a briefing note that was sent to multiple ministers from Dr. Kannin Osei-Tutu in mitigating critical risk to patient safety accreditation and economic stability in Bill 13.

I have a letter from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada to the Premier and multiple ministers outlining their concerns about how it will impact accreditation of doctors.

I have a letter from the Canadian Nurses Association again to multiple members of the government outlining their concerns with how this will impact training for nurses.

I have an e-mail to the Minister of Advanced Education from Dr. Kannin Osei-Tutu outlining how this may impact the ability to get the accreditation for the southern Alberta medical program and other medical schools.

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

**Mr. Dyck:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the five requisite copies of an article by the *Edmonton Sun*, and the headline is Naheed Nenshi Now Highest Paid Mayor in Canada after a 3.8% Raise on Council. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Yeah. You can't use names in here.

**Mr. Dyck:** I rise and apologize.

**Mr. Sinclair:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to table six copies of an article from the MD of Lesser Slave Lake in support of keeping northern

MLAs and proper representation through the Electoral Boundaries Commission. I think there are six in here. I hope there are.

Thank you.

1:50

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

The Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

**Member Ceci:** Thank you. Seven letters from Calgary-Buffalo constituents horrified at this government's Americanization of Alberta's health care system and the shortcomings that will happen.

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

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite copies of a letter from a teacher who has to spend so many hours navigating classroom complexities, she's got little time left for her own family.

**The Speaker:** Are there any more? Okay. Edmonton-Glenora.

**Ms Hoffman:** Your favourite, I know, Mr. Speaker. Oh, my apologies for assuming what's in your mind.

I have five letters today for tabling, all about public education. They're from Owen, Tyco\*, and Ivy, who are the three students, and then Monique and Lana\*, who are both parents. They've written the Premier, and they would love a response, so I'm tabling their letters for the record.

**The Speaker:** Are there any more?

I have a tabling, five copies of the annual report of the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta.

Editorially and, hopefully, helpfully, I will say that while I love you all, it's easier to do tablings if you let me know what they are ahead of time. There were an awful lot today that were a surprise. It's not a problem; it's just easier the other way. Thank you for that.

### Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** The first question, for a change, belongs to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

### Government Record

**Mr. Nenshi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fourteen pieces of legislation this session, none of them on the economy. They introduced four uses of the notwithstanding clause but nothing on wages, nothing on investment, nothing to create a better business environment for a more prosperous Alberta, just a tax on human rights, on teachers, on public health care, running up more debt, handing out more bloated contracts to their friends. Will this government ever have a real economic plan to address the cost of living, to address affordability, and to address business investment in Alberta?

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

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are so proud of the work we did this session, passing 14 bills to defend Albertans, protect children, and improve health and education. Not only that; we passed an MOU with Prime Minister Mark Carney to address seven of the nine bad laws holding back our economy, continued to grow our economy and jobs, strengthen relationships with our trade partners. We're leading the nation in job growth, adding almost 29,000 jobs last month, more than half the entire country's growth,

adding 80,000 jobs in the last three months alone. Highest workforce participation rate, highest wages: we're doing well.

**Mr. Nenshi:** Well, of course, we knew exactly what the Premier was going to say, but the real question is: where are the results? It goes beyond bragging about seasonal Christmas jobs because this Premier and her government have chased away investment from Alberta. I know the Premier loves to brag about it, but the government's actions, from its ill-fated renewables ban to pandering to separatists, have all but frozen inbound investment into Alberta regardless of how many junkets ministers and backbenchers go on. When will this government act to bring back investor confidence?

**Ms Smith:** Well, I invite the member opposite to read the news story of the day, that Capital Power has launched a new investment in power because of the MOU that we recently signed with the federal government. In fact, I'm reliably told we may have \$18 billion worth of new investment on the way because we no longer have net-zero power regs. It would have been really helpful if the members opposite had advocated on our behalf with their federal counterparts in the NDP, with British Columbia's Premier, David Eby, and with others who have been detractors of this MOU. We're pleased that they supported it yesterday. Those are the things that are going to return business confidence to Alberta and turn it into a tsunami.

**Mr. Nenshi:** But, of course, the Premier can't get a call with Mr. Poilievre, who opposed the MOU.

A couple of weeks ago J.P. Morgan estimated that oil prices could plunge into the \$30 range by 2027. This government has increased our reliance on oil royalties, and this will blow a giant hole in the budget. It means capital forecasters will find it extremely difficult to invest in a new tidewater pipeline and the jobs that come with it. So what's the backup plan here? How will we grow the economy, balance the budget if we can't rely on the one and only egg in the government's basket?

**The Speaker:** The Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If only, when the NDP had been in power, they had reinvested the investment income in the heritage savings trust fund, it actually might be worth probably \$100 billion today, generating anywhere from \$5 billion to \$10 billion in long-term revenue that would have stabilized. But you know what the good news is? We won our second majority Conservative government, and as a result we have now doubled the value of the heritage savings trust fund from \$16 billion when they left office to approaching \$35 billion today. It's going to keep on growing so that it forms that new source of revenue. You've got to get started somewhere. Too bad they didn't start it earlier.

**The Speaker:** The second main set of questions to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Nenshi:** Let's remember that everything the Premier said has been done with debt. They have three times the royalty revenue that Rachel Notley had. They've increased spending twice as fast, and what do they have to show for it? A massive deficit.

### Support for Postsecondary Education

**Mr. Nenshi:** We know that the Premier is a huge fan of one Mr. Jordan Peterson. She's given him endless amounts of her time. She's used his platform and even informally named a law after him.

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



But it's taxpayers who are paying the price for her fandom. Recently unearthed FOIP documents show that her office interfered with bureaucrats in the ministry to accredit Peterson's school. Is it appropriate for political staff to do that?

**The Speaker:** Okay. Both leaders have tried their luck a little bit on time. Let's all just follow the clock.

Go ahead, Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Eighty billion dollars' worth of debt was what they racked up. We've paid down \$15 billion in debt and put an additional \$15 billion in the heritage savings trust fund. That's our record versus their record, and we're very proud of it.

Mr. Speaker, maybe the professor is upset because Jordan Peterson would never ask him to be one of his professors teaching political science or anything else for that matter. We think that Jordan Peterson is putting forward an incredible platform trying to bring down the cost of a university education, and you bet, we are more than happy to talk with him to see if there's a way he can get accredited in Alberta.

**Mr. Nenshi:** Mr. Speaker, other politicians have used my academic title against me, and they found the only voters who don't like professors are people who did bad in school.

To be clear, this so-called academy of the Premier's is a collection of YouTube videos and some AI-generated content. It has no accreditation anywhere in the world, and it's very hard to understand what role, if any, it could play in our proper postsecondary education system, particularly a system the government has underfunded so badly unless, of course, the Premier – and this is the question. Is the Premier planning on turning Fairview campus into . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Thank you.  
The Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were inspired by Jordan Peterson to pass a law to ensure that those professionals do not end up facing sanction from their professional college for offering an opinion. The member opposite should well know, since he spent a lot of time in universities, that universities are supposed to be a place for free speech, for open and vibrant debate. Sadly, it's moved away from that direction, but we think that initiatives like Jordan Peterson is putting forward are restoring free speech and are going to restore that robust environment that's going to be good for democracy.

**Mr. Nenshi:** The total incoherence of that answer matches the incoherence of this government's strategy for advanced education. They talk about the need for more skilled trades, but they don't fund it. Instead of supporting postsecondary education as a strategy to facilitate economic growth, they've made massive cuts and they've never restored them. They claim to support rural economic development, and the Premier didn't even know about Fairview campus closing until it was in the newspaper. Does this government understand that in order to create better jobs and a better economy, you actually have to invest in real postsecondary education, not YouTube videos?

**The Speaker:** A point of order was noted at 1:58.  
Now it's the Premier's turn.

**Ms Smith:** Well, it's that kind of snobbery we've come to expect from the member opposite. Guess what our most successful university is in Alberta? It's Athabasca University, Mr. Speaker,

which is a direct learning program that educates more than 38,000 people per year and has one of the most esteemed MBA programs in all of Canada. So, yes, there are lots of opportunities for us to be able to support education, including at Fairview campus, and I'm pleased to hear from the member who represents that area that there is a local group working very hard with our Advanced Education minister to see if we can maintain the operations of that campus.

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

**Mr. Nenshi:** What an extraordinary insult to the generations of Albertans who built Athabasca University by saying it's just a bunch of YouTube videos. The Premier should apologize for that.

2:00

### Government Accountability

**Mr. Nenshi:** Now, the Chief Electoral Officer says in a letter sent yesterday that "the separation of powers between the legislative body and the executive is fundamental" to our democracy. He says, "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." The minister moved an amendment last night that he couldn't explain. Does this government believe in . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, that's at least three. You've got to stop when I stand up.

The Premier.

**Ms Smith:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are very pleased to hear from the Chief Electoral Officer, who raised a couple of concerns with the legislation, and the minister worked very diligently to ensure that a couple of amendments were made. We've removed the proposal that a new proposal cannot be seen within the next five years if it's similar to one before, and we also removed the ability of the minister to refer matters to the courts. That is going to remove two additional roadblocks to ensure that more citizens are able to participate in this process. That was the intention all along.

**Mr. Nenshi:** The Premier just admitted that rather than deal with the Chief Electoral Officer's concerns, the amendments made the legislation worse.

Yesterday the Premier insulted and demeaned an independent officer of this Legislature, the Chief Electoral Officer, but here's the thing. Shocker: he wasn't appointed by Trudeau. He was hand-picked by this UCP government, just like all the AHS CEOs that this government has hand-picked and fired. Does the Premier expect every hand-picked appointee to act according to every whim of her government, and why does this government attack people who speak their own minds?

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

**Ms Smith:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not even sure where to begin with that question. I'm not even sure if it was a question about government policy. If it was, we'd be talking about one of the 14 bills that we passed in this legislative session. I've already mentioned a few of them, and I can tell you that we are having incredible results in implementing our agenda. Canada has 10 affordable cities to live in, and seven of them are right here in Alberta. We have seen rent come down year over year by 7 per cent. We're building and renovating more than 130 schools. We've got a classroom complexity committee. We're doing great work over here.

**Mr. Nenshi:** Again, when she doesn't know the answer.

The CEO of AHS, the new CEO of AHS, the board of AHS, the new board of AHS, the new new CEO of AHS, the Chief Electoral Officer, the Auditor General, judges, lawyers, teachers, doctors: this is just a short list of people whom the Premier has blamed for the failings of this government this week. Absent on that is her own government who, clearly, in her mind, can do no wrong. So one last time this session: will the Premier once – only once – take responsibility for anything and apologize for all the scandal her government has caused?

**Ms Smith:** I'm going to take responsibility for appointing two incredible health ministers. One, for primary care, has put in place a new program for nurse practitioners. We have more nurse practitioners in the province than anywhere else. We are able to do private practice; it's increased 76 per cent. And we have 724 family physicians that are accepting new patients as a result of the great work of this minister. We've got another great health minister, who put forward an acute-care action plan. We're going to do 50,000 more surgeries, add 1,000 more beds, add community care beds as well as a provincial neonatal intensive care unit. They're doing great work, Mr. Speaker.

#### Justice Minister

**Ms Pancholi:** The Minister of Justice, the top lawyer in the province, is giving himself immunity from legal professional standards. He must be worried he's breached those standards. Maybe he's worried about section 3.4 of the Law Society Code of Conduct, which says, "a lawyer must not act . . . where there is a conflict of interest," and it defines conflict of interest as a "risk that a lawyer's loyalty . . . would be materially and adversely affected by [their] own interest or . . . duties to . . . a third person." The minister represented and directed the many investigations into Sam Mraiche's contracts with the UCP but didn't tell Albertans that Sam is his bestie, his relative, and regularly buys him trips and hockey tickets. Is that the breach the minister is worried about? I've got to tell you; I'm worried, too.

**The Speaker:** You've got to sit down. It seems to be a bad habit today. Maybe everybody is excited, but when I stand up, you've got to stop talking.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Schow:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This seems to be a typical thing for the member opposite, to use question period as a time to malign the character of, particularly, the Minister of Justice. I'm not quite sure what that's all about. Might have to have a conversation with him and the caucus to find out if there's a personal bias.

**Mr. Sabir:** Point of order.

**Mr. Schow:** But, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that members don't want to talk about the tremendous, tremendous success this province has had, particularly last month, creating 28,000 jobs, which was more than half the jobs in the entire country. Alberta is leading the way. They don't want to talk about it because they couldn't do anything that we can do on this side of the House.

**Ms Pancholi:** Alberta Justice, acting for the minister, signed off on hiring external legal counsel for corrupt care investigations and told Alberta health staff that all questions from the Auditor General had to be redirected to that legal counsel. The minister did not recuse himself then, and he still hasn't: conflict of interest. Maybe it's

section 2.1 of the code that the minister is worried about – it says that lawyers must carry out their practice and duties to the public "honourably and with integrity" – or section 7.4, which says that a lawyer in public office must follow "standards of conduct as high as those required of [any] lawyer." Anyone else find it funny that the Member for Red Deer-South has to meet higher standards now than the Minister of Justice?

**The Speaker:** A point of order was noted at 2:05.

Now the hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This legislation in question brings us in line with Ontario, which has the same protections for the Attorney General. The member opposite is a lawyer. The member opposite was educated with a law degree in Ontario. The member should know better.

What I can tell you is that on this side of the House we're still talking about things that are important to Albertans, which is creating jobs and attracting investment, investment like Siwin Foods, the expansion of a food-processing facility right here in Edmonton with 72 permanent jobs, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about Lufthansa Technik, talking about CAE, and the list goes on and on. I just don't have enough time.

**Ms Pancholi:** The minister blames alleged political activism for his CYA on Bill 14. Political activism has become code for this government for any Albertan daring to critique them, challenge them, or, most of all, hold them accountable. As per usual they're always about a year or two behind whatever Trump is doing, so Albertans can easily recognize this thin-skinned, paranoid, cowardly routine by now. After making nice with the federal government thanks to their new UCP-Liberal alliance, well, the government is desperate for a new enemy, so they're pointing their fingers wildly in every direction, including at Albertans themselves. The Alberta NDP isn't afraid of this province, but since the UCP so clearly is, why don't they call an election?

**The Speaker:** A point of order was noted at 2:07.

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, cowardly? Cowardly. Is the member serious? Cowardly is, when referring to a bill that protects women and girls in sports, the Leader of the Opposition saying, steps outside of this Chamber, about me personally, quote, "So, basically, the minister wants to wander around every school, see who's playing, I suppose, wander into locker rooms and check out people's genitals because that's what this is leading to" – it's absolutely ridiculous – or saying: maybe the minister wants to go into locker rooms and check people below the belt. The member opposite is carrying water for the leader, and this is gross. [interjections]

**An Hon. Member:** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** Order. A point of order is noted at 2:08.

We have come to the point where there is no preamble after . . . [interjections] You've had lots of time to talk. Now it's somebody else's turn.

We have come to the point where there are no preambles on the supplementary questions, and we are going to see a great example of that from the Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

#### Investigation of Health Services Procurement

**Mr. Shepherd:** Over \$600 million: the tax dollars paid to Sam Mraiche by the UCP for things like overpriced surgeries and useless

Turkish Tylenol. Four hundred and thirty million: the value of two more contracts the Premier's chief of staff allegedly pressured AHS to sign. One point six million: the value of the house Sam's sister rented to that chief of staff immediately after buying it. At least eight: the number of UCP ministers who enjoyed sports, close up, in luxury, with their buddy Sam. At least five: the number of his direct relatives who have been hired by the UCP. One question, Mr. Speaker: when are they finally going to call a public inquiry?

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

**Mr. Amery:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Time and again the members of the NDP have been making allegations, unfounded allegations, conspiracy theories, and none of those hold water whatsoever. The fact of the matter is that a comprehensive investigation was just completed by Judge Wyant, a respected member of the judiciary from Manitoba, who found absolutely no wrongdoing by any government minister on this side of the Assembly. The fact of the matter is that the members of the NDP simply only want to read half of the report. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Well, first, we're going to hear just from the Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

2:10

**Mr. Shepherd:** Given that page 4 of Justice Wyant's report states that the UCP denied them the power, the scope, or the time to investigate the extent of their political interference in the corrupt care scandal and given that he said they made his work more difficult by burying them in more than a quarter of a million documents, unindexed, delivered at random times and given that the Auditor General reported that the UCP used the same obstructive tactics to slow his investigation of the \$125 million they blew in their failed privatization contract with DynaLife, I have one question: when will this government finally do the right thing and call a public inquiry?

**The Speaker:** Now let's make it equally easy to hear the Minister of Justice.

**Mr. Amery:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member needs to listen to the answer. Judge Wyant's investigation confirmed throughout his report that there was no evidence of any improper conduct, but here's what he did find. He found that there are procurement problems with AHS. There were serious problems with contracts and others. The ministers of health have taken immediate action. The Premier has taken immediate action, requesting that the implementation of the 18 recommendations that Judge Wyant made in his report be put forward immediately.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Given that zero is the amount of credibility that the Premier or her ministers have in claiming innocence or casting blame given that we now have dozens of examples of their attempts to interfere in everything from vaccination campaigns to criminal cases to permits to mined coal in the Rockies and given that in the last two weeks they've cancelled two more contracts and had to bench yet another of the key players they hand-picked to do their bidding at AHS, it seems we've got more than just a smoking gun. We've got a body, crime scene footage, and prints on the weapon. When will we finally get a public inquiry?

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

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. The hon. members need to accept the report and the findings of Judge Wyant. There were comprehensive findings in that report that the Premier and this

government moved forward with implementing immediately. That includes 18 recommendations that Judge Wyant provided to make the system better. The Premier actioned those 18 recommendations immediately. I understand that the members of the NDP want to continue to allege conspiracy theories, fake stories, fake news, and whatnot, but it simply holds no water here.

**Mr. Sabir:** Point of order.

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

### All-season Resort Development

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's iconic mountain resorts have been a source of pride and major draw for visitors from around the world. These resorts have inspired generations of athletes and outdoor enthusiasts, hosted the 1988 Olympics, and served as the backdrop of cinematic blockbusters like *The Revenant* and *Jumanji: The Next Level*. To the Minister of Tourism and Sport: how will the destinations for Castle Mountain, Nakiska, and Fortress help breathe new life into these beloved ski areas?

**The Speaker:** Okay. A point of order – I missed it; I apologize – was noted at 2:13.

The Minister of Tourism and Sport.

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the great question. I'm proud to champion former Premier Peter Lougheed's vision for Alberta's Rockies by ensuring that future generations can continue to access and enjoy these beautiful areas for generations to come. These revitalized ski areas will be able to open their doors once again and welcome outdoor enthusiasts, Alberta families, and visitors not only in the winter but all year-round now.

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

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta's tourism sector already supports more than 260,000 jobs across the province and further given that more than 10 per cent of Albertans work in tourism with youth making up roughly 27 per cent of the tourism workforce, to the Minister of Tourism and Sport: how will these new developments support job creation for Albertans and ensure the need for adequate staff housing is addressed?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's tourism sector creates jobs and supports livelihoods across our beautiful province. Over the next decade these three all-season resort areas will have the potential to create over 24,000 new jobs and generate \$3.6 billion in GDP and \$4 billion in visitor spending. To support our expectations and commitment to sustainable growth, resorts will be required to include proactive measures such as staff accommodations.

**The Speaker:** The member.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister. Given that Alberta's new resort destinations provide benefits across the province, including Indigenous communities, and further given that revitalizing these zones will attract investment, build partnerships, and expand opportunities for municipalities and communities, to the Minister of Tourism and Sport: how will these resort areas ensure municipalities and Indigenous communities benefit in economic growth, employment, and business development opportunities that come with expanded year-round tourism?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What a great question once again. The revitalization of the ski resorts in Nakiska, Fortress, and Castle will attract visitors and keep Alberta dollars in the province. The local surrounding municipalities and Indigenous communities will share the benefits. All-season resort area developers and operators will be encouraged to partner with local businesses and utilize local source materials and workforce talent suppliers and service providers in the area.

**The Speaker:** The next set of questions goes to the Member for Calgary-Currie.

### Chartered Surgical Facility Contracts

**Member Eremenko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister announced in Chambers last week that the procurement process to build chartered surgical facilities in Red Deer and Lethbridge had been cancelled. Private surgical facilities have been the rightful subject of public scrutiny and government obfuscation following the hiring and firing of the fourth AHS CEO in six years. The corrupt care scandal alleges political corruption that has harmed ordinary people and wasted an appalling amount of money. These contracts were worth \$200 million each. How much administration time and money were wasted on these projects now that the work was cancelled after three years?

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

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite outlined many of the reasons why it is appropriate to cancel those procurements from 2022, that had not yet resulted in a final agreement, when the whole system has been refocused and our approach to funding surgeries in an activity-based way has changed. So I agree with the member opposite; this procurement was taking too long. Undoubtedly, it was chewing up administration time and resources, and we need surgery agreements that make sense across the province, that are public and transparent, and that's what we're going to go to.

Thank you.

**Member Eremenko:** Given that AHS is the UCP's favourite scapegoat and given that the minister claims to have identified the problem, AHS procurement policy, and also to have fixed it, creating a transparent procurement process within Acute Care Alberta, this sounds like an admission, which is exactly the reason we need a public inquiry, and given that since then the minister has cancelled two CSFs but has also extended one at the heart of corrupt care, both with ties to Sam Mraiche, has this government actually learned anything from the costly procurement errors they claim to have fixed?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Edmonton zone ASG facility has no shareholder or ownership ties to the individual referenced in the member's question, and it is a bridge contract to an RFPed facility, the Enoch chartered surgical facility. The necessity of the bridge contract is the delay in construction of the Enoch facility. It was supposed to be ready around this time. It's now going to be ready in the summer or fall of next year. But to make it as public and transparent as possible, we're going to be opening up the same surgeries to the Edmonton zone to all providers at the same price.

**Member Eremenko:** Given that that is precisely what the CEO of AHS, now terminated, said and given that the only person that now holds the pen on extending or cancelling surgical facilities is the minister and given that residents in central and southern Alberta are facing long wait times because this government won't invest in the public system to get them the surgeries they need and given the UCP keeps dodging questions about shady procurement practices and sweetheart deals for their friends, throwing AHS under the bus, I'll ask the question once again: how much did the cancellation of two chartered surgical facilities cost taxpayers while they wasted money privatizing health care and lining their friends' pockets?

2:20

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

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In reality, we are increasing surgical procedures in both settings, and 80 per cent of our surgeries occur in our hospital system. We continue to invest to do even more than the historical volumes that we did last year. We just approved a 50,000-surgery envelope over and above the record volumes that we already achieved last year to do over the next three years, so we're increasing volumes in-hospital. We're also leveraging chartered surgical facilities that are doing about 20 per cent of our surgeries, often at quite a significant cost savings to taxpayers.

### Grocery Prices and Minimum Wage

**Member Gurinder Brar:** Albertans are reading in the news that groceries are going up \$1,000 next year. That may not be a lot to a UCP parliamentary secretary who has voted to give themselves a raise, but for a family in my riding \$1,000 more just to buy the same food that they are already buying is a lot of money. Does the government understand that they have done nothing to address the grocery cost burdens on Albertans? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Ministers.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The changes we made in the bill bring parliamentary secretaries and the extended work that they do in line with other jurisdictions. But this is a bit rich coming from a caucus led by a leader who became and made himself the highest paid mayor in the entire country of Canada as well as was part of a \$500,000 severance package, which also included two fully funded pensions. Now, Albertans don't mind paying good money for a good product, but I can tell you that when he was mayor, people in Calgary felt ripped off. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order. Remember that "order" part? Thank you.

There was a point of order noted at 2:22.

The hon. member and only the hon. member, please.

**Member Gurinder Brar:** Given that for a minimum wage worker paying this extra \$1,000 for groceries is more than an extra hour shift in a week just to put food on the table and given that these same workers haven't seen a single dollar pay increase in the past seven years because of this UCP government, why did the government only pass legislation this session to raise the salaries of their own parliamentary secretaries and vote against the bill that would have increased the minimum wage?

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have mentioned, the members opposite are mistaken. This is bringing parliamentary

secretaries in line with other jurisdictions because they take on increased work supporting ministers. Again, the members opposite are quick to forget that the Leader of the Opposition, when mayor of Calgary, raised property taxes 83 per cent and, in doing so, did not increase the quality of public services, including not protecting Calgarians with critical infrastructure. Talk about pipelines; that member couldn't even manage a water pipeline. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Quite a bit of crosstalk. Let's just hear from the Member for Calgary-North East.

**Member Gurinder Brar:** Given that the costs of utilities, car insurance, tuition, child care, and groceries are skyrocketing and given the government's own policies mean more costs, a shocking lack of support for Albertans just scraping by and given this government believes parliamentary secretary pay should be in line with other provinces but refuses to raise the minimum wage like every other province did, will the government raise the minimum wage at least by the same rate they are giving the UCP backbencher politicians?

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of stats that back up the reason why we are staying where we are, including the fact that Alberta has no provincial sales tax. Also, 92 per cent of minimum wage earners do not live in low-income households.

But, Mr. Speaker, when you talk about affordability and salaries, whatever talking point the members opposite want to go to, they should talk to their leader about the two pensions that he has and the zero pensions that members in this Assembly have. Also, part of a \$500,000 severance when he left office as mayor. Glass houses.

**The Speaker:** It's time to hear from the Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

#### Multiculturalism and Antiracism Initiatives

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's no secret that Alberta's population continues to grow as people are choosing to move here from other provinces as well as from outside the country. We're proud of how culturally rich our province has become. Our government consistently supports multiculturalism through programs such as the ethnocultural and antiracism grant initiatives. The efforts provided by these programs are so important for strengthening communities across the province. Can the Associate Minister of Multiculturalism please elaborate on how these initiatives are helping build stronger communities for all Albertans?

**The Speaker:** The Associate Minister of Multiculturalism.

**Mr. Yaseen:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is home to many vibrant ethnocultural communities which make our province a welcoming and inclusive place to live, work, and raise a family. As our province becomes more diverse, it is vital that we support initiatives that promote cultural expressions and intercultural connections. This year the ethnocultural grant program provided \$4.5 million to 135 community-driven projects and \$500,000 for 57 antiracism initiatives to help foster cross-cultural understanding and to celebrate Alberta's rich diversity.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Given that Calgary-Lougheed is home to many vibrant and growing cultural communities that contribute to Alberta's growing economic success and further given that the ethnocultural grant program funds local projects that celebrate and promote various cultures which help build a better understanding

across our communities, could the same minister highlight how this program is helping grassroots groups host successful cultural events and open doors for education and engagement for all people in our community?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Yaseen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. The ethnocultural grant program supports grassroots organizations to host cultural events, celebrations, and educational activities. We provide them the resources they need to share their heritage, strengthen connections, and create opportunities for Albertans to learn from one another. Through these events and initiatives we see the remarkable contributions of newcomers in all walks of life, including health care, energy, art, entrepreneurship, and volunteerism throughout our beautiful province.

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the demographics in Alberta continue to evolve with population growth bringing more and more immigrants from many places and given that programs like ethnocultural and antiracism grants have been very effective in reducing barriers, to the same minister: what plans does the ministry have in place to ensure these programs continue to remain accessible and impactful for all the rapidly growing communities in Alberta? And how will these efforts continue to strengthen communities province-wide?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Yaseen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to ensuring programs like the ethnocultural and antiracism grants continue to meet the needs of Alberta's diversifying communities. By providing guidance, engaging with community organizations, and promoting awareness of funding, these initiatives remain accessible and impactful. Applications are still open until December 19. We encourage all eligible groups to submit their proposal before the deadline so they can continue to deliver events and programs that strengthen connections across our province.

#### Primary Health Care

**Ms Hoffman:** This UCP government thinks that they are entitled: entitled to force teachers into overcrowded classrooms against their Charter rights, entitled to give raises for themselves while refusing to increase the minimum wage, entitled to privatize your health care even though they didn't campaign on any of this. Late last night the current government refused to pass amendments to keep their promise that you'd never have to pay to see a family doctor because they want American-style health care. Why do the four health ministers over there feel like they are entitled to break the campaign promise the Premier made to voters?

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

2:30

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. None of that is accurate. In fact, we are going to maintain our guarantee to Albertans that they never have to pay out of pocket to see a family doctor, nor will they ever have to pay for emergency services when needed. I know it must be really, really difficult for the member opposite because she was the minister of health at one point in time. They tried to bring in a new fee-for-service model. They were only

able to get five doctors to sign on. We've had over 1,100 doctors sign on to our new family physician model. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Let's just hear from the hon. member.

**Ms Hoffman:** Given that the UCP decided that they'd rather have Monday afternoon off than actually debate a timely motion about the health care workforce the same day the federal government made an announcement about fast-tracking 5,000 internationally trained doctors and given that Alberta needs to develop its family medicine workforce, working with health care workers to ensure that this is a great place to provide health care once again, and telling the federal government that Alberta is a ready and willing recipient of those doctors would have been smart, why is the government too entitled to do something to help the nearly 1 million Albertans who need a family doctor?

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the federal government is finally catching up to Alberta. In fact, we have had the accelerator program happening since June. We've actually worked with the College of Physicians & Surgeons over the last two years to simplify and streamline the processes. It's why we have now 13,576 physicians as of December 1 of this year. That compares to, when the members opposite were in office, less than 10,600 physicians. We're not going to take any lessons. We are actually improving the needle on that measure.

**Ms Hoffman:** Given that when I was the health minister, in every major municipality you could get a family doctor and given that one of the things new doctors do is take over practices when doctors want to retire or leave the province, will the minister of hospitals and surgical centres assure all members of this House that when a practice he is responsible for has a willing doctor who wants to purchase that practice, he will act expeditiously to ensure a smooth transition of ownership without an interruption to patient care, or does he feel entitled to determine which facilities stay open and which are closed?

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, they should have gotten two doctors for every person in Alberta because they drove hundreds of thousands of people out of this province. There should have been more doctors than necessary. We have increased the number significantly. We now have 724 family physicians and nurse practitioners across this province accepting new patients as of November 24. Go on Find a Doctor. You'll find a doctor. You couldn't find one back then because they drove out people.

### Women's Participation in Sports and Recreation

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Mr. Speaker, participation in sports offers young women opportunities to build confidence, leadership, and lifelong healthy habits. It also plays an important role in supporting mental wellness and social connection. Alberta's growing population means more young women are looking for inclusive, accessible programs that support their physical and mental health needs. To the Minister of Tourism and Sport: what programs are currently available to support young women in sport, particularly those that promote mental wellness and personal development?

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

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for a great question. Alberta's government believes that sport is for everyone, and getting active is the first step to support mental health. That is why we have invested \$54,000 in annual funding into the InMotion Network to support women and girls in leadership and participating in sport, physical activities, and recreation in our province. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. member.

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. Given that sports are a powerful tool for building resilience, confidence, and mental wellness amongst youth and further given that young women often face unique barriers to participation such as access, affordability, and representation, to the same minister: how is our government working to ensure that sport and recreation programs across Alberta are inclusive, welcoming, and accessible to young women in both urban and rural communities?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Tourism and Sport. [interjections]

Order.

We're going to hear from the minister now.

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What a great question. Our UCP government believes that sport is for everyone. That is why we are working to make sport and recreation safe and accessible. With funding over \$15 million combined, our grant programs such as the active community initiative and the every kid can play program are able to support Albertans to stay healthy and remain active in our province.

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

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker and Minister. Given the importance of early intervention and community-based support in promoting youth and mental wellness and further given that sport helps build confidence and resilience, can the same minister provide an update on how sport and recreation programs are being integrated with mental health supports to ensure young women across Alberta have the tools they need to succeed both in athletic settings and in everyday life?

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

**Mr. Boitchenko:** Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Sport is more than physical activity. It is an effective tool for promoting mental health, and we want Albertans to thrive both on and off the field. Participation in sports or recreational activity helps improve overall physical and mental well-being. Exercise can enhance mood, relieve stress, promote better sleep, and build social connection. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

Members, we only need to hear now from the Member for Edmonton-South West.

### Collective Bargaining with Teachers

**Mr. Ip:** Mr. Speaker, this session saw this government make the biggest attack on teachers in the country's history. We started in the fall with the government stripping away the human rights of teachers, taking away their rights to bargain a fair agreement for the work they do in our schools to educate Alberta's next generation,

and they did it all in one day. It was unprecedented. To the education minister: was using the notwithstanding clause against teachers worth it?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Mr. Speaker, we're working very diligently to ensure that classroom conditions are structured in the most optimal way. It's why we've created a Class Size and Complexity Cabinet Committee along with other partners, to have opportunities for us to explore solutions to address some of the complexity challenges that we're seeing in our schools in addition to addressing some of the largest classrooms that exist in our province. I'm confident that we will absolutely deliver the results that Albertans expect.

**Mr. Ip:** Mr. Speaker, given that the trampling of rights did not improve class sizes, given that the trampling of rights did not fix the complexity issues students have, given that the trampling of rights of teachers did not leave them in a better place and given that two ministers have admitted they don't respect the process of arbitration that could have resulted in a fairer deal, why did the government spend the session attacking teachers instead of recognizing the incredible work they do for Alberta students and bargain a fair contract?

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Mr. Speaker, we do recognize the incredible hard work that our teachers do every single day in our classrooms. Unfortunately, while the NDP focuses on continuing to try to stir division and pit Albertans against each other, that's not what this government is going to do. We're focused on delivering results, and that's exactly what we're going to do. We will make additional investments into our education system, we will build the schools that our province needs, and we will reduce class sizes to ensure that every student has the best possible learning environment. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** I really want to hear your next question. I hope everybody hears it.

**Mr. Ip:** Given that the government used a sole-source \$200,000 advertising contract to attack teachers, given that same firm previously got paid \$300,000 to design videos for the Alberta Next Panel that, among other things, attacked immigrants and other Albertans and given that half a million dollars spent on these advertising contracts could have been spent to improve classrooms for kids, why did the government spend the session wasting money attacking teachers instead of supporting kids in Alberta's classrooms? [interjections]

2:40

**The Speaker:** I really want to hear the answer; don't we all? Go ahead.

**Mr. Nicolaides:** There you have it, Mr. Speaker. I think listening to the question is equally as important, because all you hear from the NDP is about attacks, about trying to divide Albertans. Our government is focused on bringing Albertans together, but I want to talk a little bit about where the NDP was at when they were in government. Under the NDP they approved 46 school projects. Under our UCP government we approved 150 projects. When the NDP was in government, they increased funding to education by 11.6 per cent; under our government, well over 11.8 per cent.

### Bills 2 and 9

**Ms Ganley:** Mr. Speaker, today is Human Rights Day, and we have a government that has spent the session trampling on the fundamental rights of Albertans. They used the notwithstanding

clause to trample the bargaining rights of teachers to negotiate a fair contract. They unleashed one of the largest protests in our Legislature's history to avoid having to talk about classroom conditions. Why did this government trample on the rights of teachers and force through a plan that does nothing to improve education for our kids?

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

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm excited to have the opportunity to talk a little bit more about the work that we're undertaking to improve classroom conditions. We take the challenges in our classrooms incredibly seriously, which is why we're investing more in education than the NDP ever did, which is why we're building more schools than the NDP ever did, and it's why we're working closely with teachers and other partners to address many of the challenges that we see in our classrooms. We acknowledge that there are challenges in our classrooms. We've seen unprecedented enrolment growth, driven primarily by immigration, but our government is stepping up to the challenge, and we will ensure we deliver results. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** A point of order was noted at 2:42.

This time I'd like to hear the question and the answer if that's not too much trouble.

Calgary-Mountain View, please.

**Ms Ganley:** Given the UCP government also used the notwithstanding clause three times to trample on the rights of trans youth in this province and given that the attack on their basic rights has been called by Egale, "an unprecedented attack on the rights of women and girls," and given that Bill 9 will cause irreparable harm to children and escalate homophobic and transphobic attacks against children, why are the human rights of trans youth so disposable to this government?

**Member Calahoo Stonehouse:** Let a man talk.

**The Speaker:** We want to hear the answer. We heard the question. The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, I'm just wondering if I should answer the question or if I should respond to the heckle, "let a man talk," from the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, the same member who jokingly pretended to push me down the stairs right outside the Chamber doors. [interjection]

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

**Mr. Schow:** Now, what I can say is: why are the members opposite so concerned about allowing young women and girls to be brutalized in the field of play? This is the harsh reality of allowing biological males to play against biological females.

**The Speaker:** A point of order was noted at 2:43.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

**Ms Ganley:** Given that Human Rights Day commemorates the signing of the UN declaration of human rights and that the UCP members have often said that they will never support anything the United Nations do, even these inalienable rights, and given that using the notwithstanding clause is this government telling on itself, that they know they're violating rights, and given that these rights are ours regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status, whose rights will the UCP violate next?

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That question just points out how little the members opposite care about women in this province. What we did last night was . . .

**Ms Ganley:** You going to threaten my daughter again?

**Mr. Schow:** . . . use the notwithstanding clause to protect women and girls from competing against biological males in sport . . .

**Mr. Nixon:** Point of order.

**Mr. Schow:** . . . to also protect parents so they are fully aware of what's going on with their kids in the classroom should they decide to change their pronouns. It also protects kids from being administered puberty blockers, that will cause irreparable harm to them throughout their entire life and take away their right to reproduce later on in life. Despicable.

**The Speaker:** There was a point of order noted at 2:45.  
Now we're at points of order.

The first of many points of order was noted at 1:57 p.m. It was called by the hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Schow:** I withdraw that, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The second point of order noted at or close to 2:05 p.m. was called by the opposition, Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, if I have it correctly. If I don't, please tell me.

#### Point of Order Imputing Motives

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you. That was around the time you noted, and it was under (h) and (i). At that time the Government House Leader was answering a question. He said, and I quote, without the benefit of the Blues, it's typical for the member to malign the character of the Minister of Justice. That's a direct accusation and that's offside this rule of (h) and (i), and it should be ruled out of order.

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

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, I don't have the benefit of the Blues, and it's a little difficult to hear the remarks from the member opposite. I think the speakers are a little low today, but I just wasn't able to hear it. I leave it in your hands to make a ruling.

**The Speaker:** Well, I have the Blues. What I see here is:  
Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This seems to be a typical thing for the member opposite, to use question period as a time to malign the character of, particularly, the Minister of Justice. I'm not quite sure what that's all about. Might have to have a conversation with him and the caucus to find out if there's a personal bias.

It's not great conversation. It's a matter of debate. It's not a point of order. I'm not sure the conversation in either direction was super friendly on that one, but it just doesn't turn out to be a point of order.

The next point of order is at 2:07 p.m., I think, called by the Government House Leader.

#### Point of Order Parliamentary Language

**Mr. Schow:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I called a point of order under 23(h), (i), and (j). At the time noted the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was speaking and used the word CYA, and also thinned-skinned,

paranoid, cowardly routine. The second part, make nice with federal government, UCP-Liberal alliance. That's just whatever.

Mr. Speaker, I think the only ones that are thin-skinned would be the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud and the Leader of the Opposition who made a point today of heckling, particularly making unparliamentary language off the record. In this instance, CYA: I think everyone in this Chamber knows what it means, cover your tuchus, but using a different word . . .

**Member Calahoo Stonehouse:** What does it mean?

**Mr. Schow:** . . . and like I just said, to say the actual word – to answer the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford's question, who has a lot to say for a member who's usually in a sedentary position and doesn't rise in the Chamber very often . . . [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Government House Leader, please. [interjections]  
Order.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think a point of order is not the opportunity for the Government House Leader to do what he cannot otherwise do, and it's truly shameful that the Government House Leader, who lectures others about the decorum here, will take direct shots at the deputy leader of this caucus, taking direct shots at Indigenous women, and has the audacity to get up in this House and talk about decorum. I don't think that what the Government House Leader is alleging is what the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud said.

2:50

She did say something in the line of that they are always about a year or two behind whatever Trump is doing, so Albertans can easily recognize this as a thin-skinned, paranoid, cowardly routine. Those were the words used. They were not directed at anybody else, and they are wildly pointing fingers in every direction, including at Albertans themselves. Language may have been . . .

**Ms Hoffman:** Hot?

**Mr. Sabir:** Hot. But it doesn't rise to the level of a point of order. I think, in fact, the Government House Leader should stand up and apologize for how he argued this.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Well, the Blues say this:

Political activism has become code for [the] government [or] for any Albertan [to] . . . critique . . . [or] challenge them . . . As per usual they're always about a year or two behind whatever Trump is doing, so Albertans [could] easily recognize this thin-skinned, paranoid, cowardly routine by now.

It wasn't helpful language.

**Mr. Schow:** That wasn't it.

**The Speaker:** What?

**Mr. Schow:** That wasn't the language.

**The Speaker:** Well, there are so many points of order that it could have been. You all are going to have to forgive me for this because there's just so much going on today. Trying to keep the bad behaviour all sorted out is a bit of a chore in itself.

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, if I may.

**The Speaker:** No.

**Mr. Schow:** I'll withdraw.



**The Speaker:** You're going to withdraw? That you can do.

**Mr. Schow:** In the name of being such a nice guy and Christmas, I'll just withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Ah, okay. Having said that, we're not done dealing with all of this.

Point of order number 4 at 2:08. Is that also withdrawn?

**Ms Hoffman:** That was one that I called, and I'm happy to withdraw it.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Well, thank you.

Well, it must be almost Christmas.

At 2:13, called by, I think, the Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall if I have this correctly.

**Mr. Sabir:** I will withdraw that one.

**The Speaker:** Oh, my goodness.

Now, we're at 2:22, I think, called by the Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

#### Point of Order Insulting Language

**Mr. Sabir:** I think at that time the Government House Leader was trying to answer a question, and he talked about the Leader of the Official Opposition's record as mayor. Sure, that's a matter of public debate, but where he really crossed the line was when the Government House Leader said, and without the benefit of Blues it's my recollection that he said: when he was mayor of Calgary, people of Calgary felt ripped off. I think there was a direct attack, a personal insult, and that does raise to the level of a point of order.

**The Speaker:** Government side.

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, we talk daily about how Albertans feel about what government does in this Chamber. I think it is not beyond the pale to suggest how Calgarians feel about what the member opposite did while in the mayor's seat in Calgary. I think that this is a really weak point of order called, and this one absolutely could have been withdrawn as not a point of order, but rather a matter of debate.

**The Speaker:** Okay. The Blues say:

... rich coming from a caucus led by a leader who ... made himself the highest paid mayor in the country ... as well as [the] \$500,000 severance package ... and fully funded pensions ... but I can tell you that when he was mayor, people in Calgary felt ripped off.

You know what? It's not helpful language. In terms of the rules that we have around here, you don't get to put in someone else's mind in this Chamber what they believe or don't believe. I guess that people outside of this Chamber, the people of Calgary in this case, are subject to the same thing. It's not a helpful comment, but it's also not a point of order, and that is now dealt with.

You'll have to forgive me. Are there any more? There was one at 2:42; I think it was withdrawn, if I'm not mistaken.

Oh, there it is. Sorry. I've got a lot of paper.

Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Sabir:** I think that was about some inappropriate heckling from over there, but I am happy to withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Well, thank you.

And 2:45, I think, was the last one if my notes are correct.

#### Point of Order Allegations against a Member

**Mr. Schow:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. This one was called by the minister for seniors and social services. I'm sorry. You know what? Sundre's favourite son. That's who called it.

I can tell you that when I was answering a question, the Member for Calgary-Mountain View, in response to my answering the – lots of crosstalk, Mr. Speaker – question on the use of the notwithstanding clause and protecting women and girls, the Member from Calgary-Mountain View said: You're threatening my daughter. I am not threatening anyone. What I am doing is standing up for the rights of young girls to play sports fairly and safely. I will no longer continue to debate. This is a point of order under 23(h), (i), and (j). The member should apologize and withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Opposition side.

**Ms Ganley:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. What I actually said is, "Are you going to threaten my daughter again?" referencing the member's statements from last night. After I told a story about my daughter, he asked how I would feel if she was, "exposed to male genitals." But the language was clearly unparliamentary, so I will apologize and withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Well, there's only one – is this about the point of order?

**Mr. Amery:** Well, the member made comments ...

**The Speaker:** We're done with the points of orders. I appreciate that the member drifted into debate on something that happened before, which is out of order, hon. member, and you know that. Nonetheless, you can't call points of order on points of order, thank goodness, or we might be here till New Year's. [interjection]  
Order.

There is another point of order. Okay. Called by – no? I think we're done. We are done with points of order. Thank you.

Folks, you're just going to have to forgive us. When you're enthusiastic about not following the rules, as everybody has been today, it makes it hard on all of us that have to keep track of this.

#### Orders of the Day

**Mr. Schow:** Mr. Speaker, before I move into the debate, I would like to request unanimous consent of the Assembly to move to one-minute bells for the remainder of the afternoon sitting, including for the first bell in Committee of the Whole.

**The Speaker:** Members, the hon. Government House Leader has made a request of the House to grant unanimous consent for one-minute bells for the remainder of the day till 6 o'clock.

[Unanimous consent granted]

#### Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

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

**The Speaker:** Minister, on the bill.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand and move third reading of Bill 11, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2).

I move to adjourn debate.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion to adjourn debate carried]

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

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

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

Against the motion:

Al-Guneid	Ellingson	Nenshi
Arcand-Paul	Elmeligi	Pancholi
Batten	Eremenko	Renaud
Boparai	Ganley	Sabir
Brar, Gurinder	Goehring	Schmidt
Brar, Gurtej	Haji	Shepherd
Calahoo Stonehouse	Hoffman	Sigurdson, Lori
Ceci	Hoyle	Sinclair
Chapman	Ip	Sweet
Dach	Irwin	Tejada
Deol	Kasawski	Wright, P.
Eggen	Metz	

Totals: For – 44 Against – 35

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## Government Motions

### Time Allocation on Bill 11

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

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, the Government House Leader has moved Government Motion 23.

The hon. member for Edmonton – thank you. Glenora. My apologies.

**Ms Hoffman:** No need, Mr. Speaker. Who needs to apologize is this government for ramming through Bill 11, an act to bring American-style health care into Alberta in the middle of the night and in closure. It is so disrespectful.

All Albertans deserve an apology because during the election the Premier was explicit in saying that nobody would ever have to pay to see a doctor, any doctor, that she was going to protect public

health care, that you could trust her, that you could trust yourself to vote UCP, but the UCP now has four health ministers who are all working to privatize health care in their own way. Mr. Speaker, it is so disrespectful to the people of this province to ask for their vote, to tell them that you can trust them, to sign a guarantee, and then to do the exact opposite.

This has been a continued, repeated effort of entitlement and arrogance from the government that as soon as they get, you know, 54 per cent – not exactly something to boast about – they feel that they can govern with entitlement for the next four or even four and a half because the government was so entitled that they changed the legislation to give themselves an extra six months this term.

Mr. Speaker, it is appalling, and I know a lot of people in this House have a lot of respect for former premiers of this province. While I might not admire the same things about each of those former premiers, I will tell you that Ralph Klein was never this entitled, arrogant, or cowardly. It's hard to be both cowardly and arrogant at the same time, but that is exactly what bringing in these types of motions around closure so repeatedly, so antidemocratically . . .

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

**Ms Hoffman:** I'll apologize and withdraw for those two words.

**The Speaker:** The Government House Leader

### Point of Order

#### Parliamentary Language

**Mr. Schow:** Yeah. Mr. Speaker, apologizing and withdrawing on the spot knowing you made a critical error is not something that's going to stop me from standing and defending the Premier. The member opposite from Edmonton-Glenora was clearly saying that other premiers that she admired were never this cowardly, clearly referring to the Premier now as being a coward. This is language that is well below and well beneath the level of decorum in this Chamber. That's not a new member across the aisle; it's the former health minister, someone who has sat on the government benches, who knows procedure. This is not new, not the first day. This is also not amateur hour. I ask the member to withdraw and apologize. This is a point of order.

**The Speaker:** The member.

**Ms Hoffman:** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the standing orders, I am happy to say that what I did refer to was the government. Nonetheless, I will apologize and withdraw, which I've already tried to do, and use my three minutes remaining.

**The Speaker:** That's still with the clock. You've got about three and a half minutes. Carry on.

### Debate Continued

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, this bill works to bring in a fee-for-service model so that doctors – the government takes no responsibility for the chaos that they've caused in the health care system. They say the only solution is to have doctors work during the day in the public system and at night and on weekends in the private system. We know that they've been moving a privatization agenda for a very long time in this province. That's been a constant in the Conservative playbook, but now to blame the doctors who are working all day every day and say: well, they can work on the weekends and they can work evenings, and then they can bill you extra. Nobody is asking for that.

I have talked to many, many doctors, and doctors are not the problem in this province. The government is the problem because there are operating rooms throughout this province that could be going more hours if the government would actually staff those properly if the government would actually invest in our public hospitals. I was really proud to open a new hospital in High Prairie when I was the health minister. It has two operating rooms, and one of them has never opened. Mr. Speaker, there's lots of capacity within the public system, but this Premier, this government, is so headstrong on moving forward with a privatized American model that they won't even take the fiscal responsibility of using our public spaces to their most.

Mr. Speaker, we brought motions into this House to actually say to the government that if it is, indeed, the government's intention that this is about reducing wait-lists and this is about reducing wait times, then track them, report on them, and if this Americanizing the health care system experiment doesn't work, then don't continue down this path.

3:10

The government refused to pass those amendments last night, again, under time allocation, in closure. They refused to acknowledge or report publicly in a transparent way through legislation on what the actual wait times are and what the impacts are under their experiment. And, Mr. Speaker, the other one we brought forward was around making sure that you never have to pay a family doctor. The government again decided that they would much rather vote no and continue to force ahead their ideological experiment, which is only going to lead to worse outcomes.

Nobody wants this. Nobody wants this. The Premier, in fact, had to campaign very overtly against this during the last election campaign and barely snuck out a win, in fact, the smallest win in Alberta history for any government. So to act as though you are entitled to come into this place and completely change the way the health care system is delivered after promising you wouldn't, Mr. Speaker, is not respect, it is not confidence, and it certainly is entitlement.

I know that there are a lot of hurt feelings on the other side, but it is my job to come into this place and to stand up for democracy and to stand up for the people who elected me, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Dreeshen:** Sit down.

**Ms Hoffman:** That's a point of order, actually, Mr. Speaker. I'll call a point of order.

#### Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

**Ms Hoffman:** Yeah, under 23(h), (i), and (j), telling me to sit down.

**The Speaker:** The government side?

**Ms Hoffman:** The transportation minister, yeah.

**The Speaker:** No response from the government side?

**Mr. Dreeshen:** I apologize and withdraw for saying that. I thought the member was out of time, so that's why I said ... [interjections]

**The Speaker:** But, see, that's my job to tell people when they're out of time. Thank you for apologizing and withdrawing because that was the right thing to do in this case.

Carry on.

#### Debate Continued

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I will say that Albertans deeply care about public health care. It is something that I was really proud that it was quite boring for the four years that I had the opportunity to serve this province in that role. We made sure that everyone had a family doctor, that nobody was expected to pay more out of pocket, that we had no major public-sector labour unrest, the complete opposite of what we've seen under the current government.

They would be wise to take those amendments. They would be wise to pull this bill. They would be wise to go back to the drawing board because the government even had amendments to their own bill last night, Mr. Speaker, which clearly shows that they rushed this. They didn't consult. They don't have a mandate. This bill is not fit for this Assembly, and it is certainly not respectful of democracy.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 23 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:13 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

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

Against the motion:

Al-Guneid	Eggen	Metz
Arcand-Paul	Ellingson	Nenshi
Batten	Elmeligi	Pancholi
Boparai	Eremenko	Renaud
Brar, Gurinder	Ganley	Sabir
Brar, Gurtej	Goehring	Schmidt
Calahoo Stonehouse	Hoyle	Sigurdson, Lori
Ceci	Ip	Sweet
Chapman	Irwin	Tejada
Dach	Kasawski	Wright, P.
Deol		

Totals: For – 44 Against – 31

[Government Motion 23 carried]

## Government Bills and Orders

### Third Reading

#### Bill 11

#### Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2)

(continued)

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past year our government has worked diligently to implement a refocused health care system, one that reflects the evolving needs of Albertans, supports health care professionals, and ensures timely, high-quality care for all. The development of this legislation has been informed by input from health care professionals, system experts, and most importantly, the experiences and feedback of Albertans themselves.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Bill 11 is a significant step forward in modernizing Alberta's health care system. It addresses critical areas, including physician practice rules, drug coverage, food safety, health card processes, and system-wide accountability while ensuring the structural changes necessary for a sustainable, patient-focused system. While the NDP were content with the status quo of a deteriorating health care system, we and all Albertans are not.

Thus Bill 11 modernizes physician participation rules under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act through a dual practice model. Under this framework physicians may continue to provide insured services within the public system while also delivering private services in defined, closely monitored circumstances. This approach provides physicians with practice flexibility to attract and retain top talent. It expands surgical and procedural capacity to shorten wait times. It ensures that all public services remain fully funded and accessible with no out-of-pocket costs for Albertans. It includes safeguards such as requiring separate records for public and private services, limiting dual practice in shortage-sensitive specialties, as well as excluding family physicians and emergency, cancer, or urgent procedures from private delivery.

These measures reflect a responsible, balanced approach that strengthens the public system while providing additional options for patients. Dual practice is consistent with the Canada Health Act, and it mirrors successful models already in place in other provinces such as Quebec and New Brunswick as well as other countries such as Denmark, Sweden, Germany, and the Netherlands.

3:20

Secondly, Bill 11 modernizes drug coverage for establishing the government as the payer of last resort. This ensures that private or employer-sponsored plans cover costs first while government programs serve as a safety net for vulnerable Albertans. These changes also protect older Albertans from losing employer-sponsored benefits due to their age and supports fairness and financial sustainability.

Bill 11 also enhances accountability and compliance. It expands powers to address noncompliance and proper billing while protecting public funds. It generates cost savings, and it reinforces trust within the system.

Also, public health and food safety are strengthened through the amendments to the Public Health Act. These include new investigative powers, enhancing training, increasing transparency, and administrative penalties for repeat or serious violations. Additional staffing for the office of the chief medical officer of

health will improve system oversight and ensure Alberta is prepared to respond effectively to outbreaks and public health challenges.

As well, Bill 11 modernizes the health card processes and strengthens privacy protections. These amendments enable secure card renewal, prevent misuse, support responsible data-sharing between ministries and providers, and facilitate team-based care. Health foundations are also empowered to better engage with communities in ways that foster innovation and improve patient care.

Finally, Madam Speaker, Bill 11 supports structural changes required by our refocused health system to modernize hospital governance. Alberta Health Services will be transitioned to a hospital-based acute-care provider, and outdated provisions within the Hospitals Act will be consolidated into the Provincial Health Agencies Act. These updates align legislation with today's operational realities and ensure a co-ordinated, efficient system.

Madam Speaker, Bill 11 represents a new era for health care in Alberta and reflects our government's commitment to a stronger, more modern, more accountable system while still adhering to our public health guarantee. It will be a system that puts patients first, supports the professionals who care for them, and ensures Albertans receive the timely, high-quality care that they deserve.

It is indeed an honour for me, Madam Speaker, to bring forward Bill 11, and I encourage all members to support Bill 11 before they go off to have a very Merry Christmas. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Nenshi:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the relief, I think, of everyone in this House, I will start by saying that I will not use my full time allocation this time and will cede time to others. But I did want to spend a few moments talking about Bill 11.

I will not spend a ton of time talking about the problems with this bill – and they are legion – but I want to talk a little bit about how we got here. In May 2023, in the closest election in Alberta's history, every household in Alberta got a pamphlet, and on that pamphlet it says:

Under no circumstances ...

That's in bold.

... will any Albertan ever have to pay out-of-pocket ...

That's in bold.

... [for access to] their family doctor ...

That's in bold.

... or to get the [hospital care] they need.

There's a name under there that I'm not allowed to say in the House; I've learned that rule. It's signed by the person who is now the Premier. That person won the closest election in Alberta's history, not least because of that health care guarantee.

Now, without any consultation, without any discussion with Albertans, without any discussion with professionals, without any discussion with accrediting bodies, without any discussion with experts, the government puts forth this bill at the end of a short but busy legislative session. The doctors don't like it. The accrediting bodies warn that this could lead to people not having their proper accreditation going forward.

The details on this bill don't make any sense. Every time we stand in this House and we ask, "How many hours will a doctor or a nurse or a health care worker have to put in the public system in order to earn hours in the private system?" the answer is, "We don't know." What guarantees or guardrails are there in place to make sure that the public system is well supported and well funded? We don't know; we'll figure it out in regs.

When we ask experts what they think, they universally don't like it, in fact, to the point where yesterday, very late at night, a member

of the government benches quoted a great health care thinker, Dr. Jon Meddings, making it sound like he was in favour and omitting the last part of the sentence that Dr. Meddings said, in which he said he was not at all in favour. This is how deep the government has to find to find even vague expressions of support for this.

I've mentioned in this House before my own life story. My family and I grew up poor in northeast Calgary, but what we lacked in money, we never lacked in opportunity in this place. The single most important thing for my family was that we knew if, God forbid, somebody got sick, we would not face financial ruin because there would always be a public health care system there for us.

I don't need a public health guarantee to say that to Albertans. All I need to say to Albertans is: we believe in that. It's the right thing to do, it was the right thing to do when Tommy Douglas introduced medicare, and it's the right thing to do right now because health care is a right for everyone.

That's not to say that we shouldn't have innovation. That's not to say we shouldn't think of better ways to do things. But that innovation has to be driven by the facts, it has to be driven by experts, and it has to be driven by a real understanding of the system and how it's going to work.

The government opposite really doesn't like it when we call it American-style health care. They say, "Oh, it's European-style health care," and then we say, "Well, what European countries are you using the model of?" They give a list of European countries, none of which have the same model, and they don't tell us which of the models they're following, every one of which has completely different backgrounds and completely different aspects of their health care system to what we have now.

Look, hip and knee surgeries have always been a problem. Sometimes I call my mom the bionic woman because she has two artificial knees, one artificial hip, two artificial shoulders, and two new eyes. You don't want to go through security at the airport with my mom. But she's had the interesting aspect of working through those surgeries with very different health care systems in this province.

The first one she got 25 years ago. She was bedridden for nearly a year while she was on an endless waiting list. Governments of both stripes have tried to change that, and some of her subsequent surgeries were real fast. Now, at almost 85 years old, she wants to get the other hip done because the pain is getting unbearable. Under the current UCP government system she's told: you'll probably get three years before you have your first consult. She's 85, Madam Speaker – excuse me. She's 84. I shouldn't age her too much; 85 in a couple of months. And she's told to wait three years for a consult.

Now, everyone wants to solve that problem. Certainly, I will believe that the members opposite want to solve the problem, but the problem is that what they're solving it with won't work. We've heard so many different things from the ministers and from the Premier, it's like they're making it up as they go along. The very first thing the minister said about this is that these private surgeries will only be done on the evenings and the weekends. Later we heard these private surgeries will only be done in private surgical facilities that have capacity, and that could be any time during the day.

I ask you this, Madam Speaker. If you have a limited amount of time as a health care practitioner to provide this service, whether it's at night or on the weekends or during the day, if you're a surgeon or an anaesthetist or a nurse, and you can only do this many, but you can choose because there are no guardrails: am I going to do surgeries for the people who are going to pay me a lot of money, or am I going to do them for people in the public system?

We know in every single case that the government has cited, in every single jurisdiction when the hybrid system came in, certainly it helped people on the private side of the system, and certainly there are many Albertans who, when given the choice, will say: "Even if I can't afford it, I'll take out a loan. I'll borrow money from family and friends. I'm in so much pain. I'll find that \$20,000 or \$25,000 to get this done." But where does that leave everyone else?

In every jurisdiction that has started a hybrid system, we've seen that wait times on the public side have only grown longer, and that problem will be exacerbated because in our system we already have that problem. Anaesthetists working at chartered surgical facilities mean that public operating rooms stay empty because we don't have enough anaesthetists. I've asked the Premier many, many times: "What is the workforce plan? How are we getting more doctors? How are we training more anaesthetists?" The answer always is: "Trust us. It will work."

3:30

The analogy I've often used is: you're standing in line at Canadian Tire, waiting to pay for your winter tires. The line is hugely long. The manager comes and says: "Good news, guys. We're opening a second line. If you pay another 20 bucks for your winter tires, you can get into the second line." When you get to the front of the second line, you find out that the same cashier is working both lines because there's no one new to be able to do the work. That means the public line gets longer and longer and longer.

So we can have a technical debate, we can have an expert debate, we can talk about the details of this, but it all comes down to a simple, simple question: do we believe that a core requirement to be a provincial government, the core requirement to be the government of Alberta, is to provide decent health care to every single citizen? If we believe that, there is no way we can support this bill. I'll cede my time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

**Mr. Haji:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are making a consequential decision today because this is the third reading of Bill 11, a bill that Americanizes our health care system, one that will shape the future of health and the well-being of Albertans for generations. This is not a minor adjustment. It is not a minor administrative function. What's before us today is a bill that will leave a profound and devastating effect on the lives of many Albertans in the years and generations to come. Bill 11 reaches into every household, every community, and every family. It will have a real and lasting impact.

I rise with conviction and with pride to unapologetically oppose Bill 11. I do so as a representative of Edmonton-Decore, a constituency full of hard-working families, seniors, newcomers who rely deeply on our public health care system. Their voices, their fears, and their hopes guide me today, Madam Speaker. I rise with the full belief that our public health care system needs rebuilding and strengthening. Albertans, including those I represent in Edmonton-Decore, are depending on us to protect the system that millions rely on, and today that responsibility weighs heavily on this Chamber.

Our public health system is under enormous strain. No doubt it is still recovering from the unprecedented pressures of the pandemic, a pandemic that exhausted our workers, stretched our hospitals beyond capacity, and revealed the cracks in our systems that we should be repairing today. Yet rather than investing in stability, rather than focusing on recovery, this government chose to embark on a sweeping restructuring, a chaotic reorganization that has left

health workers uncertain, left patients confused, and left our system weaker than it was before.

These decisions have consequences. They affect patient outcomes. They affect access. They affect continuity of care. In short, they affect the very heart and soul of what makes our health care system function. Now, in the middle of this instability, we have Bill 11 in front of us, throwing open the doors to American-style health care.

Madam Speaker, this is the creation of a system where those who can afford to pay will move to the front of the line while those who cannot afford it will be left waiting, suffering, watching, and seeing their health care decline. In the privatized tier, when we create two tiers as per Bill 11, wait times will look impressive because they will only serve the few who can pay, and then this government will turn around and point to those numbers as proof that privatization works. Meanwhile the public tier will be left with the most complex cases, with the most complex patients, with the most chronic diseases and the least resources, and day after day that public tier will crumble under the weight. That is what Bill 11 will deliver.

We have seen this cycle before in many countries. We've also seen Alberta's own experiment in DynaLife. We know exactly where it leads. It leads to deteriorating care. It leads to poor health outcomes. It leads to a system where wealth, not need, determines who gets treated first.

Now, Madam Speaker, government members have insisted that this is not an American two-tier health care system, but rather a European-style health care. They would like Albertans to believe that Bill 11 brings us closer to the health care system of countries like France, Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands. That comparison collapses under the slightest scrutiny. Most European countries have national pharmacare; pharmacare that dramatically reduces out-of-pocket costs for everyday people. Albertans do not have that, and Bill 11 does not bring that. Albertans will still pay for prescriptions out of pocket. Many already struggle because of this government's decisions.

The European health care system invests heavily in prevention and early intervention because they understand that prevention reduces costs and saves lives. Alberta is nowhere near that level of investment, and if you want to get an indicator, just see our immunization or vaccination coverage and where we are at today. European countries provide comprehensive mental health coverage as part of the public system. Bill 11 doesn't do that. European systems have an extraordinarily strong primary health care function. In many nations 98 per cent of residents are attached to a family doctor. Here in Alberta 1 million Albertans are still trying to find their family doctor. The funding model is entirely different. European systems rely on payroll-based social insurance models, not the tax-based system that we use here in Alberta.

So I ask this government: on what metric is this European-style? On what measure? On what evidence? None has been offered because none exists.

3:40

Bill 11 does not mirror Europe; Bill 11 mirrors the United States, where millions of people face devastating medical debt even when they are insured, where families delay treatment because they fear the bill more than the illness, where health outcomes lag behind other developed nations despite spending more per capita than any other country on Earth. Madam Speaker, in the United States people lose their homes, their savings, even their futures because of medical bills, stress, anxiety, depression. These are byproducts of a system that treats patients as consumers and health care and health as a commodity. That is what Bill 11 is attempting to do.

The consequences ripple outwards: damaged credit, reduced job opportunities, and financial suffocation. Is that the direction we want Alberta to go? That is the direction Bill 11 takes us, Madam Speaker. Since Bill 11 was introduced, my office has received more e-mails, more calls, and more heartfelt messages from Albertans than on any issue in recent memory. Albertans are worried. They feel betrayed by a government that promised to protect public health care only to turn around and undermine it.

Let me share one single message from the many, many e-mails that I received.

I'm not in support of Bill 11, which increases privatization of health care and a two-tier system. It's outrageous that this is being considered. It needs to stop now. MLAs need to support their constituents, not glorify failing American ideology. Following a two-tier or private model that has been proven to fail and to cost more in the long run in areas where it has been implemented.

This constituent says:

As someone who can afford private health care, I still do not support Bill 11. Many cannot afford it, and that's not right. Do what's right. Be a Canadian. Keep health care public, accessible, and affordable.

Madam Speaker, this is the voice of Alberta, not the voice of a special interest, not the voice of ideology, the voice of everyday people, people who believe in fairness, in decency, and people who believe in the Canadian principle that health care should be based on need, not on wealth.

Madam Speaker, today I ask every member of this Assembly to do the right thing. Stand on the right side of history. Stand with the people you are elected to serve. Reject and withdraw Bill 11. Protect public health care. Rebuild public health care. Strengthen public health care. Ensure that every Albertan, no matter their income, no matter their background, and no matter their age, has access to quality, timely, and affordable public health care. Albertans deserve nothing else.

With that, I encourage every member of this Assembly to reflect and think about how creating a two-tier, American-style health care is not what Albertans are asking for. Albertans are asking for a strong public health care system, a strong public health care system that is affordable, that is accessible, and that leads to better health outcomes for every Albertan.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Dr. Metz:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 11, yet another garbage bill that this government has brought in and makes nothing better for the life of Albertans. One of the things in Bill 11 is that it proposes to change the minimum requirements of the chief medical officer of health to include specialists in family medicine. Specialists in family medicine are not trained in public health to the degree that is needed to be a chief medical officer of health.

Public health and preventive medicine are a medical specialty that requires a five-year residency. It includes clinical training as well as specialized rotations in communicable disease control, environmental health, health promotion, chronic disease and injury prevention, health and disease surveillance, as well as health policy and management. They also learn research skills because they are always developing policy and interpreting data. That is very different than the training of a family medicine specialist. Because roles in public health invariably require leadership skills, they include formal training in administration and leadership as well as in ethics. Therefore, those who choose a career in public health commit to science, they commit to leadership, and they commit to

ethics, and they must have a thorough understanding of promotion and prevention.

Is it any wonder that this government has been unable to recruit a chief medical officer of health who is a specialist in public health and preventive medicine? Therefore, this is taking them down this path in this bill to lower the bar. They have not had a fully qualified CMOH since they fired Dr. Hinshaw twice. I heard from a colleague who was approached by a recruiter that the recruiting company had approached over 200 people to try and find someone for this role. Now, my colleague is not a specialist in this area and laughed and said: boy, if they're looking at him, they must really be having to dig deep to find someone.

If this government is now changing the rules about who can be a CMOH because nobody will work for them – remember that part about ethics and leadership? – will this government now start finding ways to allow orthopaedic surgeons perhaps to do prostate surgery? I mean, they're both doctors – in fact, they're both surgeons – so I'm wondering if any of my colleagues would like to be the first one to allow an orthopaedic surgeon to operate on their prostate. Yet this government is proposing to put public and preventive health in the hands of someone who is completely unqualified to be a CMOH.

On the other hand, it is obvious that, in fact, the politicians are running public health and that the advice of a public health expert is ignored or kept secret, in any case. Therefore, maybe we have the reason that nobody trained in public health will take the job: you get to be the face of horrendous decisions made by this government, you need to speak publicly to sell their antisience messages and, of course, along the way destroy your reputation, your career, and probably your soul. And be assured that when the public revolt against the messages that they present comes, the government will blame you, shame you, and fire you.

My advice to any physician who takes this role is: wear a disguise when you go out in public, make sure you do not expect to work again in public health, and make sure you get a very good termination clause in your contract. By the way, we would love to know what all the termination payments have been for all the people that have been fired. And, by the way, we're hearing rumours today that this government has just lost another interim CMOH, and I'm looking forward to hearing if that is true.

3:50

Albertans want access to primary care, yet this bill is doing nothing to improve access. Encouraging primary care physicians to add more hours of work in a new private health care system will decrease access to the public. There are a limited number of hours in the day. Just as we've heard about anaesthesiologists, you can't stretch them out. They can't work more hours. Many physicians will wonder, though, why they don't take the easy work and work for one of the corporate for-profit clinics that are going to rapidly now expand. We have seen the corporatization of dental care, of veterinary care, of optometry, and we know that the outcomes are worse, the costs go up, and the providers lose any control that they might have had before to deliver high-quality care.

These programs offer no admin responsibilities. In fact, it's kind of like being a CMOH. You just do what you're told. There's no need to take on the commitment of a multiyear lease. Now, that's a good thing. No need to worry about which EMR you're going to use. No need to keep your supplies in stock, hire your staff, or worry about getting holiday coverage for your patients or manage the cost of your office when you're trying to cover a local emergency department or run out to deliver babies.

Jobs like this, that could be part-time and help out a practice that a physician or physician group is running, could be offered in the

public system, yet this government has made it more difficult for such physicians to be able to do those jobs. They can't be part of the new system of billing because they don't carry a large enough panel themselves. They can be critical in an existing practice. These types of roles are critical for physicians in their early years of practice, when commitments to look after family may be high; later, when they have responsibilities to care for other family members or their own health limits how much they can work; and in those early years, when they're perhaps waiting for a partner to finish their education and decide where to work.

These jobs could be easily available in team-based clinics led by local teams and developed with the support and funding of a well-designed publicly funded system. But no. With Bill 11 this government is moving to the American model of corporate clinics, and believe me, we will start to see them very soon.

What are the downsides of these corporate clinics? Well, first, they're motivated by profit. They're often run by venture capitalists. Quality care is not the goal. This has been proven again and again all over the world where they've existed but particularly, of course, in the United States.

Second, these corporate clinics will focus on what makes money. They will draw people into the clinic, but then they will provide the services that are good for making money. One of the first and easiest is virtual care. We need more virtual care. We need this government to support a system where virtual care is appropriately funded and positions and jobs for physicians to work part-time in that are there but they're integrated with the public system and with the care provided by a person's own regular family doctor. These corporate clinics will focus on those things that make money. Indeed, many of them will only provide virtual care, which means that you can pay for that consult at this point in time – they're already there through many insurance plans – but if you need more, maybe an examination, you'll either be sent to the emergency department or you'll have to find a physician who can examine you.

These corporate clinics will also stop doing the hard things that don't make money. They will buy up practices so that they have a monopoly, but then they will look at where they can make the most bucks. Maybe you need ultrasound and obstetric care in a remote and rural community. Well, you know, it's not very financially good to start building practices in rural areas because it costs more. We all know that. That's why it's hard to get people there and systems built. It is going to have a bigger impact on rural and remote areas than it is even on people in the cities.

Fourth, as already noted by my colleagues and every actual policy expert, based on data, wait times for primary care will increase in the public system. People who can pay are less likely to be complex. They're often working, fit, and well and having a better income and a better insurance plan. The complexity will increase along with there being fewer providers. Along with these longer wait times, the cost of the public health care system will increase. Public system costs will increase as the patients are more complex, need more tests, need more interventions. It will increase because people don't get the care when they need it. They have to wait longer to get the care. They're often sicker, and that costs more.

And because health care premiums are going to rise for all of us, everybody with a health care plan that is going to probably have to start offering some of these private benefits – they are going to go up. Employers are going to have to pay more. Maybe they say they can't afford to increase the minimum wage, but if there are any benefits, that cost is going to go up. Individuals and employers will be paying more, but the efficiency of the health care system is also going to decrease.

Costs will rise because we will no longer have a single payer. One of the things that is well known about the Canadian system is

that by having a single payer instead of 30 different insurance companies, the administrative costs are magnitudes lower. My neurology group had one to two billing clerks to cover all of our billing submissions, which went to the Alberta health care system, whereas a practice of similar size would have magnitudes. We'd have more billing clerks than physicians. We used to say: 30 neurologists; two billing clerks. In the U.S. it would be: two neurologists and 30 billing clerks. It is enormous. They're on the phone all day arguing about what gets paid and what doesn't get paid. Every Albertan will pay more for the public system and these long wait times.

Albertans also want shorter wait times for surgery and diagnostics, and we deserve it. However, this government has already shown that their experiment of increasing reliance on private surgical clinics is increasing wait times for most types of surgery because there's a limited supply of anaesthesiologists. Allowing more private surgery by allowing doctors to work in both the public and private system is going to magnify this. It's going to get worse. Anaesthesiologists will spend more time delivering privately funded care.

Alberta's private surgical clinics already do a lot more than the public-funded surgery that we know about. They are doing a lot of private surgery for people who come from other provinces. Those in the public health care system know this because they get a complication and they end up in our emergency departments. Nurses and anaesthesiologists who work for these private surgical clinics already work to provide private care to these out-of-province patients. More nurses and anaesthesiologists will now work in the private system. This will further reduce public system access. From what I understand, this government doesn't even know the magnitude of that surgery that's going on.

Public system access will affect all of us, whether you can pay for elective surgery or not, because urgent surgery is still going to be done in our hospital systems, and if you need an appendectomy or care after trauma or a C-section, it's already limited because of limited staffed ORs. Within Calgary and Edmonton it is no longer rare for a hospital to be on diversion, which means there's no capacity at that hospital and patients have to be taken elsewhere.

4:00

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak at third reading of Bill 11, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2). I will say again what I said in earlier debate. There has never been a government that has done as much damage to our public health care system as the UCP, without question.

I had the honour of serving as the opposition critic for health for about five years starting in 2019, and when we came into that election in 2019, the folks who were most knowledgeable in our health care system were saying that in the four years we were in government, we'd seen an unprecedented era of stability. We'd calmed things down after years of Conservative tinkering and chaos, a roller coaster of funding as oil rose and fell, successive health ministers shuffling in and out, different CEOs, different boards, restructuring. Indeed, what was said by, you know, a number of columnists and others who were well informed was that health care wasn't so much of an election issue because it had been taken off the table because it was stabilized.

It wasn't perfect. There are areas that still needed to be fixed and repaired. Those, of course, are the ones that the current Minister of Primary and Preventative Services likes to talk about. She likes to

pick all the little bits and pieces that weren't working well and ignore all the things that were. It's kind of an inverse now, Madam Speaker, where they've improved a couple of things, but everything else has pretty much gone to heck.

The fact is that when I had that opportunity to come in, I recognized health care is a pretty big and complex field. I'll be honest. I didn't know much about the health care system, much as all of the current ministers had no background when they took the file. But I recognized that if I was going to do my job well, I needed to learn, I needed to be able to stand toe to toe and be as informed, as well spoken and intelligent on the issue, as educated as the minister.

There was only one way to do that, Madam Speaker. That was to talk to a lot of folks in the health care system, front-line workers, folks that had been doing this for decades, folks who had the knowledge of how these systems work. I'll be honest. At first it was a bit of a challenge building those relationships and making those connections because folks in the health care system recognize where their funding comes from. When they have a government who they know is watching them, they're careful about what they say.

But I can tell you that it didn't take long under the UCP for folks to start talking. It started around the time they launched their war on doctors in early 2020. When they so badly threatened and undermined the ability for family doctors to practise their livelihood, suddenly there was a flood of doctors that were willing to talk to me, provide a lot of information, a lot of education about how the system worked.

It was interesting, Madam Speaker. When they launched that war on doctors, you know what their argument was? Family doctors are too greedy. They're manipulating the system, this fee-for-service billing system to take advantage of loopholes. Well, guess what they've done, Madam Speaker. They've created a whole new system now where they're going to double down on exactly that. They're going to let doctors bill in the public system and in the private system. They created surgical contracts that were exactly that. They were exploited, but they were okay with that because, you know, that was their close friends and supporters that were getting paid.

So the fact is what we have seen is that this government has continued to undermine the system at every step. Through the pandemic – let's remember at the start of the pandemic, Madam Speaker, that push to privatize. They were paying Alberta family doctors less for virtual visits with their own patients that they'd known for decades than they were willing to pay a private company, Telus, for a generic online walk-in service. They did that for months because they wanted to put the pressure on family doctors to buckle under. That is how this government treats the health care system.

Throughout the pandemic I built more relationships with folks across the health care system. I got to know folks that worked in internal medicine, folks that worked in acute care, folks that worked in emergency rooms, folks that worked in surgery because they became so frustrated with this government, with the damage they were doing, with how they were pushing the system to the limits, again, because of ideology, because they were not making decisions based on actual public health, on expertise, on talking to the folks who knew the system and cared the most about it but based on their political interests and ideology.

That's what drove a number of the steps they took. Premier Kenney came in. He said: "You know what we're going to do in health care? We're going to save a bunch of money. We're going to privatize lab services." Well, how did that go, Madam Speaker? Three years of work to force through a contract that they designed specifically for DynaLife fell apart in six months, cost taxpayers



\$125 million, and caused a whole lot of suffering for Albertans for the six to eight months when they handed it over.

He was going to save a bunch of money and get more surgeries done, Madam Speaker, through the Alberta Surgical Group and others, the Alberta surgical initiative. Again, they took months to get this up and going. It turns out the contracts that they signed were overpaid, and we warned them at every step. It wasn't me speaking from ideology; it was me telling them what I was hearing from folks on the front lines, surgeons, anaesthesiologists who were reaching out to me behind the scenes because of their concern with what this government was doing and their refusal to actually listen or consult.

They warned me and I warned this government that when they doubled down on privatizing surgeries, that was going to pull people out of the public system and that was going to hurt the public system and kill its capacity. Guess what, Madam Speaker. That's exactly what's happened. I stood in this House and asked questions of then minister of health Jason Copping about his plan to force anaesthesiologists in the public system in Calgary to go and work for ASG. He first swore up and down that it wasn't happening and then swore up and down that it would not impact the public system. Those anaesthesiologists themselves are speaking out about the damage it's done.

You know, it's all of that, all that damage, all of that chaos, all the ways that they undermined and blew up the system, drove up wait times in our emergency rooms, drove up closures of ERs in rural areas. Again, we started raising the flag on that in the summer of 2020, started tracking every closure that was happening in rural Alberta and saying that this is a trend.

Well, guess what, Madam Speaker. Five years down the road: still happening, still going. They finally got the Boyle hospital open. You know how many times they promised they were going to make that happen? It took about three years from the first date when they said they were going to have it done because this government has not been able to address the significant worker shortage we still have in our health care system, no matter how much the minister stands and talks about how many new ones come in, ignoring the fact that population has grown by a far larger margin than the paltry number of health care workers they've been able to hang on to and attract.

That means Albertans have fewer workers per capita, fewer workers per Albertan available to provide care, and now they want to create this parallel system when they don't have more workers to staff it, when they can't even provide the service that they as a government are supposed to be providing for the tax dollars that Albertans pay.

At every step of the way, Madam Speaker, this has been a choice by this government. Premier Kenney, before he became Premier, spoke with contempt, literally, about the public health care system and public health care workers. This Premier, before she became Premier, spoke at length about what she wanted to do, how Albertans should pay more out of pocket for health care, maybe pay to see their family doctor, how hospitals: maybe we should have private corporations run those instead because public health care workers are so bad at their job. Now, of course, she had to swear up and down that she would not do that during the election because Albertans were very, very clear about what they did not want to see. They knew that it was radioactive to propose precisely the things that they have pushed through since they were elected.

4:10

And the reason they've managed to keep this quiet, Madam Speaker, is through a campaign of quiet intimidation. You don't see many health care workers standing up and talking now because they know this government will come after them. They know they are

under pressure. They know they're being watched. What we have now is that Albertans are left with this degraded system in which the government suppresses information by hiding data through rigging of the freedom of information system, by intimidating workers into silence, but Albertans know, anybody who was at the Royal Alex emergency room the other day, when it was packed to the gills.

And you know what? There are still some health care workers who are speaking out. I salute Dr. Paul Parks, who made every effort to work with the Minister of Primary and Preventative Services, trusted them to act in good faith, stood with them, had her stand in this House and claim that he supported everything they were doing, so everything was okay. Well, he's very clear now, Madam Speaker, that he's out of his role as president of the AMA that this government broke every promise they made, they failed to follow through, and that this government is destroying our public health care system. He is very clear about the realities of what we are seeing on the front lines. We just saw it again the other day when the minister stood up and misquoted Dr. John Meddings and conveniently left out all the considerable criticism he has brought forward about every choice this government makes and cherry-picked one little bit.

That's Bill 11, Madam Speaker. It's this government proposing new plastic surgery for a patient that's about to code. Our health care system is struggling. It is limping along. Health care workers are exhausted, but this government is only interested in listening to a handful of doctors who are making a darn good profit and want to make more. They're focusing on a little handful, a sliver of the surgeries.

Let's be clear. These are surgeries people need. Hips, knees, cataracts: those are things that make a big difference for people's quality of life, but they are paying no attention to the growing wait-lists for people with cancer, life-threatening surgeries, all these other areas of health care that this government just conveniently ignores. They don't care about them because it's not the fun stuff, Madam Speaker. It's not the things where you cherry-pick this little bit from that health care system and that little bit from this thing over there and feel like a clever disruptor, like they're Elon Musk. Though I'd say, you know, what Elon Musk did to Twitter is not dissimilar to what they've done to our health care system.

There's a tech term for it that would not be parliamentary, but it's kind of, colloquially, turning things to crap. That is what we have seen, and that is what anybody who works in this health care system will tell you. But, of course, this government doesn't listen to them. They spend millions of dollars on consultants. Who knows how many CEOs we've had at AHS at this point, how many different boards, sole administrators, single persons that are representing the entire board. The most recent one: now he's off on leave, and this government swears they've done nothing wrong; it's all those people over there. Madam Speaker, if you have a constant turnover of employees, if you constantly have people quit, it's not your employees; you're a bad boss. You probably don't know how to actually run your business.

And that's bad enough. I mean, the money they wasted on DynaLife: yeah, that was problematic. All these little games they like to play: yes. But what we are talking about here is life and death for some Albertans. It is objectively their quality of life, their ability to make a living, the amount of time they're going to have with loved ones. That's what this government is playing with as if they were tinkering with an engine, swapping out parts willy-nilly.

Albertans are owed far more. What we are seeing in Bill 11 is just further disruption, further chaos. It is far more rooted in American-style privatization than European countries that have actually put thought and care into holistically building every aspect

of their health care system, primarily pharmacare and primary care. This government is going to do a lot of damage.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I've got less than three minutes up for grabs. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

**Member Irwin:** Thank you so much. I just wanted to take a moment to start by thanking so much my colleagues who've done incredible work speaking in support of public health care. Grateful for all of you, especially when we have folks like the Member for Calgary-Varsity, who's had a lifetime of working in health care.

[The Speaker in the chair]

On that note, I want to give a shout-out to all the health care workers out there. We're just so grateful for you, and we love you. Thank you for all that you continue to do. Wishing you all the best as you head into this holiday season.

We're almost done our time here in the House this session. I know I can speak for all of us that, as we head back into our home constituencies, we're going to be connecting with our constituents. We're going to be checking in with them. We're going to be, you know, asking them how they felt about this fall session. We're going to be asking how they're feeling about all the issues that are top of mind. I know that I can speak for countless folks in Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, that I'm so honoured to represent, who say that they want access to doctors for their loved ones. They want less time waiting in emergency departments. They want shorter wait times for surgeries. They want a health care system that is accessible to all, one that leaves no one behind. They believe in the fundamental value of public health care, something that we as Canadians are just so very proud of.

What do they not want? Well, they don't want UCP American-style health care. They do not want to have to take out their credit cards just to access the fundamental health care that they deserve. They do not support Bill 11. Our inboxes have been flooded – flooded – by e-mails from our constituents and from folks all across this province who are speaking out. There are countless stakeholders like Friends of Medicare, like a number of health care professionals, too many to name, who are speaking out against the dangers of Bill 11. Let me tell you that Albertans are speaking out, and it's now time . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt, but it is my job. Pursuant to Government Motion 23, agreed to earlier this afternoon, one hour of debate has now been completed, and I am required to put to the Assembly all necessary questions to dispose of Bill 11, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2), at third reading.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:18 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Amery	Johnson	Sawhney
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Jones	Sawyer
Boitchenko	LaGrange	Schow
Bouchard	Loewen	Sigurdson, R.J.
Cyr	Long	Singh
de Jonge	Lovely	Smith
Dreeshen	Lundy	Stephan
Dyck	McDougall	Turton

Ellis	Nally	Wiebe
Fir	Neudorf	Williams
Getson	Nicolaides	Wilson
Glubish	Nixon	Wright, J.
Horner	Petrovic	Yao
Hunter	Pitt	Yaseen
Jean	Rowswell	

Against the motion:

Al-Guneid	Ellingson	Metz
Arcand-Paul	Elmeligi	Nenshi
Batten	Eremenko	Pancholi
Boparai	Ganley	Renaud
Brar, Gurinder	Goehring	Sabir
Brar, Gurtej	Haji	Schmidt
Calahoo Stonehouse	Hoffman	Shepherd
Ceci	Hoyle	Sigurdson, Lori
Chapman	Ip	Sweet
Dach	Irwin	Tejada
Deol	Kasawski	Wright, P.
Eggen		

Totals: For – 44 Against – 34

[Motion carried; Bill 11 read a third time]

#### Bill 14

#### Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

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

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

Mr. Speaker, at its core Bill 14 protects something fundamental, Albertans' confidence in their democracy and in their justice system.

At this time I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion to adjourn debate carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:25 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

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

Against the motion:

Al-Guneid	Ellingson	Metz
Arcand-Paul	Elmeligi	Nenshi
Batten	Eremenko	Pancholi

Boparai	Ganley	Renaud
Brar, Gurinder	Goehring	Sabir
Brar, Gurtej	Haji	Schmidt
Calahoo Stonehouse	Hoffman	Shepherd
Ceci	Hoyle	Sigurdson, Lori
Chapman	Ip	Sweet
Dach	Irwin	Tejada
Deol	Kasawski	Wright, P.
Edgen		
Totals:	For – 44	Against – 34

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

4:30

### Government Motions

(continued)

#### Time Allocation on Bill 14

26. 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 third reading, at which time every question necessary for the disposal of the bill at this stage shall be put forthwith.

**Mr. Schow:** Now, Mr. Speaker, being as this is the last bill that we will be debating today and of this session, I think it's important to make a couple of notes as to why we're moving time allocation. The sessional calendar had us at four weeks in this Chamber and then breaking for Christmas, as we do. We are now here two weeks past that expiry date for session to ensure that proper time is given for all members of this Assembly to engage in debate on these very important pieces of legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've made this note before and it's important to make it again. There comes a time in this Chamber when we have reached the magnitude of our potential, particularly for the opposition side, and our ability to be productive with our debate, productive with our time, productive with the people's time. Time allocation is now being moved because I do believe the members have reached that limit.

A few examples. It was only a couple of days ago that we sat in this Chamber while the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar stood on the opposition benches and didn't say a single solitary word. Five minutes, Mr. Speaker. It seemed like a lifetime, but that is not very good use of time, so it appears based on action, clearly not based on word, that the members opposite don't choose to use their time here wisely but rather act as an obstructionist, not an opposition but an obstruction, to government progress.

Now, I understand. It's a very important role being His Majesty's Loyal Opposition. Members on the government benches have been on those benches. Heaven knows, Mr. Speaker, I was once a staffer and I was writing some of those speeches myself, staying up late nights and making sure that the members on the opposition benches had the information that they needed to come in here and engage in a robust debate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I can tell you is that what I learned as a staffer is that it is important to use the facts. It's important to use your time wisely. It's important to support the members for which you work. Now, the members opposite have chosen to use this time to sling mud at the government, to make personal attacks, and to ensure that rather than getting progress, but getting oppositional comments on the record, they have chosen to obstruct, and that is why more times than ever in the history of this Assembly I have

had to use time allocation, because the members have failed at their job to be a true opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite like to use this statistic and say how many times I, as the Government House Leader, moved time allocation. I think it's time to look inwards and ask themselves: do you want to sit here until the new year, or do you want to use this time wisely to get your comments and represent your constituents properly on the record?

Mr. Speaker, I think we have reached that limit. We have reached that limit. The limit where the members have gone from being productive in opposition to obstructionists, and that is not the role. That is not what their constituents elected them to do. They elected them to come into this Chamber and be His Majesty's Loyal Opposition, not His Majesty's loyal obstruction. The members opposite don't like what I have to say, but the truth hurts. The truth hurts.

With that, I move Government Motion 26 to ensure that the mandate that the people of Alberta gave us in 2023 is completed.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks.

**Member Arcand-Paul:** Mr. Speaker, this is the last and final time allocation of this fall session, and it is a disgusting abuse of power that this government has become so accustomed to doing in this House because they know they are losing. They are losing the plot, they're losing in the polls, and, thereby, they are losing the support of Albertans. "There comes a time in this Chamber when we have reached the magnitude of our potential," are words that were just spoken by the Government House Leader. To be "productive with our time, the people's time," he says. "Members have reached that limit," he says. Well, this side of the aisle could go right until the new year to defend and stand up for the rights of Albertans.

For shame, Mr. Speaker, for the members opposite to call us obstructionists to government progress. While that side may want to stall debate and the voices of Albertans, that is not our interest, and we will not take any advice from this authoritarian government. We represent Albertans. We bring facts into this Chamber despite the members opposite ad hominem attacks, rich commentary from the Government House Leader. Those comments and our concerns as opposition go to the crux of this bill.

For a government that sits up in this Chamber arrogant as can be that the legislation they are putting forward is good for Albertans, but then turns around and abuses their powers, that they can continue to consolidate into the hands of the few, the executive branch of our system, the cabinet. It is rich from this government to call our judicial branch, an important arm of separation of powers in our democracy, an oligarchy, which it is not, Mr. Speaker.

Although we disagree with some of the judgments, our job is to ensure that our future judges, which are lawyers, Mr. Speaker, have the knowledge, skill, and competence to serve all of us, but this government is also taking that ability away from our once self-governing Law Society. It is rich because this government only dreams of achieving that status of oligarchy. This bill exemplifies this intention along with this time allocation motion.

Striking the referral of a court from their earlier draft, before the government amendment last night at the eleventh hour, really signals to Albertans that this government is coming after our judicial branch because the UCP cannot stomp their feet and get what they want from the courts, as they should not. That is the point of the courts, Mr. Speaker. Closing debate on these very important conversations that Albertans elect us to have in this place, especially on Bill 14, is despicable when the Minister of Justice is getting an exculpatory pass. This is not Monopoly. These are the rights of Albertans that we are talking about.

As a lawyer in this esteemed Chamber, like that minister is and as this member is, we are held to a much higher standard than that of the nonlawyer members of this Chamber under our once self-regulating profession, as it requires. To exempt the chief lawyer of this province from Law Society scrutiny leaves Albertans to really question the UCP's motives. Was it the notwithstanding clause, or is there something else coming? With this government, Albertans are concerned.

This motion to limit debate goes to the heart of what the Chief Electoral Officer wrote to this government yesterday, which I tabled this afternoon in the House. "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." Mr. Speaker, this Chamber is the legislative branch. While the other side may not like what this side of the House has to say, His Majesty's Loyal Opposition: we have the responsibility of holding the government accountable, especially when it overreaches and consolidates power in authoritarian ways.

It is doing so in Bill 14 by preventing members in this Chamber from using the term "Conservative," but it is also preserving the right for the term "Republican" to be used in the future. Hmm, Mr. Speaker, why is that? This government is doing indirectly what it cannot do directly. This is the 84th use of time allocation motions since the UCP came into power, which has only been used in the history of this place 155 times. They are responsible for 54 per cent of all uses over their short six years. And that is since this Chamber was granted the authority to exist from the federal government, since this government was created in large thanks because treaty was concluded over this land. That means that the UCP is responsible for two provincial records rooted in abuse of power: limiting debate and the use of the notwithstanding clause.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 26 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:40 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

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

Against the motion:

Al-Guneid	Ellingson	Metz
Arcand-Paul	Elmeligi	Nenshi
Batten	Eremenko	Pancholi
Boparai	Ganley	Renaud
Brar, Gurinder	Goehring	Sabir

Brar, Gurtej	Haji	Schmidt
Calahoo Stonehouse	Hoffman	Shepherd
Ceci	Hoyle	Sigurdson, Lori
Chapman	Ip	Sweet
Dach	Irwin	Tejada
Deol	Kasawski	Wright, P.
Eggen		

Totals: For – 44 Against – 34

[Government Motion 26 carried]

## Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

### Bill 14 Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (continued)

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

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to again rise and speak to third reading of Bill 14, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025. Albertans expect our democratic processes to be open, fair, and transparent. Not only that; Albertans are eager to participate in the process, and that's why Bill 14 gives more opportunities for Albertans to participate in democracy through citizen initiative petitions. While allowing more Albertans to participate, we're also safeguarding our elections. Our province has seen multiple attempts to co-ordinate and overwhelm ballots, mislead voters, and undermine the electoral process.

Many experts have weighed in on this. Some have gone so far as to call this an abuse of process, Mr. Speaker. This is a nonpartisan commentary on the processes that are impeding upon our elections these days. Once again – I mentioned it earlier; I'll mention it again – Jean-Pierre Kingsley, the former CEO of Elections Canada, called the long-ballot protests and the processes by which organized groups are impacting and undermining our elections an abuse of process. Bill 14 sets clear, common-sense guardrails to ensure that ballots aren't filled with people who have no intention of actually being elected.

It also reinforces a basic democratic principle: every Albertan should be able to participate without having their personal information mishandled, misused, or abused, Mr. Speaker. That's why Bill 14 is strengthening privacy protections and enforcing real consequences for violations.

It also reflects a commitment to a justice system that is responsive and works for the people. By supporting front-line legal aid services and improving our core capacity, we are ensuring that Albertans can access timely, reliable support when navigating the justice system.

Taken together, Mr. Speaker, Bill 14 strengthens integrity, it promotes participation, and it supports the democratic process that Albertans value and treasure. It is a balanced, responsible set of reforms designed to ensure that democracy in Alberta remains open but never open to abuse. I know this is a comprehensive bill. I'm certain that members of this Assembly will have much to say about it. A lot of work has gone into this legislation, and there's nothing more important to this government than upholding and ensuring democracy is upheld, and I'm honoured to have played a part in that for our province.

I'll close by encouraging everyone to support Bill 14. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** On Bill 14, seeing no speakers – oh, I do. Okay. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Nenshi:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, to the vast relief of the people of the House, I will not use all of my allocated time, but I may go a little bit longer than I did just a little earlier this afternoon because there's a lot to talk about here.

One of the very last things that the minister said was fascinating. He said that a lot of work has gone into this bill, which is fascinating because none of that work appears to have included any consultation with anyone. It has not had any consultation with the Alberta Law Society or the Alberta Law Foundation. It has not included any consultation with the Chief Electoral Officer. It has not included any consultation with the heads of the various political parties who are impacted by it. So if a lot of work happened, Albertans would be free to question: what exactly was that work and with whom?

In fact, just last night we had the minister table an amendment at the very last second that no one had seen before, and when asked, he could not in fact explain what was in the amendment. What he said was: the Chief Electoral Officer wrote us a letter today, and we've addressed his concerns. When he was asked, "How have you addressed those concerns?" or a very basic question like "Does the Chief Electoral Officer maintain the right to refer a potential petition for its constitutionality?" he did not know the answer. So where is that lot of work that went into this bill?

4:50

In fact, what we have here are the actions of a government so entitled, so arrogant, so shameless that they are willing to toy with democracy itself. This is the second time in a row where a bill has been tabled with no consultation in a session, as the very last bill in the session, that fundamentally changes our democracy. What's interesting is the last one that was tabled at the end of the spring session, which, among many other things, changed corporate finance rules. The minister as recently as two weeks ago was bragging about the fact that he put through a piece of legislation that favours only his party. Albertans have a right to demand better, and we have a right to demand better for our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you why these conversations are happening. It's because folks on the right around the world – it's not an original thought of this government. They don't have very many of those. It is a thought that is taken from forces on the right around the world who discovered something. They've discovered that for a certain element of the electorate, democracy doesn't really matter. You know, people think of democracy as: "Jeez, I've got to go vote once every four years. If you take away a little bit of my right to vote once every four years but maybe give me something I want, maybe you somehow increase my paycheque," though this government hasn't done that, "if you somehow lower my taxes," though this government hasn't done that, "if you beat up on people I don't like and I feel better about myself" – this government has certainly done that – "then maybe I don't care so much about democracy."

Folks like my colleagues here and myself and kind of a lot of the people we talked to were shocked by this. We say: antidemocratic actions are the worst things the government can do. But this government has decided that it doesn't really matter, and they go forward with this in such a shameless way, its actions reminiscent of a cornered predator, of an injured predator who doesn't know what to do, who doesn't know what to do when they're not the most powerful person in the room, who doesn't know how to handle criticism when they've never had to face criticism before. We have members opposite for whom the history has been that if you win the UCP nomination – or you win the Conservative nomination, I should say, well, you've got a job for life. It's fine. Nobody is going to bother you as long as you win the nomination. Suddenly these members are facing citizens who are very, very angry.

I can't even keep up with the number of recalls that have been filed. It grows every single day. Watching the reaction of my colleagues opposite really gives us a good sense of the challenge this government is facing as they're setting this kind of government policy. They don't know how to take it, and they lash out. They lash out at the opposition. Sure, we're used to that. But now they're lashing out at anybody who they think doesn't agree with them, who doesn't do every whim. They're lashing out at people they themselves appointed to boards and agencies for daring to question them. They're lashing out at officers of the Legislature whose job it is to be nonpartisan. Most shocking of all, they're lashing out at citizens.

We still haven't had an apology from the minister of agriculture for exposing one of his neighbours to incredible harassment. We still haven't had an apology from the Member for Airdrie-East for implicitly threatening the job of a principal by saying that public servants should never criticize the government, despite the fact that the Premier is well on record talking about how public servants should criticize the government. But that was before she was Premier. This is the kind of government we're dealing with. They think they can do anything. The entitlement is enormous.

Let's just talk about one aspect of this bill.

Oh, Mr. Speaker, this is very important. I apologize. I should have done this right off the top. I have received – I don't know – thousands and thousands of notes, I think, in the last 48 hours because of what I said in the House a couple of days ago, where perhaps I implied that I was opposed to raisins in butter tarts and pineapple on pizza. I want to be clear about something. I believe in people's freedom. Put raisins in your butter tarts. Put pineapple on your pizza. Do what you need to do. But don't do two things. Number one, don't hide cauliflower in the mac and cheese. That's just crime against nature. Number two, don't hide things in your bills that have nothing to do with the title but you think you can get away with.

You'll notice that in the minister's conversation and each time he's talked about this bill, unless he's directly questioned, he doesn't talk about immunity for not just himself but every Minister of Justice that has ever served in Alberta. Come on. We know that three Conservative ministers of Justice in a row have been investigated by the Law Society, two of them sanctioned by the Law Society. We know that's true. The Premier refused to answer the question and the minister refused to answer the question when we asked very straight up: how many complaints have been filed at the Law Society against this minister? The refusal to answer that question speaks volumes.

Look, we know that this minister stood up and introduced a bill that gives himself immunity. In any other place that would be a conflict of interest, but more important, in any other place no politician would dare to do it because they have a little bit of shame, because they have a little bit of understanding of the responsibility of their work. Yet he stood up to put forth a motion as Alberta's top lawyer to give himself immunity.

We've been talking for months in this House about things he failed to disclose. He failed to disclose, if we're to believe the Premier, that Sam Mraiche, the recipient of more than a billion dollars we think in government contracts, is his best friend, that he travels with Sam Mraiche, that he goes to events with Sam Mraiche, that Sam Mraiche is indeed related to him. Yet he has the gall to stand up in this House and speak to defend Sam Mraiche.

The Premier hasn't even benched her minister who has such a clear conflict of interest, but that's what this government does. They don't think any rules apply to them, least of all the rule of law. This government acts like it is above the law at all times. The minister should at the very least recuse himself for the final vote

on this legislation, but he won't. He won't because he thinks he can get away with it.

That is emblematic of everything about this government. Albertans deserve so much better. Again, cornered, scared, cowardly: the government doesn't think that it can win a fair election, so now it's going to make it harder again, for the second time, for its opponents in that election.

This is almost entertaining. There is a list in this bill of names you cannot use if you want to register a new party, and if you were to go over to Elections Alberta's website – this is all the hard work that went into it – they didn't even reorder the list or put it in alphabetical order or anything. You just have a list of political parties from Elections Alberta's website. Every one of them except for one has some word in their name that the government has decided is the distinctive word in that name. For us it's "democratic." Look, we're very happy to be the only democratic party in this House.

It's laughable. It excludes the word "wildrose" from being used in any new party, except, of course, there are already two parties with the name Wildrose. Voters seem to figure it out. Voters are not as dumb as this government sometimes seems to think they are. They know who they're voting for.

This is just pure self-preservation. In fact, early drafts of this that were leaked said that they were going to ban the use of the word "progressive" in the name of a future party despite the fact that "progressive" is not in fact used in any current party name. They decided not to do that in the end, so our colleagues in the independent caucus, I suppose, could call themselves the progressive progressive party or the pragmatic Canadian party or your progressive conservative choice if it's not in the name of the party. Ironically, the only party they couldn't ban a name from was the Alberta Party because they couldn't figure out a way to ban "Alberta" or "party." This is comical. It is comical that we're wasting our time in this House talking about these basic self-preservation moves on the part of a desperate and cowardly government.

But let's just talk a little bit about banning that word "conservative." No other party can call themselves conservative. Around the world, Mr. Speaker, in different jurisdictions there are many flavours of conservative parties. There are far-right extremist parties. There are anti-immigrant parties. There are fiscally conservative parties. There are parties that are centrist on social policy but conservative on fiscal policy.

5:00

Now, what's interesting about this party is they want to hold on to that word "conservative." They love it so much, and there is nothing conservative about this government. They're terrible with money. They're running record deficits despite three times the oil royalty revenue of the NDP. They're not libertarians. They strip away human rights at every opportunity. They trample on people's rights. They're certainly not constitutionally conservative. They're not structuralists. They don't believe in the Constitution. They're not institutional conservatives who believe in the power of individual institutions like the courts. There's nothing conservative about this organization, but luckily they haven't banned the words "separatist" or "power hungry," so perhaps those could be new words for this party going forward.

There are special things in this legislation to allow a separatist referendum and only a separatist referendum to go forward. Indeed, the amendments that were made last night make it easier, not harder, for this kind of referendum to go forward despite Justice Feasby clearly highlighting before this legislation came through that that separatist referendum is, in fact, unconstitutional.

So what does that mean? It means the Premier is trying to have it both ways. She's trying to speak to her base and say, "Hey, we're going to let you have a referendum," but she knows the referendum question is unconstitutional. And the part she'll never say is: we're going to let you have a referendum, and regardless of the result, we're not going to do anything because it's unconstitutional. It's a waste of time, it's a waste of money, and it is, in fact, a sham.

It's not fair. It's not fair to her base. It's not fair to other Albertans. It's not fair to the 450,000 Albertans who gave up their summer to fight for Canada. Maybe I'm old fashioned, talking about fairness in a place like this, but I believe Albertans deserve ethical and competent government, regardless of colour, and they're certainly not getting it now.

I've got another couple of points. Number one, you know, I quoted in question period a few days ago that in the Wildrose era they had very specific policy on referenda, much more specific than this government has ever had. It actually said that referenda, quote, must be deemed constitutional by a justice of the court. It wasn't just an option; it was a requirement for any referendum. And now not only have we stripped away the option; we're just assuming that everything's going to be constitutional at some point.

The Premier has refused, despite my asking her probably a dozen times in this House, to define what she thinks the role of the courts should be. This is very dangerous. This is empty rhetoric without any substance. She rails on about unelected judges but doesn't say she'll elect them. She rails on about gatekeepers but doesn't say what gatekeeping she would remove. She's trying to have it both ways. This government is trying to have it both ways by suggesting that they are what they are not.

They don't have the guts to have elected judges. They don't have the guts to actually do anything about the judicial system, but they're going to complain about it and keep people angry because that's their political philosophy. They'd rather fight than win because if they're seen to be fighting, even though they're so weak, then people will be angry, and those people will vote for them.

But Albertans have seen through it. We've had the largest rallies in Alberta's history on the steps of this Legislature. We had the largest petition in Alberta's history against this government, and we have – I don't know how many we have now – 18, 19, 20, 25 recall petitions against government MLAs. Albertans are not going to take it any more.

As this government feels threatened, they go to tired, old culture war tropes. They try to remind people, "Hey, we're the people who you believe in; we're the people you can trust because you can't trust anyone else," but Albertans have stopped trusting them.

They tried a new one. They've decided to attack the lawyers. I never went to law school; I almost went to law school many times, but I never did finish. But I do have a bunch of lawyers that sit around me here in this caucus and a whole bunch in my life. Sometimes I like them, and sometimes I don't like them.

**Ms Hoffman:** Sometimes you really like them.

**Mr. Nenshi:** Once in a while I really like them.

The attacks on lawyers that we've seen from this government are really, really telling. They are an example of the mask falling, of this government saying, "Wow, some of our supporters didn't like having to take Indigenous education" even though the lawyers came together in record numbers and said, "We want to have mandatory Indigenous education because that was required by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission." The lawyers were self-governing, and they made that decision, and now the government wants to make the decision for them.

The attacks on the Alberta Law Foundation are blowing my mind. This is an independent foundation. The money that this foundation has is from the interest on the trust accounts that clients give their lawyers. When you're in a case, you might have some money you give to the lawyer that they hold in trust. The interest off of it goes to the Alberta Law Foundation to fund all kinds of important legal education, all kinds of legal interventions, including law clinics as well as legal aid. In an unprecedented power grab, something I've never seen a government in Alberta do before, this government is reaching into a nonprofit organization and trying to control it and trying to get their hands on that money. It's not the government's money. It's money that belongs to clients, and it's money that belongs to Albertans.

It's not because I love lawyers; it's because I believe in the judicial system. It's because I believe that a system of separation of powers and a free court system, a free judiciary, is what serves freedom the best. No government should tell police officers who to arrest. No government should tell lawyers who to prosecute. No government should tell judges how to do their job. That's authoritarianism and worse, and that is not what Albertans voted for.

One final thought. I want to talk a little bit about separation and the separation referendum. On this side of the House we spent the summer talking to Albertans. We knocked on over 200,000 doors. We went to every small-town rodeo and parade. We were in dog parks. The Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood was in a lot of dog parks. We talked to Albertans, and we had a series of extraordinary community gatherings, 10 of them, from Grande Prairie to Lethbridge. Thousands of Albertans gave up a summer evening to come talk to us. Indeed, without spending a penny of taxpayer money on advertising, we had nearly as many people come to these community gatherings as came to the government's town halls, and we didn't suggest any single Albertan ought to be spanked for their views.

What we heard from Albertans was really critical. We called the system Better Together. It was meant to be about separatism. It was meant to say, "Look, Albertans are better together with Canada," and certainly we heard that from Albertans. They were angry at this government for pandering to separatists, and they said to us very, very clearly: Albertans are now, have always been, and always will be proud Canadians.

And there were lots of head arguments here. There were lots of intellectual arguments on what the challenges are with separatism. You know, we understand that when we look at previous examples. Nineteen sixty-seven: I was not alive then, but we had the centennial of Canada. We had a world's fair in Montreal. Montreal was the heart of the world's cultural and economic scene. It was the economic engine of Canada. Almost immediately after, with the FLQ crisis and the separation referenda in Quebec, capital fled; 338 head offices left Montreal, most for Toronto, some for Calgary. The city of Montreal and the province of Quebec went into 50 years of economic decline from which they still have not recovered.

Is this the future this government wants for Alberta? The amendment that was made last night means you could have endless separation referenda. You don't have to have any time limit. You could have them every week, every month, every year, and capital will flee. We've seen this everywhere. We saw it in Brexit. We've seen it in Scotland. We've seen it everywhere where separatist thought is allowed to spread and pandered to.

But that's not the most important thing, Mr. Speaker. The most important thing is not the head; it's the heart. The heart is simply this: our ancestors and the ancestors of people in this room, people who've been on this land for thousands of years, people who arrived – I have a family that I'm sponsoring as refugees who are on their way here

right now. We have a promise to those people, and the promise to those people is that Canada is where you belong. We are proud Canadians, and we will fight for Canada, we will fight for Alberta, and we will make this place better every single day.

5:10

With this legislation this government says: we don't care about democracy; we don't care about anything but power. Well, on this side, Mr. Speaker, we care about Alberta. We care about Albertans, we care about big dreams, we care about audacious goals, and we believe always that we are better together. That is why we should oppose this legislation.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, seeing no speakers – oh, Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also stand to speak to Bill 14. It's a hard act to follow after the leader just spoke.

**Mr. Nenshi:** And I told you I'd take ten minutes.

**Mr. Sabir:** Yeah. I was going to say that I will not repeat many of the things the leader said, but all of those things are worth repeating, so you might hear some of those things again.

I will start with the Citizen Initiative Act changes. There are two or three things that I must highlight. One, that changes contained in this section were designed to end a court reference that the court has already heard, where Albertans have already made submissions, where Indigenous communities have made submissions. The court was almost ready to pronounce the decision, and they did, in fact, one day after this bill was introduced. One of the activists in the court who was writing the judgment, hon. Justice Feasby, said that was against the rule of law, that government would take this extraordinary step to interfere in the justice system. They called this attitude a complete and cavalier disregard for the independence of the judiciary.

Not only that; this government then has the audacity to come in this Chamber and say things that are completely inaccurate, that somehow judges are involved in activism, somehow they are unelected and unaccountable and they've been stretching things and they are doing things that they are not allowed to do even though that judge was doing exactly what this government legislation asked the judge to do. The judge was required to hear a reference from the Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta pursuant to sections 3 and 4 of the Citizen Initiative Act, which sections are now being repealed. So for the government to say that somehow the court exceeded their authority: that is completely dishonest, and the government should be ashamed of spreading that kind of misinformation.

Second thing: I will speak to the changes that this government is making in the Citizen Initiative Act. I'm sure that the Minister of Indigenous Relations will be very interested in these changes. The government is repealing sections 3 and 4 of the Citizen Initiative Act. Section 3, which is being repealed, reads thus: "An application with respect to a legislative proposal must not exceed the jurisdiction of the Legislature . . . An initiative petition proposal must not contravene sections 1 to section 35.1 of the Constitution Act, 1982."

Mr. Speaker, what section (3) does is what the Premier lectures everyone else to do: stay in your lane. The federal government has heard that lecture, I guess, the most. Then every once in a while the Premier will tell Premier Eby and others to stay in their lane. Here there was a provision essentially saying: okay; the Alberta government will also stay in its lane and not do anything that exceeds the jurisdiction of this Legislature. By removing this section, by removing this protection, the government is inviting the

separatist elements, its fringe base, to bring referendum questions, citizen initiative proposals on whatever they see fit. I think that's very unfortunate that the government will engage in that kind of behaviour and remove this protection from the act.

The second provision is, "An initiative petition proposal must not contravene sections 1 to 35.1 of the Constitution Act, 1982." That was the provision which the Chief Electoral Officer relied on when he sent the reference to the court. The question proposed by that initiative was: should Alberta cease to exist as a province and become independent of Canada? It was in the provision provided in the Citizen Initiative Act that any initiative petition must not contravene sections 1 to 35. Section 1 to 35 includes the Charter, and sections 35 and 35.1 include Indigenous rights, treaty rights that are offered and recognized by the Constitution.

This bill is removing that protection for Indigenous people. They included a nonderogation and nonabrogation clause to assure Indigenous communities along with this provision that nothing in these initiatives will be allowed to derogate or abrogate treaty and Indigenous rights, and here we are. They are removing those protections, again giving that message to their base: "No, Indigenous rights don't matter. Treaty rights don't matter. Bring whatever you think that you need to bring through the Citizen Initiative Act." We didn't hear literally a word from the Minister of Indigenous Relations in this government. That's also truly shameful. A minister who gets paid to stand up for Indigenous communities, treaty rights, constitutionally protected rights, will let this government repeal those protections for Indigenous communities across this province. That is truly shameful.

There are things that they included which last night, after a letter from the Chief Electoral Officer, they tried to fix. The only thing they tried to fix is that now the Chief Electoral Officer will not be required to seek confirmation from the minister whether a similar referendum question has been asked in the last five years. That was just part of what the Chief Electoral Officer asked.

But what they are doing with this is even more dangerous. They are getting rid of all of this, so now through the Citizen Initiative Act people will be able to bring referendum questions on things that are basically similar. There is one referendum question that was brought forward by former Deputy Premier Thomas Lukaszuk. If tomorrow somebody else wants to bring the same question, there is no provision in this act that gives the Chief Electoral Officer the authority to reject that question. Again, it's just the Wild West. Whatever their base thinks that they need to do, they will be able to do, and the Chief Electoral Officer doesn't have the authority. Government is deliberately stripping the Chief Electoral Officer of the authority to make that determination.

5:20

There are a few more things. Government is removing the Chief Electoral Officer's authority to refer questions to the court for guidance whenever there are questions of constitutionality, questions of Indigenous and treaty rights: again, complete disregard for the Constitution of Canada, complete disregard for Indigenous rights, complete disregard for treaty rights, and that's truly shameful. We are headed in the direction opposite of democracy.

Then there are other things. As the Leader of the Official Opposition mentioned, the Minister of Justice had more than a few opportunities to talk about this bill and at least enlighten us about why this immunity for him was necessary while he's giving himself authority to change bylaws, make bylaws with respect to education, training, all those things, but then declare himself that: no, I won't be bound by any of that because I'm special, and these are the laws for you and not for me. Not once did he comment on it. As I said,

for a layperson the minister moving this bill, putting forward this bill and giving himself immunity is, I guess in layperson's terms, a conflict, and he should not have included that in it. That goes against the spirit of the rule of law that we all cherish, that we see as a fundamental Canadian value.

Some other changes are included as well. Mr. Speaker, Albertans under the Business Corporations Act, the Societies Act do register corporations, societies. They do register businesses. Just imagine if I register a corporation and I have some money in the bank account that has nothing to do with government, that is not public funds, and the government of the day legislates and takes control of that corporation account. When that was happening elsewhere around the globe, we called that totalitarianism. We thought that investment security was at risk, and we came up with all kinds of things for how this should never happen in a democratic society.

Exactly that is happening here. A society independent of government, the Law Foundation, has some money in their account. That's not government money. That's Albertans' money, and with Albertans' consent that money goes to their account so that they can use it for access to justice initiatives and many other community initiatives to promote reconciliation, to promote a just, equitable society. Government: first they cut Legal Aid funding, and they went after their funds, and with the dint of law they asked them to pay more to backfill for the cuts that government is making to the Law Society.

Then, this time around, government is taking another run at them and now giving themselves the ability to make bylaws with respect to their finances and all that. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that's highway robbery. Government is using its legislative power to steal money from the arm's-length Law Foundation. That is unacceptable. That kind of behaviour should be unacceptable in a free, democratic society.

Then one more thing. I think we have talked about these party names enough, but again, that's the government that is afraid of political competition, that is afraid of scrutiny, that is afraid of accountability. They do everything to reduce political competition and rig laws in their favour. They do everything to duck accountability. They last hired a law firm with public dollars to hide things from the Auditor General with respect to allegations of corruption in procurement.

That's the government that we are faced with. I think Albertans are watching, and come next election, I'm sure they will show them the door.

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

**Ms Pancholi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to rise and speak on Bill 14, a bill that was just introduced by this government five days ago, yet here we are being time allocated on third reading of this bill today. It is remarkable. After forcing through Bill 2 in one day, I guess getting three days to debate a bill is now considered a luxury with this government. But it's not surprising given this government's approach to democracy, to debate, to listening to challenge and questions and critiques. Shutting down the voices of Albertans is something, unfortunately, this government is getting far too comfortable with.

When it comes to Bill 14, I want to thank my colleagues the Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall and, of course, the Leader of the Opposition for their very eloquent remarks upon this bill. I want to begin by pointing out something that both of my colleagues also pointed out and which I've raised questions about in this House and many of our members have, which is about the provision in Bill 14 where the Minister of Justice gives himself immunity from professional standards. Despite being the top lawyer in this



province, the Minister of Justice does not believe that he should be held to legal professional standards.

Now, this is surprising on many fronts, Mr. Speaker, but of course the reason why there is a significant concern about this particular Minister of Justice providing himself immunity is that there have been very legitimate concerns and questions raised about this Minister of Justice's potential for conflict of interest given his very close relationship with Sam Mraiche, his relationship as a friend, as a relative, as somebody who he travels with, who buys him tickets to things, buys him gifts all the time. We know that relationship is very, very in depth.

However, that relationship was not disclosed to Albertans at the time when the current Minister of Justice repeatedly not only stood in this House to represent the government on the significant investigations going into contracts that Mr. Mraiche has received and that his companies have received, almost a billion dollars in contracts under some very questionable circumstances which has led to investigations by the Auditor General. It's been referred to the RCMP. The UCP tried to have a sham investigation on it. They still refuse to call a public inquiry.

This has been an ongoing question about the relationship between the Minister of Justice and somebody who's at the heart of significant allegations of corruption against this government, and the Minister of Justice did not disclose that nor did he recuse himself from either his role as a public representative on those issues in this House, but certainly there is evidence that he provided direction as the Minister of Justice when it came to responding to those investigations, came to appointing legal counsel, to directing staff within government how to respond to questions from the Auditor General.

These are live issues in this House, Mr. Speaker. These are live, unanswered issues, yet that very same Minister of Justice has now introduced, in yet another conflict of interest, a provision that would provide himself immunity from legal professional standards. It is, quite frankly, jaw dropping, Mr. Speaker, but that's the audacity that this government continues to demonstrate and the disrespect that they show Albertans over and over again when they believe that they can protect themselves and not be accountable to Albertans.

5:30

You know, the Minister of Justice has taken it apparently personally, believes that this is an attack on him, or at least if you believe the Government House Leader that's the case. I want to reiterate that it is the responsibility of the Official Opposition to ask these questions and to shine a light on these very significant allegations and issues of concern. Every Albertan should be concerned when their taxpayer dollars are going in an unfettered way to a relative and personal friend of the Minister of Justice, and he continues to provide advice to the government on how to manage those things.

The absurdity of the of the provision in Bill 14, which has been introduced, means that the Minister of Justice is held to a lower professional standard, in fact, no legal professional standard, Mr. Speaker, as the top lawyer in this province, compared to not only all other lawyers in this province but all the lawyers who represent in this House. Every single one of the lawyers in this House, on both sides of the House, are subject to the responsibilities under the Law Society code of conduct and can be held to account for that. The only person in this House who is no longer subject to those same standards is the Minister of Justice, the top lawyer in the province.

The minister has yet to speak to why that's the case. He is reported in the media as saying that he wants to prevent political

activists. Mr. Speaker, this is a trend from this government, where they try to prevent anybody from raising concerns, legitimate concerns. As I've outlined, there are very legitimate concerns raised about the Minister of Justice's potential conflict of interest. They do not want anybody to be able to challenge, to ask questions, to raise complaints. More importantly, they do not want to be held accountable, and it is outrageous that this Minister of Justice and this government thinks that that is appropriate.

I want to say at the same time that the Minister of Justice has introduced a piece of legislation to protect himself personally. This is not an abstract; it is going to protect him personally against complaints. We don't know if there have been complaints filed yet. That's, at this point, only between the Minister of Justice and the Law Society of Alberta, but I guess we'll never know now, Mr. Speaker. At the same time that he's protecting himself, he's also expanding his reach into the legal system. It is completely unfathomable why this government believes that they have the right to take over, which is essentially what they're doing with Bill 14, the Alberta Law Foundation.

As outlined by the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Alberta Law Foundation is funded through dollars that have nothing to do with government taxpayer dollars. Those dollars come from Albertans and clients and lawyers. That money does not belong to the government of Alberta, but they have reached down into it, not only in trying to seize that money but also to pay for the things that this government is responsible for funding, things like Legal Aid, and things that this government won't fund, by the way, like legal education and increasing access to justice. They're going to reach into this foundation to take that money but now also take control of the organization. The Minister of Justice, at the same time as limiting his accountability, has expanded his power, and that is absolutely shameful.

I also want to mention, as has been discussed a few times in this House, Mr. Speaker, that the incompetence demonstrated by this government on a regular basis is unbelievable. We are looking at Bill 14, with its numerous amendments to the Citizen Initiative Act, which is only a four-year-old piece of legislation introduced by this government, and it has now been amended three times by the same government for the bill that they brought in. A piece of legislation that, by the way, the Official Opposition voted against initially. Then all of the things that they're complaining about in that Citizen Initiative Act are things that this government chose to put in.

For example, the gatekeeping provisions that the Premier continues to refer to, the provisions where the Chief Electoral Officer can refer a matter of the constitutionality of a petition to the courts. That was a provision that this government put in not one, not two but three times. They moved it around, but they maintained that provision.

The Chief Electoral Officer was simply exercising the very authority that this government enshrined in legislation. Not only was he doing precisely what he was empowered to do, but then this government smeared his reputation. In the Legislature the Premier called him out and singled him out as essentially not behaving properly when he was simply following the actions of the legislation this government crafted and amended multiple times to give him the power to do exactly that. The disrespect for the independent officers of this Legislature is heightened, Mr. Speaker, by what we see in Bill 14. Of course, it's part of a larger conversation that this government has had undermining the rule of law and the role of the courts.

Now, of course, there's been some lighthearted and amused conversation but also some very serious conversation in this House when it comes to Bill 14 about how genuinely fearful this

government is of political competition, to take this ridiculous step, Mr. Speaker, of trying to ban certain words. I think what we can abandon is any illusion that this government is truly about free speech. They just don't like – if anything threatens them in any way, they will shut it down as quickly as they can.

This government has banned certain names because they can't do the hard work of convincing Albertans that they are still conservative. They absolutely are not, and the Leader of the Official Opposition gave a fantastic overview of all of the ways that this government, the UCP, is not operating in a conservative way. They know that because they're bleeding conservatives to other parties and other supports, and that's why they had to change the name. They can't do the hard work of earning the support of Albertans; therefore, they're just going to try to ban certain words and names because that will help, Mr. Speaker.

Let me just outline, because I want to link those two together: this fear of political competition, especially around the word "conservative," but also the ongoing critique and undermining that this government has taken of the judicial system, of the courts, and the important role that they play in terms of the conversation between the rule of law and the courts and parliaments and Legislatures; those who make the laws and those who interpret and apply the laws. Courts and Legislatures have had those ongoing conversations for years, but right now we're seeing this very, again, tired Trumpesque-type critique of the judiciary system that is not helpful in any way, Mr. Speaker. All it does is incite anger.

I want to quote from Dr. Jared Wesley, who did an excellent post about conservatism and the challenges with this government continuing to assert that they are conservative when truly they're not. This is the quote, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Wesley says:

Conservatives absolutely should critique decisions on their merits. They should appoint judges who respect precedent and restraint. They ought to debate how rights are interpreted and balanced.

But there's a world of difference between criticizing a gatekeeper and removing the gates entirely. Between arguing with the referee and denigrating them so you can call the game yourself.

The UCP approach – delegitimizing courts as "undemocratic" – doesn't conserve anything. It weakens faith in institutions, trains citizens to trust only "the people" as embodied in the premier of the day, and clears the way for unchecked executive power.

That's not Canadian conservatism. [That's] radical populism.

Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what we're seeing. We're seeing a government that is too incompetent to even get their legislation right, to bring in late night amendments because they didn't take the time to even consult with the Chief Electoral Officer. The letter he issued to all MLAs in this Chamber made it very clear. He stated clearly: I was not consulted. If he had been consulted, the government wouldn't have had to incompetently try to amend their own legislation late last night, at the last minute, when bill debate was already limited.

This government is too incompetent, too scared, too fearful of opposition and competition and Albertans to be able to be trusted with making important decisions that affect Albertans every day. Mr. Speaker, I think it's very clear that between the entitlement of this government, between their refusal to listen to the Albertans about the priorities of the day, this government is not conservative. They are not qualified to make the decisions that they're making, and they certainly cannot be trusted with important things such as

the rule of law and protecting that. I think every single member of this House must oppose Bill 14.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm pleased to get one final opportunity to speak to this bill. Where we are is that closure has been moved on this bill. I know that the Government House Leader has certainly indicated that he thinks this is because we're taking too long to debate it. I would hasten to point out that this bill was introduced on Thursday of last week. Our first opportunity to debate it was on Monday, which was the day before yesterday, so I don't feel like that's too long. It hasn't historically been in this place.

I think, Mr. Speaker, my biggest concern with this bill – and there are a lot of concerns – is government overreach. It's part of a larger system of overreach that this government is bringing in with multiple uses of the notwithstanding clause and now a heightening rhetoric about how checks and balances, how our free and democratic system is somehow not serving the people. I think it's incredibly problematic.

5:40

The reason power doesn't exist unchecked, the reason we don't just find one person and put them in charge for all time and eternity is because when only one person is in charge, they have power over everyone else. That means everyone else, if they want to get whatever they want done, has to essentially tell that person that they're right and tell them that they're pretty and tell them that they like them and whatever else, and that leaves the one person who is solely in power with a very skewed version of reality. When you're surrounded by yes-men, you don't see the world as it is. You think everything you have is a good idea. You think your random, emotional, capricious whims are fact, and you act on them. We see characters like this. I referenced the Queen of Hearts in *Alice in Wonderland* who beheads people for saying things she doesn't like.

That's what happens when we centralize power, but that's exactly what this government is doing. They're not just doing it; they're trying to make out like somehow it's a good thing. They're attacking the courts for acting within their jurisdiction. They are claiming that human rights should be at the whim of the government. Mr. Speaker, the point of human rights is to protect from the tyranny of the majority. It's to protect against a situation where resources get more limited, and people get more stressed, and you see something called lateral violence, where it becomes popular for a majority of a population to attack a minority group. To prevent us from having that situation, we bring in these human rights. We say that this is not a basis on which we're going to single people out for punishment: their race, their religion, their political affiliations, their associations, their gender; any of those factors are not a basis on which we can single people out for different rules than the rest of us.

This is an incredible problem. This is an incredible problem. These checks and balances exist in our system for very, very important reasons. We don't need a Premier surrounded by yes-men who say that everything she does is brilliant while she rolls over the rights of whatever minority group she happens to have picked that week. It is incredibly problematic and we're seeing it happen already with legislative offices, right? Maligning the Chief Electoral Officer. The Auditor General is investigating and rather than being allowed to complete his investigation, he will have his contract expire. They are starving these offices of resources, intentionally denying them the necessary staff to do the work, and

the petition they're pushing through in this bill is a petition of their friends. This is exactly the kind of problematic action we're talking about. They like the separatists better than they like the other group who brought forward a petition, so they are going to take action to force the petition of their friends through.

Mr. Speaker, this is exactly the sort of thing that we are trying to avoid. This is exactly the sort of thing that the opposition is speaking out against. It's unchecked power. It allows this government to pick their friends and give them special rules and give them special privileges, and then their friends tell them they're doing everything perfectly, and they never hear from the rest of the population. We've seen this throughout history, and it doesn't go anywhere good. It never does.

I don't think these are conservative values, Mr. Speaker. I obviously am not a conservative, but I think this disrespect for institutions, this anti-individual rights sentiment: I don't think most conservatives identify with that. I really don't. I would strongly urge the members on the backbenches in the government to take a good, long, hard look at this. I know some of the ministers struggle with the concept of separations of powers. They refer to the existence of the court as an abdication of legislative responsibility, which is not what any of those words mean. I would urge the private members on the government side to take a good, long, hard look, Mr. Speaker, because this is not a good thing.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I hesitate to interrupt, but pursuant to Government Motion 26, agreed to earlier this afternoon, 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 third reading.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:46 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

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

5:50

Against the motion:

Al-Guneid	Ellingson	Metz
Arcand-Paul	Elmeligi	Nenshi
Batten	Eremenko	Pancholi
Boparai	Ganley	Renaud
Brar, Gurinder	Goehring	Sabir
Brar, Gurtej	Guthrie	Schmidt
Calahoo Stonehouse	Haji	Shepherd
Ceci	Hoffman	Sigurdson, Lori
Chapman	Hoyle	Sinclair
Dach	Ip	Sweet
Deol	Irwin	Tejada
Eggen	Kasawski	Wright, P.
Totals:	For – 43	Against – 36

[Motion carried; Bill 14 read a third time]

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The time has come that we are going to move on and go home to our families and our constituents for Christmas and celebrate the holidays. But before we do, I would like to just say a couple of things. I also, first, want to start by thanking all the members of this Assembly for participating in this robust debate we've had over the last six weeks and thank them for their time and being diligent servants of their constituents.

I want to thank the table and the presiding officers and you, Mr. Speaker, and your staff for helping us keep order in this House and keep the House running. I want to thank those who work in this building, who we don't see on a daily basis but we know they also keep the lights on, keep the building operating. I also want to thank the staff at *Hansard*. I want to thank the pages. I also want to thank the LASS for keeping us safe. Again, without you we would not be able to do our job. To all those people, can we please have a good desk thump. [Standing ovation]

Mr. Speaker, I do want to wish everyone safe travels, a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, a Happy Hanukkah. I hope you all find yourselves together with family and friends and loved ones and a lot of delicious baked goods.

With that, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Government Motion 14 I wish to advise the Assembly that the business of the 2025 fall sitting is now concluded.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, thank you for your hard work. I caution you gently but importantly. Some of us might be tired, the roads might be tough, it's dark out: get home safely, please. I hope you get to spend time with those you love. Thank you for the important work that we do here. It's not always pretty, but 5 million Albertans are depending upon us. Thank you for being part of that.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:53 p.m. pursuant to Government Motion 14]



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

**Activity to Wednesday, December 10, 2025**

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

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

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

### **Bill 1 — International Agreements Act (Smith)**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Bill 2 — Back to School Act (Horner)**

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

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

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

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

Royal Assent — (*Oct. 28, 2025 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on October 28, 2025; SA 2025 cB-0.5 ]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Second Reading — 193-201 (*Nov. 4, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 216-24 (*Nov. 5, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 289 (*Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned*), 323-34 (*Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed on division*)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Second Reading — 378-91 (Nov. 19, 2025 aft., adjourned), 493-501 (Nov. 25, 2025 aft., adjourned), 549-54 (Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned), 676-79 (Dec. 2, 2025 aft., adjourned), 815-22 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 855 (Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned), 873-80 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Third Reading — 891 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., adjourned on division), 892-900 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)

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

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

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

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

Third Reading — 789-94 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed)

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

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

Second Reading — 555-64 (Nov. 26, 2025 eve., adjourned), 590-96 (Nov. 27, 2025 aft., adjourned), 637-46 (Dec. 1, 2025 eve., adjourned), 808-15 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 856 (Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned), 867-73 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division with amendments)

Third Reading — 913-14 (Dec. 10, 2025 aft., adjourned on division), 916-22 (Dec. 10, 2025 aft., passed on division)

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

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

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

Committee of the Whole — 745-50 (Dec. 3, 2025 eve., adjourned), 850-55 (Dec. 9, 2025 aft., passed with amendments)

Third Reading — 860-67 (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)

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

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

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

Committee of the Whole — 686-92 (Dec. 2, 2025 eve., adjourned), 801-08 (Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed)

Third Reading — (Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)

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

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

Second Reading — 794-801 (*Dec. 8, 2025 eve., adjourned*), 844-50 (*Dec. 9, 2025 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 856 (*Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned*), 880-87 (*Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division with amendments*)

Third Reading — 922-23 (*Dec. 10, 2025 aft., adjourned on division*), 924-31 (*Dec. 10, 2025 aft., passed on division*)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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









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