

Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, November 17, 2026

Day 68

The Honourable Ric McIver, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 31st Legislature
Second Session

McIver, Hon. Ric, ECA, Calgary-Hays (UC), Speaker
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UC), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UC), Deputy Chair of Committees

Al-Guneid, Nagwan, Calgary-Glenmore (NDP)
Amery, Hon. Mickey K., ECA, KC, Calgary-Cross (UC), Deputy Government House Leader
Arcand-Paul, Brooks, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)
Armstrong-Homeniuk, Hon. Jackie, ECA, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UC)
Batten, Diana M.B., Calgary-Acadia (NDP)
Boitchenko, Hon. Andrew, ECA, Drayton Valley-Devon (UC)
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)
Campbell, Kyle, Calgary-Shaw (NDP)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, ECA, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Chapman, Amanda, Calgary-Beddington (NDP), Official Opposition Deputy Assistant Whip
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UC)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
de Jonge, Chantelle, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)
Dreeshen, Hon. Devin, ECA, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UC)
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), Deputy Premier
Elmeligi, Sarah, Banff-Kananaskis (NDP)
Eremenko, Janet, Calgary-Currie (NDP)
Fir, Hon. Tanya, ECA, Calgary-Peigan (UC)
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., ECA, Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
Glubish, Hon. Nate, ECA, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UC)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Gray, Hon. Christina, ECA, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP), Official Opposition House Leader
Guthrie, Hon. Peter F., ECA, Airdrie-Cochrane (PTP)
Haji, Sharif, Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Hayter, Julia K.U., Calgary-Edgemont (NDP)
Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, ECA, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)
Horner, Hon. Nate S., ECA, Drumheller-Stettler (UC)
Hoyle, Rhiannon, Edmonton-South (NDP)
Hunter, Hon. Grant R., ECA, Taber-Warner (UC)
Ip, Nathan, Edmonton-South West (NDP)
Irwin, Janis, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP), Official Opposition Assistant Whip
Jean, Hon. Brian Michael, ECA, KC, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche (UC)
Johnson, Jennifer, Lacombe-Ponoka (UC)
Jones, Hon. Matt, ECA, Calgary-South East (UC)
Kasawski, Kyle, Sherwood Park (NDP)
Kayande, Samir, Calgary-Elbow (NDP)
LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, ECA, Red Deer-North (UC)
Loewen, Hon. Todd, ECA, Central Peace-Notley (UC)
Long, Hon. Martin M., ECA, West Yellowhead (UC)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UC)
Lunty, Brandon G., Leduc-Beaumont (UC) Government Whip
McDougall, Hon. Myles, ECA, Calgary-Fish Creek (UC)
Metz, Luanne, Calgary-Varsity (NDP)
Miyashiro, Rob, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Nally, Hon. Dale, ECA, Morinville-St. Albert (UC)
Nenshi, Naheed K., Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP), Leader of the Official Opposition
Neudorf, Hon. Nathan T., ECA, Lethbridge-East (UC)
Nicolaides, Hon. Demetrios, ECA, Calgary-Bow (UC)
Nixon, Hon. Jason, ECA, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (UC)
Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP), Official Opposition Whip
Petrovic, Chelsae, Livingstone-Macleod (UC)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UC)
Sabir, Hon. Irfan, ECA, Calgary-Bhullar-McCall (NDP), Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Sawhney, Hon. Rajan, ECA, Calgary-North West (UC)
Sawyer, Hon. Tara, ECA, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UC)
Schmidt, Hon. Marlin, ECA, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)
Schow, Hon. Joseph R., ECA, Cardston-Siksika (UC), Government House Leader
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP), Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, ECA, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)
Sigurdson, Hon. R.J., ECA, Highwood (UC)
Sinclair, Scott, Lesser Slave Lake (UC)
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UC)
Smith, Hon. Danielle, ECA, Brooks-Medicine Hat (UC), Premier
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UC)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP)
Tejada, Lizette, Calgary-Klein (NDP)
Turton, Hon. Searle, ECA, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UC)
Wiebe, Ron, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UC)
Williams, Hon. Dan D.A., ECA, Peace River (UC), Deputy Government House Leader
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., ECA, Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UC)
Wright, Hon. Justin, ECA, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UC)
Wright, Peggy K., Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC), Deputy Government Whip
Yaseen, Hon. Muhammad, ECA, Calgary-North (UC)
Vacant, Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland

Party standings:
United Conservative: 46 New Democrat: 39 Progressive Tory: 1 Vacant: 1

Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Shannon Dean, KC, Clerk
Trafton Koenig, Law Clerk
Vani Govindarajan, Parliamentary Counsel
Philip Massolin, Clerk Assistant and Executive Director of Parliamentary Services
Nancy Robert, Clerk of *Journals* and Committees
Aaron Roth, Committee Clerk
Amanda LeBlanc, Managing Editor of *Alberta Hansard*
Terry Langley, Sergeant-at-Arms
Lang Bawn, Managing Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
Paul Shafer, Acting Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
James Matsune, Acting Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms

Executive Council

Danielle Smith	Premier, President of Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental and International Relations
Mike Ellis	Deputy Premier, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services
Mickey Amery	Minister of Justice
Andrew Boitchenko	Minister of Tourism and Sport
Devin Dreeshen	Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors
Tanya Fir	Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women
Nate Glubish	Minister of Technology and Innovation
Grant Hunter	Minister of Environment and Protected Areas
Brian Jean	Minister of Energy and Minerals
Adriana LaGrange	Minister of Hospital and Surgical Health Services
Todd Loewen	Minister of Forestry and Parks
Martin Long	Minister of Infrastructure
Myles McDougall	Minister of Advanced Education
Dale Nally	Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction
Nathan Neudorf	Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services
Demetrios Nicolaides	Minister of Education and Childcare
Jason Nixon	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Rajan Sawhney	Minister of Indigenous Relations
Tara Sawyer	Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Joseph Schow	Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration
R.J. Sigurdson	Minister of Affordability and Utilities
Searle Turton	Minister of Children and Family Services
Dan Williams	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Rick Wilson	Minister of Mental Health and Addiction
Justin Wright	Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services
Muhammad Yaseen	Associate Minister of Multiculturalism

Parliamentary Secretaries

Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk	Parliamentary Secretary for Settlement Services and Ukrainian Evacuees
Scott Cyr	Parliamentary Secretary for Transportation and Strategic Development
Chantelle de Jonge	Parliamentary Secretary for Affordability and Utilities
Nolan Dyck	Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous and Rural Policing
Chelsae Petrovic	Parliamentary Secretary for Health Workforce Engagement
Ron Wiebe	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health (North)
Tany Yao	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Northern Development

STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Yao
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Johnson

de Jonge
Ellingson
Kasawski
Kayande
Rowswell
Stephan
Wiebe

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. Wiebe
Deputy Chair: Mr. Dach

Boparai
Bouchard
Cyr
de Jonge
Elmeligi
Hoyle
Stephan
van Dijken

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Lovely
Deputy Chair: Ms Goehring

Batten
Haji
Johnson
Jones
Lunty
Sinclair
Singh
Tejada

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Lunty
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Johnson

Armstrong-Homeniuk
Chapman
Dyck
Miyashiro
Petrovic
Shepherd
Sinclair
Wright, P.

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. McIver
Deputy Chair: Mr. Yao

Eggen
Gray
Lunty
Metz
Petrovic
Rowswell
Sabir
Singh

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Mr. Bouchard
Deputy Chair: Mr. Cyr

Ceci
Deol
Hayter
Horner
Jones
Lovely
Sigurdson, L.
Singh
Vacant

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk
Deputy Chair: Mr. Wiebe

Arcand-Paul
Brar, Gurinder
Brar, Gurtej
de Jonge
Gray
Horner
Jones
Sinclair
Stephan

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. Sabir
Deputy Chair: Mr. van Dijken

Bouchard
Cyr
Dyck
Eremenko
Lovely
Renaud
Schmidt
Sinclair

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Mr. Dyck
Deputy Chair: Ms Sweet

Al-Guneid
Armstrong-Homeniuk
Calahoo Stonehouse
Horner
Ip
Petrovic
Rowswell
Yao

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m. Tuesday, November 17, 2026

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: Hon. members, seated in my gallery today is former MLA for Lacombe-Ponoka Raymond Prins. During his eight years in the Legislative Assembly Mr. Prins served on several boards and committees, including the rural Alberta development fund, the Alberta grain commission, and Treasury Board. He also served as MLA co-chair of the petrochemicals chemicals task team and Alberta Competitiveness Council, as a member of the property rights task force, and as chair of rural caucus. He is joined by his son Lorne Prins, who, alongside his wife, Alida, operates BeeMaid, a family beekeeping and honey production business in Lacombe. Since returning to the family farm in 2018, Lorne and Alida have grown their operations while helping raise awareness about the importance of beekeeping and pollinators in Alberta's agricultural centre. Please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Also seated in my gallery we have former MLA Steve Young, who served in the Legislative Assembly from 2012 to 2015. Mr. Young is now the CEO of the Alberta Federation of Rural Electrification Associations and serves on the board of directors of the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association. He is joined by fellow representatives from across Alberta's co-operative sector. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Two school groups today, starting with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Haji: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly grade 9 students – there are 105 in both galleries – from St. Cecilia Catholic junior high school. I met with their trustee this morning, Sandra Palazzo, and we both agreed that they are the smartest kids in our province. I ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you some incredible students from St. Charles school in grade 6. They're here visiting us all week at School at the Legislature. I would ask that they please rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women.

Ms Fir: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the privilege to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly members from the Jewish community visiting the Legislature for their advocacy day, including the Calgary Jewish Federation, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, and others. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction.

Mr. Nally: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to introduce to you and through you and to all members of this Assembly the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association and co-operative leaders from across the province. Co-ops are the lifeblood of our communities. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and introduce you to prominent leaders of the Lebanese community joining us here today to celebrate Lebanese Heritage Month. The contributions of the Lebanese community in Alberta have been immense. Today we recognize a heavyweight of the Lebanese community, Joe Hak, who passed away recently, but today is his birthday. I'd ask all members to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Mental Health and Addiction.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you Mr. Paul Wagman and Stephanie Deglow, from the Wayfinders Wellness Society, and their daughter Isabella. Wayfinders is a peer support organization helping first responders, military personnel, and families living with the impacts of PTSD. Paul also cofounded the Alberta Uniformed Services and Family Support Network, which is helping those impacted by the tragedy at CFB Wainwright. Please rise and receive the warm welcome.

The Speaker: Banff-Kananaskis.

Dr. Elmeligi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you members of the Association for Mountain Parks Protection and Enjoyment Colin Brown, Alex Grant, Lisa Darragh, and Mike Day. They're here talking about world-class visitor experiences in Canada's mountain national parks. We had a great conversation this morning. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mrs. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise and introduce again to you and through you two guests in the Speaker's gallery, Ray Prins, former MLA for Lacombe-Ponoka and also my friend and mentor, and his son Lorne Prins, owner and operator of Gull Lake Honey Company and director of Canadian Honey Council and Alberta Beekeepers Commission. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Edmonton-South.

Member Hoyle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted to introduce some amazing young leaders from the Students' Association of MacEwan University. These are wonderful, strong leaders who are

building empowerment and support for all students across the province. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, to you and through you it's my pleasure to introduce an impressive group of student leaders seated in the gallery today. Members of the Alberta Students Executive Council, who represent over 133,000 postsecondary students, are here for their annual advocacy days, including their chair, Rylee Mae Wevers. I thank them for their work, and on behalf of postsecondary students across Alberta please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mrs. Sawhney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce Harvir Randev, a proud Calgarian who has called Alberta home for more than 50 years. Harvir is a successful entrepreneur and a dedicated community leader who has spent decades helping newcomers, seniors, and families. I ask Harvir to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Williams: Why, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you two individuals from about as far north as it can get, from Fort Vermilion school division, who are trustees for that division. Henry Goertzen and John Zacharias, please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Member Boparai: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Gurinder Singh Shergill. Gurinder is a small-business owner, community advocate from Edmonton, and world-wide promoter of the Punjabi music and film industry. I ask that he rise to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Wright: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce three amazing people who support veterans every day with Coding for Veterans: Jeff Musson, Apoorva Rana, and Eithne Cahill. I'd ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome to the Assembly.

Members' Statements

Immigration Policies

Member Tejada: At a UCP candidate forum last week for that party's board of directors the Premier's deputy chief of staff, Patrick Malkin, delivered some news that should not come as a surprise to members of this Chamber. The UCP has a problem recruiting new Canadians. To quote Mr. Malkin: the problem attracting new membership as you talk about immigrant workers is that our party passed a motion at the last AGM that doesn't allow permanent residents to vote, so it's going to be very difficult to attract those workers into our group. This is rich, Mr. Speaker. Fresh off a referendum campaign against immigrants that failed in both Edmonton and Calgary, the Premier's office is now lamenting that immigrant workers aren't lining up to join the UCP.

1:40

While the Premier's staffer and candidate for the UCP board are correct that new Canadians aren't choosing to support this party, the reasons run deeper than who can or can't vote at a UCP AGM. This government spent millions on Alberta Is Calling, wanted to grow Red Deer to 1 million people, and then spent millions more on five referendum questions to tell new Canadians they don't belong. Is it any wonder that new Albertans, whether they're from Nova Scotia or overseas, just can't trust this Premier?

Albertans have spoken, and this Premier has the wrong priorities. Whether they moved here last summer or have lived here for decades, Albertans are tired of the UCP government's failures on affordability, attacks on our health care system, and this Premier's catering to the most radical elements of her base, whether it be removing hate speech laws, banning flags, or the endless second chances for the separatists who run her party. All Albertans want real solutions on what matters. They want to feel welcome, and that is not within the UCP. Better is possible, and Albertans know that Alberta's New Democrats will deliver on that.

Calgary Water System

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Speaker, Calgary just wrapped up hosting the Grey Cup, welcoming thousands of football fans from across the country. While the CFL celebrated its biggest game of the year, Calgarians were still living under stage 4 water restrictions. That means that thousands of people that visited our beautiful city were asked to keep showers to a minimum and flush only when needed. That's one tailgate tradition no one asked for.

The results of an independent inspection into the Bearspaw South Feeder Main made nine priority recommendations. While the pipe lost water, the mayor's office lost five of the recommendations. Mr. Speaker, the inspector described what happened as irregular, improper, and improvident. "Exonerated" was not one of those three words. The NDP leader found the one sentence he liked and called it a full pardon. That's not accountability; that's political selective memory. The one thing this report lets off the hook is the pipe. The former mayor also says that he can't recall those recommendations. Turns out that Calgary's water isn't the only thing under restrictions. His memory is, too. He calls this inspection a vendetta to find a smoking gun. Why search for a smoking gun when we have a gushing pipe?

Mr. Speaker, from 2006 to 2024 the city's water utility spent about 35 per cent less on capital than was approved to spend. The former mayor ran council for 11 of those years. You can't fix a pipe with money you never spend, but while in office there was money to spend, just not for the infrastructure Calgarians depend on.

Calgary's current mayor calls the pipe terminally ill, but diagnosis actually came in 2015; it just never made it to council. Mr. Speaker, Albertans do not want leadership with stage 4 restrictions or amnesia. They want answers.

Government Policies and Cost of Living

Member Gurinder Brar: A bus conductor walks up to a man and asks him to show his ticket. The man puts his hand in the pocket, and to his surprise there was no wallet in it. Worried, confused, and guilty, he said in a shaking voice: "I am sorry. My wallet is missing." Not believing a single word, the conductor yells at him and says: "Don't make excuses. Get up and get out." There was a person sitting right behind that man who stands up and says: "You cannot disrespect this person just because he doesn't have a ticket. His respect is more valuable than a bus ticket. Here's the money. I will pay for the ticket. This person is not getting out." Everyone looked at that person with respect only to find out later that it was that person who stole the wallet.

That's exactly how this UCP government has treated Albertans. They increased property taxes. They collected the fuel tax, contradicting their own law. They didn't lift a finger to lower the insurance costs, tuition costs, grocery costs, and now, with the election looming, just like that person on the bus, they claim that they are taking some action.

But Albertans are not foolish, Mr. Speaker. Albertans are smarter than what this UCP thinks. They proved that in the Calgary-Shaw by-election. They proved that in a wasteful, divisive, and separatist referendum, and they will prove that again in the next election. Come the next election, the Alberta NDP will be unstoppable because on this side we believe that better is possible.

Investment Attraction and Job Creation

Mr. Dyck: Well, Mr. Speaker, Albertans have always been willing to take a chance, work hard, and build something for the next generation, and few things tell this story better than Alberta's energy industry. In 1946, after 133 unsuccessful wells, Imperial Oil was ready to make one more attempt before throwing in the towel. Eighty years ago this November they began drilling Leduc No. 1, and on February 13, 1947, that well came into production with 1,000 barrels a day and changed Alberta's future. Imagine if they had stopped at 133 wells. But they kept going, and opened doors for generations of Albertans, and that spirit built Alberta.

Our drilling crews, our welders, our truck drivers and business owners understand something that is too often lost in this Chamber. Before a family can count on a paycheque, somebody must create the jobs. Somebody takes a chance. Someone invests their savings. Someone gets up before sunrise and goes to work. A steady paycheque becomes a down payment on a home and the opportunity to provide for a family.

Opportunity does not happen by accident. Government has a responsibility to create the conditions where people can invest, build, and succeed. In contrast, in the NDP's first 14 months in government close to 85,000 Albertans lost their jobs, and by July 2016 unemployment hit 8.9 per cent. Instead of easing the pressure, the NDP raised the corporate income tax from 10 per cent to 12 per cent. The NDP said that Alberta was closed for business, but our Conservative government made a difference. We have investments, we have pipelines and more access to new markets planned out, and we have young Albertans who are building a future right here at home. Our United Conservative government has worked to reduce barriers, encourage investment, and strengthen the Alberta advantage for them and our children.

Eighty years ago someone was willing to drill the next well. Today Albertans are ready to build what comes next, and only our Conservative government will keep this spirit alive.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

High School Graduation Requirements

Ms Wright: Mr. Speaker, how a government chooses to invest in its youth tells you everything you need to know about the kind of society they would build, and the changes this government has put forward on graduation requirements clearly demonstrate that they have all the wrong priorities when it comes to education. Robbing students of the chance to grow their skills in math, science, and humanities: that's the key to a better future? How does lowering literacy and numeracy requirements help Alberta's high school graduates remain competitive in both the postsecondary arena and job market? How can being the only province in the country that does not require a senior-level English course to graduate be a good thing? And how is it not obvious to every member across the aisle that those graduates who choose to enter the skilled trades need math and science to succeed? Might they not want to learn history and social sciences, too?

I speak to trades workers often. They value a strong educational system. Apprenticeships and more trades training are important, but these changes will not prepare our kids for these critical jobs in the economy to come. Instead, their opportunities will be limited.

Education is supposed to be about opening young people's minds to an array of ideas and subjects. It's about helping kids learn the most important life skill of all, Mr. Speaker: how to think for yourself. The more opportunities that high school students have to develop a foundation of knowledge and skills that include core subjects, the more likely they are to have the chance to chart their own path to a meaningful career and a fabulous life. But the UCP would rather limit their options. That won't help our graduates in trades, university, or the wider job market.

Embracing low expectations and calling it virtue is not the solution for our next generation. They deserve so much better.

Hate Crimes

Mr. Shepherd: Hate is growing in Alberta. That's a fact. Ask any Albertan who identifies as Jewish or Muslim, who's visibly Indigenous, Black, Brown, trans, or queer, and they'll tell you they're seeing it, feeling it online, at work, in the streets, in their community spaces and their places of worship, and the numbers back that up.

According to data from StatsCan police-reported hate crimes in Alberta have doubled over the last 10 years. In Calgary last year police-reported hate crimes were more than 20 per cent over their average for the last five. In Edmonton almost three-quarters were violent, more than double the rate in 2024. And this year, in the shadow of the Premier's referendum questions targeting immigrants, the numbers are on track to increase, with Calgary police reporting that the most common targets are newcomers or immigrants, and that's just a small fraction that gets reported. According to the Edmonton hate crimes unit hate crimes remain one of the most underreported because of a lack of trust in the system and in part due to, quote, the normalization of hate in online spaces and in the community.

1:50

How has this government responded? Well, they spent the summer of 2025 touring the province, sharing heavily slanted misinformation about newcomers to Alberta, then launched a referendum where half of the questions targeted them. The Premier's senior staff attacked Indigenous leaders who stood up to their support of separatism and went on racist rants against immigration, and the Premier defended them. In August the Premier and public safety minister took to their bully pulpit to lecture the Edmonton Police Service for trying to make hate easier to report, ordering police province-wide to focus on real crime, not hurt feelings. And just weeks ago the Premier on a far-right broadcast said that she was in active conversation about repealing provincial protections against hate speech.

Albertans deserve better. True leaders know hate is a wildfire, and once you fan those flames, you can't control where it goes or who it hurts, and that's why they don't put ideology ahead of people's humanity and safety. True leaders stand strong against hate in all its forms. This government has made it clear they won't, but an Alberta NDP government will.

Oral Question Period

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

Health Care System

Mr. Nenshi: Mr. Speaker, it has been 1,471 days since the Premier promised to fix health care in 90 days. That's a miss. The health care system has never been worse. Cuts, chaos, corruption, cruelty, and under the UCP management and administration costs in the

health care system have doubled in only two years by nearly an additional $300 million. So a simple, specific question: how much has this government spent on health care consultants to help them ruin the system?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that we've prioritized spending money on the front line, and we have got some incredible results to show for it. We have allowed nurse practitioners to set up their own private practice and along with docs, we now have 1,100 offices that are accepting new patients, and 87 per cent of patients are attached. We have gone from 295,000 surgeries pre-COVID to 332,000 surgeries last year and growing. We have built 750 beds for recovery, we've reduced the number of opioid deaths by 39 per cent, and we're in the process of building out 3,400 new continuing care beds.

Mr. Nenshi: Fascinating that the Premier thinks $300 million on consultants and administration is front-line spending.

Listen, it's been nearly a year since the tragic death of Mr. Sreekumar at the Grey Nuns hospital. In the two weeks after he died, six more similar deaths in emergency rooms across Alberta, 30 near misses. The then minister promised triage liaison physicians, a Band-Aid solution, by February 1. Now here in November we understand that we've hired six of them 10 months later. How many other Albertans have died waiting for the UCP to fix the mess in our emergency rooms?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were really disappointed that the AMA did not work faster with us to get those triage physicians in place, and we're glad that at the minute we finally ended up getting the payment proposal in place, the minute the health minister signed off, we were already recruiting. We have 25 triage physicians who've signed up for shifts. We have six that have been rolled out, including triage teams, and there was just a story in the CBC today about how promising it is after the first shift and he's looking forward to more.

Mr. Nenshi: This is a very interesting answer because last week when the Premier was asked that question, she blamed the entire thing on Dr. Paul Parks, someone who wasn't in the room and wasn't part of the negotiating team. This was clearly defamatory, and it is the Premier's pattern of blame, blame, blame. Will the Premier apologize to Dr. Parks today for defaming him in this manner, and could she explain why on her most important file she doesn't know what's going on and she doesn't even know who's in the room?

Ms Smith: Well, I wonder if Paul Parks has told the member opposite why it is that the doctors at Royal Alex refused to take any shifts. I think it's a really interesting story, Mr. Speaker. It's the reason why we have to do a workaround and we have to have nurse practitioners lead those teams. I think it'd be really interesting for the media to dig in as to why it is we have a work-to-rule going on at the Royal Alex. Maybe Paul Parks will fill him in. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. The second set of questions belongs . . . [interjections] Order.

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

Mr. Nenshi: More spurious allegations, more blame. Surely the Premier will figure out that it's not working.

High School Graduation Requirements

Mr. Nenshi: The Premier yesterday implied that young people don't need to study math, science, or English as long as they can handle a tool. This is deeply insulting to highly trained, skilled trades workers, whom we need in Alberta, but it's also wrong. The government's own website recommends math 30, science 30, and English 30 to join a variety of skilled trades, including elevator constructor, boilermaker, plumber, electrician, millwright . . .

The Speaker: The next answer belongs to the Premier.

Ms Smith: Factories for workers for jobs of the past, Mr. Speaker. That is how the member opposite describes those who are going into the skilled trades and professions. All he would have to do is just say that he misspoke. All he would have to do is just apologize to those who are in the trades rather than stand here and grandstand. He knows that what we are aiming to do with the changes that we've made is free up elective time in the schedule so that more kids can get the training that they need so that they can seamlessly enter into the skilled trades. Why won't he apologize?

Mr. Nenshi: Because I don't apologize when the Premier mischaracterizes things and grasps at straws. No Albertan believes her because she grasps at these straws.

The problem is that there is nothing in the scary . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Stop the clock. Stop the clock.

We heard the question. We don't have to like the answer, but we are supposed to be able to hear it.

Go ahead.

Mr. Nenshi: There is nothing in the Friday the 13th announcement that actually encourages people to enter trades. It just takes away academic requirements. It doesn't substitute any others. Students can take any options they want, not tied to any career path, leaving them even less prepared for the future. How does this Friday the 13th announcement actually encourage anyone to go into trades?

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, we have been building out vocational and trades training for the last eight years, and it is working. We have an aviation school. We have got multiple agriculture schools. We are doing heavy-duty mechanic training. We are going to ensure that we've got people who can drive a truck. We are going to make sure that we've got people who can build houses, as they do with the partnership with McKee Homes in Airdrie. Every single school district has been challenged to find ways to partner with the private sector. We have more kids enrolled in apprenticeships than ever before, and we're going to keep on doing it.

Mr. Nenshi: Except it's not working. It may shock the Premier to know that aviation students need math and science.

Apprenticeship programs actually have incredibly high attrition rates, and they get higher the younger the apprentices are. Nothing the minister announced invests in technology. It doesn't invest in labs. It doesn't invest in making the programs more suitable for the young people of today. The policy was created on the back of an envelope. The minister couldn't answer any questions about it. There has been 100 per cent uniform negative feedback to it. Will the government change it?

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, still waiting for him to apologize for saying that we are creating factories for workers for jobs in the past. The jobs that I just described are jobs of the future. We are also making sure that kids have the chance to access them in high school. We're also making sure that kids know what the vocational options

are going back as far as junior high. That's why we're changing the career and life management courses. It's why we're allowing for those with skilled trades to be able to get a six-month certification program, so that they can come in and be guidance counsellors, and they can teach kids these skilled trades. We're looking forward to continuing to recruit more.

The Speaker: The third question belongs to the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Nenshi: Of course, the Premier has answered none of those questions because there are no answers. They're making it up as they go along.

Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction Minister's Travel to the U.S.

Mr. Nenshi: Now, speaking of making things up, yesterday the Premier said that only soft drinks were drunk on the minister's distillery tour, but the website for Sip Tours – you know, "You Sip. We Drive" – clearly states that the price is all-inclusive, including bourbon tastings, a hosted lunch, not just transportation. Are we being asked to believe that the Alberta government paid for an all-inclusive trip but nobody actually drank any of it?

2:00

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can confirm that it was for transportation only. The Finance minister has looked into it. The vehicle was also bringing the group to various meetings with elected officials and others. We always have a policy of making sure that we are using the taxpayers' dollars not on things like alcohol. They have to be used on things like travel and hotels and transportation, and we're going to make sure that every single minister complies with that.

Mr. Nenshi: The most expensive taxi in history. UberXL does exist in Kentucky.

Let me quote the company's website. "Your private Mercedes-Benz . . . arrives at your hotel . . . From that moment, the only job you have is to enjoy yourself. You Sip. We Drive. Visit . . . distilleries, taste through some of the finest bourbon Kentucky has to offer, [and] sit down to a hosted lunch." If lunch was provided, how come the minister double-dipped and claimed a lunch per diem those days?

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, as I said, there were a number of people who were on the vehicle. There were only soft drinks in the vehicle. It was used for transportation. The Finance minister has looked into it. There was no alcohol that was consumed on the vehicle. There was no alcohol that was paid for in the cost of the transportation. That's the way the rules work, and we follow them. [interjections]

The Speaker: Stop the clock. It's still the Premier's turn; we stopped the clock here. Earlier I insisted that you hear the question. Now I'm going to ask for the same courtesy to hear the answer.

Finish, Premier.

Ms Smith: I'm good.

The Speaker: You're done? Okay.

Mr. Nenshi: So interesting that she's after me to apologize for something I didn't do when they never apologize for anything. This is an easy one to apologize for because she's right. There were a number of people there. The question is: what was the number? The number was actually nine, but the receipts only show eight, and they're divided by eight. The ninth passenger was Dr. Gary Davidson, a failed UCP candidate. The Premier paid him a ton of money to launch her antivaccine COVID study, but his name was hidden on the receipts. Does the Premier think it was okay to hide the receipts and get taxpayers and private industry to cover his tab?

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, it has been a long practice that spouses and family members are able to attend trips as long as they pay their own way, and that is what occurred in this particular case. Taxpayers only pay for the legitimate business expenses of those who are doing work, and this was a legitimate business trip. The minister was going down to get an understanding of how their very successful industry worked so that we could pave the way for the Alberta Whisky Act and could be able to create a similar tourism benefit.

High School Graduation Requirements *(continued)*

Member Irwin: The UCP did not consult with teachers, parents, or education experts before announcing their erosion of high school graduation requirements, but why consult when there's a study that supports their changes, a study from a right-wing American organization that promotes the privatization of education? We know this UCP government loves America, Trump-style health care and education, trips to Mar-a-Lago, booze cruises to Kentucky, but none of this helps students or teachers who want smaller class sizes, proper funding, and, hey – you know what? – teachers wouldn't mind their Charter rights back, too. So why won't this Premier listen to them?

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

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The changes that we've made to graduation requirements will give students greater flexibility to explore areas that may be of interest, find career passions, and explore those, hopefully, into postsecondary or into career opportunities. Students that want to pursue more rigorous programming at university still have all of those courses available for them to take. At the end of the day, if we provide more choice to students, we can increase their satisfaction, we can increase their intrinsic motivation for choosing a particular program, and, ultimately, ensure that they succeed in whatever it is that they choose.

Member Irwin: The Premier proved today in front of trustees that she has no idea what's happening in schools. She was shocked to learn that school boards will be spending millions on flagpoles just so they can follow her unnecessary flag legislation. To the Premier: are the UCP planning to invest significant infrastructure dollars into schools so that they can add flagpoles? What about gyms now with mandatory high school physical education all the way up to grade 12? Will schools be funded for more gym space? Please be specific, Premier.

Mr. Nicolaides: I find it disappointing, Mr. Speaker. The NDP refuses to understand the importance of physical education and wellness for young adults. We have growing issues as it relates to mental health challenges, growing issues that affect youth with respect to addictions and the importance of understanding productive and effective personal relationships. Ensuring that we're teaching young people about these elements through grades 10, 11, and 12 is critically important and something that students themselves have asked for and look forward to.

Member Irwin: It's clear there's no foresight, no consultation, no interest in evidence or best practice. We've heard from teachers,

parents, students, trustees. They want answers, but they're not getting them. They're asking: how do we stop this madness? Well, here's some good news. These changes to education don't come into effect until the fall of 2028, after the next election. So what can Albertans do? They can fire that education minister. They can fire that Premier. They can elect an NDP government. So I guess the question to the Premier is: if you're not going to support public education, why don't you call an election?

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP are so upset because ultimately at their core they are opposed to choice. They're opposed to choice when it comes to health care, they're opposed to choice when it comes to education, and they're opposed to choice when it means giving students an opportunity to pursue the pathway that is most interesting to them. The reason for that is because when they were in charge, they tried to put control over . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: I know a little heckling is okay, but when I can't – no; don't point at somebody else. I'm talking. I haven't talked to a specific person, but I am saying that I could almost reach out and touch the minister because of the seating plan, and I still have a hard time hearing him.

Finish your answer, please, Minister.

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was mentioning, they're so upset because they don't like choice. When they were in government, they tried to change the social studies curriculum to make students into agents of change and tell them what to do.

Alberta Delegation to U.S. National Prayer Breakfast

Member Hoyle: In February, with Trump's tariffs looming, the government sent the Municipal Affairs minister and a Finance political staffer on yet another trip with no clear outcome for Albertans. The minister of service Alberta's chief of staff, Pam Davidson, also went. Did the minister of service Alberta approve of his staff's Washington trip? What was the justification for his ministry to pay for it? Or was he forced to do so by the Premier's chief of staff?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Williams: Yes, Mr. Speaker. While Alberta was advocating for Canada and Albertans in our trade relationship, we had 27 congressional meetings with over 18 different state groups that have committees that shape Alberta's economy, including agriculture, energy, ways and means, financial services, that we met with during this period, including having government staff supporting government ministers and this mission, because the trade relationship with the United States needed to be regulated, and the Premier was the only adult in the room at the time willing to do it.

Member Hoyle: Given that the minister of service Alberta has billed Albertans nearly $3,000 more than the other political staffer who also went to Washington and given that she also took along her husband, failed UCP candidate Gary Davidson, and given that the Municipal Affairs minister posted a photo of Gary Davidson in the official entourage, did the service Alberta minister know that Gary Davidson was also on the trip, and how certain is he that there are no bills to taxpayers for him this time?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, we followed all the procedures and practices within Finance and made sure that those who are advocating for Alberta on behalf of the government were paid for by the government. Those who weren't were not paid for by the government. We are incredibly proud of the advocacy that we did at the National Prayer Breakfast on behalf of Albertans, building relationships, like I said, with dozens of different congressional offices, setting up 39 more relationships so that the senior representative for Alberta in Washington could continue that work of continuing to advocate for Albertans. This is important work, and regulating this relationship with the United States was Alberta's responsibility to support Canada in a for-Canada policy.

2:10

Member Hoyle: Given that the Municipal Affairs minister already had staff with him and given that the government broke its own travel policy by not releasing the itinerary or attendee lists of the trip and given that the minister disclosed Washington taxi receipts but no flight or hotel, did the service Alberta minister pick up the tab for his cabinet colleague? If not, where are the receipts showing who and why these people went on this Washington junket?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, we're incredibly above board about being transparent about the dollars we spent as Alberta government representatives supporting Alberta's mission to regulate trade when it came to the United States, building relationships across the border through faith at the National Prayer Breakfast, making sure that we advocate for Alberta's energy industry, our agriculture industry. The proof is that we've seen so many of these different policies move forward because of the work Alberta has done and the Premier has led. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Optometrists' Scope of Practice

Mr. Rowswell: Mr. Speaker, Alberta is leading the country by becoming the first province to allow qualified optometrists to perform certain laser treatments and minor surgical procedures. This is a significant milestone that puts patients first, makes better use of our highly skilled health professionals, and brings more health care services closer to home. To the Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services: what does this historic expansion mean for Albertans, and how will it strengthen eye care?

The Speaker: Just before you answer, I'll just give advice to the Government House Leader and the Leader of the Opposition that if you need to have a conversation right now, unless you're recognized, this is not the place to do it.

Which minister is going to answer the question? The hon. Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services.

Mr. Wright: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After nearly 12 years of advocacy by the College of Optometrists Alberta is leading the country as the first jurisdiction to be able to allow optometrists to expand their scope of practice to certain laser treatments and medical procedures. We're making this choice to ensure that qualified optometrists are able to provide service in community. This also allows ophthalmologists to focus on conditions that are better utilizing their expertise. It's about putting patients first. It's about making better use of our highly skilled health professionals and delivering better care for Albertans.

The Speaker: Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for that answer. Given that rural and remote Albertans can face unique challenges accessing health care and further given that our government has made strengthening access to services across the

province a priority, to the same minister: what does Alberta's recent expansion of optometrists' scope of practice mean for patients outside our major urban centres, and how does this initiative fit into our government's broader efforts to improve rural health care?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Wright: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans shouldn't have to travel hours away from home to receive the quality treatment that they need to meet their medical conditions. This expansion means rural Albertans will have more opportunity to receive eye care closer to home while reducing lengthy travel times, unnecessary referrals, and additional appointments. Our government is committed to making sure that Albertans can get the care when and where they need it. Regarding where Albertans live shouldn't be a determination of whether they can get the care they need. They deserve timely access to quality care, and that's exactly what our government is doing.

The Speaker: The member.

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for the answer. Given Alberta has become the first Canadian province to expand optometrists' scope of practice to include minor surgical and laser procedures and further given our government's commitment to better utilizing the skills and training of health professionals across Alberta, can the same minister explain what this milestone means for future scope expansions for other health professionals and how these changes can continue to improve patient access to care?

Mr. Wright: Mr. Speaker, we are undertaking the province's most in-depth scope of practice review with 26 of 28 medical colleges submitting 117 recommendations. We are taking a very thorough examination of these proposals to ensure that we are delivering the health care outcomes and expansions that these colleges are looking for that are going to best service Albertans and their medical needs. We are continuing to look at opportunities across all health professions to ensure that we are strengthening access to care, strengthening our system, and, most importantly, putting Albertans first.

The Speaker: The next question belongs to the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Alberta Delegation to U.S. National Prayer Breakfast *(continued)*

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Municipal Affairs' travel expenses are incomplete, and Albertans want to know why. Records revealed that the ministry was covering his full costs on his Washington trip, but then a mere eight minutes later, they said they would only cover the cost of his travel. There are no flight records for him anywhere. Why did the minister disclose only taxi receipts for this trip, and did the UCP caucus pay for the rest, and wasn't it a ministerial expense? Why was service Alberta's chief of staff there with her husband?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, we sent a government mission to Washington to the National Prayer Breakfast to meet with 27 different congressional offices from 18 different states, with key areas for committees including agriculture, energy, ways and means, financial services. Those who went for the government were sponsored by the government and paid for that. Those who didn't go with the government were not paid for by the government. We need to continue to regulate relationships. This is an important trade relationship for the province of Alberta and our economy to grow. You have to remember at the time, of course, there was great consternation around the American work around trade and trying to undermine the country. Canada supported our initiatives.

Mr. Eggen: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the government's own updated travel policy requires a sign-off on all international travel by the Premier's office and given that all delegates on an international mission are required to disclose via a news release, why did the government break their own policy? Why did they not reveal the whole delegation on the trip, and why does it seem that junkets for UCP insiders are more important than the priorities of Albertans?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, this is incredibly important work. You have to remember that at the time there was a trade war going on, which there still is, where we continued to work on behalf of all Canadians and the province of Alberta to make sure we have relief when it comes to the energy industry, which the Premier worked hard for, continued to advocate by herself, in part because of the relationships that we forged. Remember, from this trip 39 more congressional meetings came about through the trade representative that we have in Washington, DC that continue to carry on the work that we did. These relationships are fundamental to Alberta's economic success. We'll continue to move forward in these relationships.

Mr. Eggen: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the minister for service Alberta billed taxpayers an exorbitant amount for friends and family on a trip to Kentucky and given that the Minister of Municipal Affairs now needs to come clean about the expense records for his own international travel trip to Washington, DC and given that this government always seems to be, "Do as I say, not what I do," kind of approach to the rules that they themselves created, maybe this is a good time for them to clean up their acts. Is there any minister who actually follows their own travel policy over there?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to advocate for Albertans and continue to support our economy. When it comes to the world's largest economy and Canada and Alberta's largest trading partner, we will continue to build those relationships. Members opposite are concerned that we are advocating on behalf of Albertans, building relationships through faith-based organizations, through common cultural connections. Remember, we had dozens upon dozens of different meetings that took place with congressional and Senate offices because of this. We don't apologize for that. We continue to be transparent in reporting it and advocate for Albertans and our interests.

Oil and Gas Well Liability Management

Ms Al-Guneid: Mr. Speaker, rural Albertans are sick and tired of being treated like an afterthought by the UCP. The Alberta Surface Rights Federation sent the Premier a clear message: enough is enough. Farmers and ranchers are left with junk wells, with public safety and health concerns. These are homes, livelihoods, farms where kids play and families live. Why is the Premier protecting companies instead of standing up for the landowners who are paying the price for their negligence?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. For four years these folks had an opportunity to fix something in orphan wells around Alberta for rural Albertans, and what did they do? They had a photo-op, but they took about three weeks to find the photo-op because nobody would stand with them and talk about

nothing. We're actually doing something. We're cleaning up orphan wells. We're setting up a whole bunch of initiatives to make sure that we actually do something, and we've talked to the industry. We've got recommendations coming forward that are going to be very, very good, and Albertans are going to very much appreciate it because we're going to clean up something that they never did anything about.

2:20

Ms Al-Guneid: Given that the Surface Rights Federation letter raises questions about political interference in Alberta's Energy Regulator, damaging investor confidence, given that the AER is supposed to enforce the law and protect landowners, not bow to political pressure, given that I sat at an industry event and the Premier explained that landowner issues need to be fixed as Alberta doubles production, what is the Premier prepared to do? Will she give landowners a seat at the table as her friend implements her mature asset strategy, or will rural Albertans continue to be shut out of the plan?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you of one thing: we're making sure that polluters pay. We're making sure that companies clean up what they leave behind and that we have something in place to make sure that they do that even if the companies aren't viable afterwards. We're actually taking concrete action working with industries. We've come up with 20 recommendations, and we're implementing those recommendations. They are by far the most aggressive position that Alberta has ever had, and the truth is that we're leading the world on this.

Ms Al-Guneid: Given that UCP MLAs claim to represent rural Alberta, yet the energy, environment, and agriculture ministers failed bison ranchers – Butch and Nicole Smith are still waiting for answers or even a compensation while UCP insiders call the shots – given that four landowners with their land rights organizations are asking for a judicial review of the AER's orphan well fund levy after being ignored by their UCP MLAs, what will the Premier do? When will this Premier stand up for the people who feed this province? Enough talk. These are real people, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, those 20 recommendations include some of the things we've heard, including unpaid municipal taxes, making sure that companies are actually able to support the municipal tax role they need to. We've made sure that weed control on sites is taken care of. We've heard clearly, and we're re-establishing the landowner rights tribunal. We're taking real, concrete action. We're always prepared to listen to landowners. We have and we continue to do so. We've listened to their recommendations. We've implemented most of them, and we will continue to do that, unlike the NDP. Their claim to fame is water pipes that leak 25 per cent on a constant basis for the city of Calgary, running up costs.

The Speaker: The next question belongs to the hon. Member for Camrose.

Sporting Event Hosting

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta shoots, and lately we sure seem to score. Just like the Oilers, this UCP government leads the league not in games won but in investment flowing into the province. It was announced that Edmonton and Red Deer will host the World Junior tournament just four years since hosting it last. Can the Minister of Tourism and Sport explain what attracts the world juniors to Alberta for this international tournament with so many other countries and cities to choose from? [interjections]

The Speaker: Minister, just as soon as it's quiet here.

The hon. Minister of Tourism and Sport.

Mr. Boitchenko: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for a great question. It is easy to see why Alberta is chosen time and time again to host international major sport events. Alberta is proud to be home to world-class sport facilities where athletes can train and compete. Beyond our venues, we have volunteers, team spirit, attractions, and experiences ready to welcome fans from across Alberta, Canada, and across the world.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Camrose.

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the world juniors will play pretournament games in Cold Lake, Red Deer, Lloydminster, Blackfalds, and in my very own community, Camrose – we are grateful for the boost in our local economies – and given that for so many youth within the province providing them a chance to see top-tier talent in their backyard will boost enjoyment and skill, can the Minister of Tourism and Sport outline the value this tournament will bring to small communities not just for business but in the hearts and minds of all Albertans?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Boitchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member again. Hosting major sport events in rural communities in our province brings visitors into our towns, boosting local businesses and showcasing our signature western hospitality and hidden gems. Just as importantly, watching elite athletes compete in their local arenas helps inspire our next generation of athletes in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for that answer. Given how clear it is that Albertans eat, sleep, and breathe hockey and that passion starts from a young age but given that the sport so many love can sometimes be too expensive for many families, can the Minister of Tourism and Sport please explain what the every kid can play program is and how we are removing financial and social barriers so that kids can keep having fun and getting exercise?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Boitchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our United Conservative government is proud to support Alberta's youth and kids to get into the game by breaking down financial barriers. This year we invested $8 million in funding to support the great programs which help 124 organizations and over 110,000 Albertan kids to participate in the sports that they love.

iGaming and Digital Asset Promotion

Mr. Ip: Mr. Speaker, cryptocurrencies are an evolving part of our economy that remains volatile and subject to speculation. Albertans expect cautious, steady leadership. Despite this, the Premier is all in on Bitcoin and our minister of service Alberta never misses a chance to globetrot to the next crypto convention. In fact, the minister found himself on yet another junket, this time to Vegas and Dallas with his chief of staff, last fall to talk crypto. What was the net benefit for Albertans for this trip?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, like every other mission that members of the government caucus take, it's for the benefit of Albertans to

make sure that we're attracting investment to this province and seeing record job creation. As a result of those missions and the leadership of the Premier, she has seen under her tenure over 300,000 new jobs created, something the NDP could never even fathom. We know what their economic plan is, and that is simple: to drive investment to other provinces and drive workers to other provinces. They said it themselves in the public media.

Mr. Ip: Given that a new report shows that the minister appointed deep-pocketed UCP donor Koleya Karringten to the board of the iGaming regulator, given that the minister spoke in Dallas along with Ms Karringten and given that the regulator should be free of political influence, but Ms Karringten has donated thousands to the Premier's leadership bid and to the UCP, how can Albertans trust that the iGaming regulator is politically independent and making the right regulations for the industry?

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. Koleya Karringten is the executive director of the Canadian Bitcoin Consortium. She is an entrepreneur, and she's also a strong, conservative woman, and I know that's someone that is a threat to them because they've demonstrated that they're threatened by strong, conservative women. They may be threatened by them, but we appoint them to boards, and that's what we did. She's a very talented individual.

Mr. Ip: Given that the minister appointed Ms Karringten to the board while she also runs a crypto lobby group and given that months after appointment iGaming sponsored that lobby group's own Stampede event featuring, quote, thoughtfully prepared appetizers and cocktails, unquote, and given that it was held in the honour of its own minister and given that the minister and his chief of staff billed per diems for the whole day of that July 8 Stampede event, does the minister think any of this is above board?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Nally: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that – there are some members over there that have sat in as a minister and they know – when you go to these events, you often can't eat because you're too busy engaging with the people that are there, because your stakeholders are there.

Let's go back to really why we're engaging on the Bitcoin file. Very recently we had Bitdeer, the largest Bitcoin miner in the world, choose Alberta to build their next facility. They're building a 200-megawatt facility. They're going to scale up to a gig, Mr. Speaker. It's creating jobs. It's attracting investment. I get why they don't like that.

The Speaker: The next question belongs to the hon. Member for Calgary-East.

Economic Development and Job Creation

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my conversations with constituents across Calgary-East, I often hear the same concern: will there be steady work and real opportunities to build a secure future here in Alberta? That question matters to Albertans of every generation. To the Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration: what is our government doing to strengthen Alberta's economy, support employers, and create more opportunities for Albertans looking for work across the province?

The Speaker: The Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank that member for the great question. The answer is yes. There are opportunities now, and there will be opportunities in the future in this province for work because we are working tirelessly to make sure that everyone in the world knows that Alberta is open for business. Because of that message, we have seen billions of dollars of new investment coming here in new industries like aerospace and aviation, tech and innovation. Alberta is winning. Why won't the NDP recognize that Alberta is winning and support the government as opposed to trying to drive investment out of the province?

2:30

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

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given employers are looking for people with the right skills while young Albertans are looking for a place to begin their careers, connecting the two is an important part of building our workforce. To the same minister: how is our government helping young people gain the skills and experience they need to get their first real opportunity and begin building a career here in Alberta?

Mr. Schow: Well, the first thing we're not going to do, Mr. Speaker, is take lessons from the NDP because in their four years in government they lost 39,000 jobs for youth, 39,000 young Albertans who couldn't find work because of the policies of the members opposite. On this side of the House we have the youth incentive program, which helps businesses derisk their investment in hiring youth. Because of that we've seen over 3,500 youth get jobs right here in the province, matching them with work experience, giving them those important skills they need for their future employment opportunities.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that to keep our economy growing, we need businesses to keep choosing Alberta as a place to invest, build new projects, and create good-paying jobs for Albertans, to the same minister: what is our government doing to attract more investment to Alberta and make sure that investment leads to more work for Albertans and stronger opportunities for families and communities across our province?

Mr. Schow: Well, Mr. Speaker, the first thing we did to make Alberta an attractive place to invest was get rid of the NDP back in 2019, the first one-term government in the history of this province, and they're going to stay in opposition. On this side of the House we continue to reduce regulation. We have the lowest taxes in the country, and Albertans know that our government is tirelessly working to remove regulations to make us an even more business-friendly environment. As a result we've seen over 300,000 new jobs created since the Premier took office, and we're just getting started.

Education Policies and Funding

Member Boparai: Last week I visited Falconridge school in my riding. Students asked thoughtful questions about democracy. What struck me most was that grade 6 students were talking about overcrowded classrooms, a lack of resources and school supplies, and the need for more support for teachers. Eleven-year-olds can see this government's failure to properly fund public education. Can the minister explain to students and parents why the UCP government has spent a year and millions of taxpayer dollars pursuing a separation referendum instead of fixing Alberta's classrooms?

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe the member has missed the memo, but we have invested hundreds of millions of dollars to hire more teachers, hire more EAs, build more schools, and hire complexity teams. In fact, I'm pleased to be able to report to Albertans that we've hired 2,100 net new teachers, over 1,000 net new EAs in our schools. Over 80 per cent of the 700 complexity teams that we've established have been fully staffed. Ten new schools opened their doors at the start of this school year, and more is on the way, indeed.

Member Boparai: Given that this government is failing to set up youth for an evolving economy by lowering the bar to graduate, given that this government is leaving young people on their own, less prepared to join the workforce or attend postsecondary, given that no one is calling for lowered graduation standards for science, English, and social studies, given that Alberta has the worst provincial youth unemployment rate outside Atlantic Canada, why wouldn't the government want Alberta's students to have an education that prepares them for any career they want to pursue?

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've mentioned, the changes that we've made to graduation requirements will help students have more flexibility to examine areas of career interest, to examine pathways to postsecondary, be that in collegiate programming, in trades programming, or in university. Having that kind of choice will be able to ensure that students find that area that is of interest to them, help them connect their passion to real and meaningful careers, and pursue those options. Again, I know the NDP really hates choice, and they just similarly hate giving more choice to students.

Member Boparai: Given that Alberta families have been calling for more public school funding, smaller class sizes, and for schools to be built, given that teachers, parents, and students are asking for investments that would improve learning outcomes, given that this government has instead chosen to focus on banning flags, removing required classes, and revoking teachers' rights, what exactly is the Alberta advantage here? And who is this government listening to when it seems so out of touch with the priorities of everyday Alberta families?

Mr. Nicolaides: As I mentioned a moment ago, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the efforts that we've undertaken we've been able to add 2,100 net new teachers into our schools, over 1,000 net new EAs. We've been able to establish 700 complexity teams, and as of this point in time, over 80 per cent of them are fully staffed and in place in our schools right now. Ten new schools have opened their doors at the start of this school year. Another 19 are on track for the following school year. We're focused on bringing more staff into our schools to ensure that students have the supports that they need to be able to succeed.

Health Care Capital Funding

Dr. Metz: Alberta is now dead last in Canada for investing in health care infrastructure. Emergency departments are overcrowded, and hospitals operate at near full capacity. Instead of investing higher oil revenues in better public health care, the UCP government wasted public money on referendums and gerrymandering. To the minister: how can this government justify investing less in public medical infrastructure than every other province in Canada while still forking out public dollars to establish and stabilize private surgical practice?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of health and surgical services.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, Alberta is investing a projected $12.4 billion this year, which is a 46 per cent increase since 2018; 2018 was when the members opposite were in government. They weren't investing in health care, but we are. I've announced an additional 1,000 acute-care spaces in the province. We've also announced nine urgent care centres, and we're going to keep adding more so that we can do more surgeries.

Dr. Metz: Given that had this government not cancelled it, the south Edmonton hospital could have opened this year, adding needed capacity for care delivery and clinical teaching of health care professionals and given that Albertans are struggling without timely care or any reasonable expectation of future solutions from this government and given that wait times are causing pain, discomfort, and unnecessary suffering, why is this government dragging its heels and delaying building their repeatedly announced urgent care centres that have yet to even find locations?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Hospital and Surgical Health Services.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we are building more than the NDP ever did. When I look at the fact that we are spending more on health care on a per-person basis than both Ontario and Quebec, we know that we are getting results. We are actually growing the workforce at twice the national average, both for physicians as well as for nurses. We are cutting wait times for much needed surgeries, and we're doing more surgeries than ever in Alberta history.

Dr. Metz: Given that Alberta has the lowest CT scan capacity and the second-lowest MRI capacity per capita in the country and given that this past April, 1 out of every 25 Albertans was waiting for diagnostic imaging and of those more than two-thirds were already waiting beyond what is reasonable and given that the infrastructure deficit, in large part to replace aging machines, is over half a billion dollars, how does the minister plan to resolve this when she's only spending on private health care?

The Speaker: The minister.

Member LaGrange: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Once again, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, we have increased our diagnostic scans by over 61,000. That's an increase of 8.3 per cent for CT scans and 5.2 per cent for MRIs. We're continuing to increase. There's increased demand, but we're going to continue to meet that increase because Albertans deserve excellent health care and we know that we are attracting more doctors, more nurses, and more surgeries being done every year.

2:40 Sports and Recreation in Red Deer

Mr. Stephan: Mr. Speaker, last Monday was a good day for Red Deer. Red Deer's central location gives it competitive advantages in hosting events, including sporting events, and there is wonderful news to celebrate. The curling championship in Canada for men, the Brier, is coming to Red Deer in 2028. To the Minister of Tourism and Sport: what will this event mean for local businesses, jobs, and families in central Alberta?

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

Mr. Boitchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for a super-duper question. Hosting major sports events brings athletes, families, and fans to our communities, boosting the local economy as they stay, shop, and dine, supporting our local hotels, restaurants,

and mom-and-pop shops. Major events also showcase our first-class sporting facilities, creating jobs and volunteer opportunities as they foster community spirit in our province.

Mr. Stephan: Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday was also a good day for Red Deer. Given Red Deer Polytechnic has a dominant collegiate volleyball program, including the men winning more national titles than any other postsecondary, given Alberta's government and Volleyball Alberta announced $1 million for beach volleyball courts at Red Deer Polytechnic, to the minister: with these beach volleyball courts, does this mean more sunny days and sunny ways for Red Deer?

The Speaker: I'm not sure that when the sun comes out is government policy, but the Minister of Tourism and Sport can answer the question if he chooses.

Mr. Boitchenko: Mr. Speaker, another super-duper question. Our UCP government is proud to have invested $40 million towards the active communities initiative grant program this year alone. This investment supports new and updated facilities so that our future generations have the spaces they need to remain healthy both physically and, most importantly, mentally. Our UCP government is doing a great job in our province.

Mr. Stephan: Mr. Speaker, yesterday was also a good day for Red Deer. Given Canyon ski hill is the largest nonalpine ski hill in Alberta and given Canyon was just awarded the Alberta tourism resilience award for adding year-round activities including an alpine coaster, aerial park, dual zipline, bungee trampoline, summer tubing, and constructing a new minigolf course, to the minister: why does central Alberta keep winning?

The Speaker: Well, again an interesting question. It's not government policy you asked about, and you actually ought to. You're a long-time member. You should know.

Minister, if you want to answer, you can.

Mr. Boitchenko: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for yet another great question. We are proud to work with Travel Alberta to support local-owned operators like Canyon ski hill as they continue to invest, expand, and create ways for Albertans to explore their own backyard. Alberta's tourism sector is leading the country, and that means creating more year-round experiences for visitors and Albertans to stay and enjoy our beautiful province.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds we will continue with the daily Routine.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

Bill 41
Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2)

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 41, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2). This being a money bill, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

If passed, this legislation would update laws related to pension, insurance, securities, taxes, and government programs. These amendments would give Albertans more choice in financial security, support businesses and investment, and strengthen the programs, services, and other things that Albertans rely on.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill 41, the Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2).

[Motion carried; Bill 41 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a copy of an e-mail from a constituent sharing her concerns about long wait times for surgery.

The Speaker: Any other tablings? The hon. Member for Calgary – my goodness. Help me out here.

Ms Hayter: Edgemont.

The Speaker: Calgary-Edgemont. Sorry.

Ms Hayter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got five reports here to table: a future without violence, building safety and stability. It was a Calgary and area shelters joint report from Big Hill Haven, Discovery House, FearIsNotLove, Heart Home Network, Niitoiyis Family Support Society, Radiance Family Society, Rowan House Society, True North Society, YWCA Banff, and YWCA Calgary.

The Speaker: Are there any other tablings? Seeing none.

Hon. members, I have a tabling. In accordance with section 21(2) of the Child and Youth Advocate Act I would like to table six copies of the 2025-2026 annual report of the office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of hon. Mr. Amery, Minister of Justice, pursuant to the Alberta Firearms Act Alberta Chief Firearms Office annual report 2025-26.

On behalf of hon. Mr. Nicolaides, Minister of Education and Child Care, pursuant to the Teaching Profession Act Alberta Teachers' Association 2025 annual report.

The Speaker: Hon. members, at this point I have the pleasant duty of expressing my sincere gratitude to all members of this House as this is the second day this week without any points of order.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading

Bill 38
Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

[Debate adjourned November 5: Mr. Gurtej Brar speaking]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-South. [interjection] Sorry. Edmonton-Decore. Hon. members, my apologies.

Mr. Haji: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to Bill 38, the Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. I will start with why we are here. How did we get to this bill? In November 2024 the UCP government announced the creation of an expert panel to review and evaluate the public funding of postsecondary institutions in Alberta. In October 2025 the expert panel report went

public. The government said that they would review the recommendations and take their time to implement any changes. Over the summer the government was talking to stakeholders, including students and postsecondary institution leaders, about a new funding formula. Now Bill 38 allows the minister to establish maximum tuition fees for academic programs, with details left to regulation through a ministerial order.

2:50

Mr. Speaker, Alberta students are already facing financial pressures. They are paying more on rent. They are paying more on groceries. They're paying more on transportation. They're paying more on tuition while facing a volatile job market and poor employment prospects after graduation.

Now, after years of instability in postsecondary institution funding, Bill 38 makes matters worse by replacing a predictable funding mechanism with a model that gives the minister greater discretion through ministerial order. No university or college will know how funding will be channelled or delivered to them. They will not know the funding formula, the methodology behind it, and they will not know how much it will cost the university. The minister can make a decision and change the funding. This is what Bill 38 is attempting to do, Mr. Speaker.

The responsibility of the government, particularly the minister, is to create certainty. This government is concentrating more power in the minister's office while providing less certainty to the institutions and the students who depend on stable funding. This is not a one-off, Mr. Speaker. The bills that have been tabled in this Chamber are a framework for the minister to have more power, for the minister to regulate and develop things that have financial consequences in ministerial orders.

While the minister of postsecondary education has already indicated that a new funding formula will be introduced in next year's budget, the postsecondary institutions, or the PSIs, don't know what that will look like. They don't know what that means. Reports suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the government is considering, through ministerial order, a model that consists of enrolment-based funding, performance-based funding, and a base funding along with a cluster approach to allocating resources for over 45 different programs. Previous recommendations focused on the actual cost of delivering programs. This government appears to be exploring a model based largely on a labour market alignment.

It's a government that in one way says that the market has to determine; in another way, if the market is not determining in the way that they want, they now interfere and then jig it. That should concern every Albertan: every student, those who are in postsecondary institutions now; the prospects, those who are in high schools now; parents who have children in postsecondary institutions. I have two of my kids going to university. I don't know what this cost will mean tomorrow.

Alberta universities and colleges educate future nurses, Mr. Speaker. They educate future teachers. They educate social workers, entrepreneurs, researchers, artists, community leaders, future legislators. Funding decisions should reflect the true cost and the value of education, the dreams of those young Albertans. The funding formula should enable an opportunity where young Albertans should succeed with their dreams. The funding decisions should reflect the real cost that they have to pay, not a narrow political judgment about which programs the government of the day is in favour of.

Yesterday some of my colleagues and I met with student leaders from across the province, and their frustration, Mr. Speaker, was very, very clear. In fact, student leaders first raised concerns with me in September, the first week when they were getting back to campus. The student leadership at the University of Alberta in September told me that they were furious after learning the government's intention to change the formula, and that is what Bill 38 is doing. It's not only changing; it's not even letting us know what kind of a change it's making.

The students learned that the change is coming after years of tuition increases. This change is coming after years of funding reductions. This change is coming after growing financial pressures, Mr. Speaker. We talked in this House that we have the highest unemployment among youth in western Canada. These students now are being told that even more decisions affecting their loans, affecting how much money they will spend on education, could be determined through a ministerial order rather than a transparent, predictable funding framework that people know how much it will cost. The students feel their future is being treated as an afterthought. That's what Bill 38 is attempting to do here. Students deserve certainty. They want a government that works with them. They learned the change is coming in August when they are heading back to schools in September.

Mr. Speaker, many young Albertans are working longer hours while studying. They're taking on greater debt loads. They're struggling to find secure employment after graduation. The anxiety of the employment prospects is unimaginable. Alberta's youth unemployment rate, as I said, remains among the highest in the country, if not the highest. Instead of strengthening pathways to education and good jobs, the government is injecting more uncertainty into both, uncertainty in education, uncertainty in job opportunities.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Universities and colleges cannot effectively plan programs if they don't know how much they will be receiving from the government, if they don't know what the tuition will look like. They can't hire faculty because they don't know. They can't support research because they don't know. They can't keep education more affordable because the change to the funding decisions is within the minister's powers, so it doesn't come to the Chamber. It's not debated. It's not something that the universities can predictably say, that this is how much funding will come and this is how we will plan in the long run. And this is not year to year, Madam Speaker. Universities require long-range planning in terms of making sure of their funding, how they program their programs because students are taken in cohorts in some of the programs. Predictable funding is a prerequisite for a successful postsecondary system.

What students in Alberta deserve is a postsecondary system that is affordable. Students in our province deserve postsecondary institutions and postsecondary funding that is transparent. More importantly, they deserve postsecondary institutions that are properly funded. What about institutions? Institutions deserve a stable funding model because that is what allows them, Madam Speaker, to plan. That's what allows them to develop programs, forecast, and then plan. And what about Albertans? Albertans deserve confidence, confidence that decisions about higher education are made in the public interest, not through ministerial directives that can be changed any time depending on the minister of the day.

3:00

Government members should abandon this increasingly centralized approach. They need to work directly with the students, the postsecondary institutions, and they need to commit to a transparent, predictable funding model that supports affordability, a predictable funding model that supports educational quality, a predictable funding model that supports an economic opportunity for Alberta's next generation, Madam Speaker.

The question students are asking is simple. The question that they asked in the first week of September, when we met them at the university, and the question they asked us yesterday as well is quite simple. Why is the government making it hard for them to plan for their future in terms of how much tuition will cost, how much life will cost for a young university student who doesn't work? The youth unemployment rate is in very bad shape. In fact, last month, Madam Speaker, as a province we lost 24,000 jobs.

Alberta students need affordability, more importantly a better future because if it's not affordable now, then they are facing a much rougher future than it is now. Alberta's postsecondary institutions need stable, predictable funding. Bill 38 doesn't deliver those two; therefore, I ask members of the government to think through on the decisions that they are making today of predictable funding, an affordable cost to get education at postsecondary institutions. They have to think for postsecondary institutions' leaders, for predictable funding so that they can plan well for programs that will benefit Alberta's future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Falconridge.

Member Boparai: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak against Bill 38. I do so because this bill represents everything Albertans are tired of seeing from this government: misplaced priorities, political distractions, and an ideological obsession that does nothing to improve the lives of ordinary people. At a time when students are struggling to pay their rent, struggling to buy groceries, struggling to afford tuition, and struggling to see a future for themselves in this province, the UCP has decided that this is the legislation Alberta urgently needs. Not funding. Not affordability. Not student supports. Not reducing student debt. Not restoring years of cuts to our colleges and universities. Instead, they have brought forward another piece of legislation that seems designed to fight culture wars rather than solve real problems.

Madam Speaker, Albertans deserve a government focused on the future. Instead, they got a government obsessed with political games. They got a government more interested in importing American political debates than addressing Alberta's priorities. Frankly, when Albertans look at this government, many are asking a simple question. Why is this UCP so obsessed with Donald Trump and American right-wing politics? Why are they constantly trying to copy ideas from south of the border? Why are they constantly searching for the next American culture war to bring into Alberta?

The UCP must stop dancing to Donald Trump's tunes. The people of Alberta did not elect a government to become a branch office of American political movements. They elected a government to solve Alberta problems. But every time there is another ideological fight in the U.S., it seems this government immediately wants to re-create it here. Every time there is another talking point coming out of Republican politics, this government rushes to adopt it. Every time there is another manufactured controversy south of the border, somehow it becomes a priority in Alberta by this government. Madam Speaker, it is embarrassing.

Even Americans themselves are increasingly rejecting this style of politics. The world is moving on, yet this government continues chasing it. It almost feels like somebody is dangling a carrot in front of a rabbit. The carrot moves; the rabbit follows. So is the UCP government. The American culture war shifts; the UCP follows. A new ideological slogan appears; the UCP follows. A new distraction emerges; the UCP follows. The question is: where is the leadership? Where is the Alberta voice? Where is the courage to stand up and say, "We will focus on Alberta's needs, not Washington's political obsessions"? Unfortunately, that courage is nowhere to be found.

Madam Speaker, courage would mean admitting that years of cuts have damaged postsecondary education. Courage would mean admitting that students are drowning in costs. Courage would mean admitting that Alberta families are struggling more today than they were several years ago. Courage would mean restoring funding rather than creating distractions. But this government refuses to do any of those things. Instead, they are trying to distract Albertans from their own failures.

Let's talk about those failures. Since 2019 Alberta's postsecondary system has been forced to absorb significant cuts. Universities have eliminated positions. Programs have been reduced. Services have been reduced. Students have paid more, families have paid more, and communities have paid more. The government's answer to all of this is more interference, more ideology, more political theatre.

Madam Speaker, over the summer I spent a great deal of time speaking with residents while door-knocking throughout our communities. I heard countless stories from families trying to make ends meet. People aren't talking about institutional neutrality. They're not talking about American culture wars. They're talking about affordability, their bills, and their survival. One family I met left a profound impression on me. They told me that they had recently remortgaged their home so they could get help for their child to pursue postsecondary education.

3:10

Think about that. A family that worked hard, saved money, played by the rules, believed in education and that if their child studied hard, opportunities would follow. Yet they found themselves taking on additional debt just to give their child a chance. That is the Alberta people are living in today. Parents are making sacrifices that should never be necessary. Students are taking on enormous debt loads, and many young people are wondering whether the dream of building a life in Alberta still exists. What does Bill 38 do for those families? Nothing. What does Bill 38 do for student debt? Nothing. What does Bill 38 do for affordability? Nothing.

Madam Speaker, the reality is that this government has abandoned young people. Young Albertans are working harder than ever, yet ownership of a home feels further away, starting a family feels further away, financial security feels further away. Higher education is becoming increasingly expensive, and many are becoming frustrated and discouraged. I hear it constantly. Young people say that they are considering leaving Alberta. Some already have, not because they want to leave but because they feel they have no choice, because they no longer believe this government is investing in their future. That should concern every member of this Chamber because Alberta's future depends upon young people staying here. Our economy depends on it, our workforce depends on it, our communities depend on it. Yet this government keeps making decisions that push people away rather than pulling them in.

Madam Speaker, one of the most concerning aspects of this Bill 38 is the path it creates toward a new funding model. This government calls it modernization; many Albertans see it differently. They see a government trying to pick winners and losers, a government deciding which programs deserve support and which do not, a government increasingly viewing education not as a public good but as a political project.

The government is talking about labour market alignment. Of course, labour market needs are important. Nobody disputes that. But governments have a terrible record when it comes to predicting the future. Twenty years ago many of today's jobs didn't exist. Ten years ago nobody knew exactly how AI, cybersecurity, renewable energy, and advanced technology would transform our economy.

Five years from now entirely new industries will emerge. The strength of the university system has always been diversity. Scientists, engineers, teachers, writers, researchers, artists, entrepreneurs, all contributing to society in different ways. This is how innovation happens. This is how economies grow, not by government deciding which fields are politically fashionable and which are not.

Madam Speaker, Bill 38 also opens the door to changes that could affect tuition, and students have every reason to be concerned because history tells us what happens when this government talks about flexibility. Students pay more. Families pay more. Debt increases. The burden shifts from government to individuals. Albertans already graduate with some of the highest levels of student debt in Canada. Young people do not need more uncertainty; they need affordability, predictability. They do need support, but once again this government offers the opposite.

Madam Speaker, let's also be very clear about universities and colleges. Their purpose is not to serve politicians. Their purpose is not to protect governments from criticism. Their purpose is to pursue knowledge, to challenge assumptions, to ask difficult questions, to advance research, to prepare the next generation. Sometimes that means criticizing government. Sometimes that means questioning those in power. That is not a weakness of democracy; that is a strength of democracy. A confident government welcomes scrutiny. A confident government engages criticism. A confident government focuses on results. An insecure government, however, spends its time trying to control narratives. Unfortunately, Bill 38 feels far closer to the second category than the first.

Madam Speaker, after seven years of this government Albertans have every right to ask what they have to show for it. Housing is less affordable. Education is less affordable. Life is less affordable. Students carry more debt. Families face greater pressure. Meanwhile the government continues chasing ideological distractions. Albertans deserve better. They deserve a government that believes in education. They deserve a government that invests in young people. They deserve a government that restores confidence in our postsecondary institutions. Albertans deserve a government that focuses on affordability instead of culture wars. Most importantly, they deserve a government with the courage to stand up for Alberta instead of blindly following every political trend coming from the States.

Bill 38 does not address the challenges facing students. It does not solve the affordability crisis. It does not restore funding. It does not reduce debt. It does not strengthen opportunity. It is another distraction from another failed record. For the students struggling to get ahead, for the parents making impossible choices, for the families remortgaging homes to fund education, for the young people wondering whether they still have a future in Alberta, I cannot support this legislation, and I urge all members of this Assembly to oppose Bill 38.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford. Sorry; Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you for the correction, Madam Speaker.

I am pleased to rise this afternoon in the Legislature to speak about advanced education and Bill 38, the Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, which, of course, is once again going down a path that this government has chosen many times during this session and during its tenure over the last seven years to focus on anything but what is important to Albertans. The government is not focused on the priorities of delivering affordability to Albertans. Bill 38 goes a long way to making things more difficult for those individuals, those families who wish to have students attend postsecondary institutions in Alberta.

The fastest growing lineup, Madam Speaker, inside of the institutions of postsecondary, of higher learning in the province is not to sign up for courses; the fastest growing lineup at our Alberta postsecondary institutions is to the food bank. A quick search to check out food bank use on the campuses at Alberta postsecondary institutions reveals a sad tale and a long list of various different food bank users and efforts at serving the community of students who find themselves in need as they attend university. Coupled with the high cost of rent, many, many find themselves being food insecure.

Bill 38 doesn't do anything to help that. In fact, it increases the anxiety that many students and families will feel not only as the students are actually attending postsecondary institutions, but the mere decision to actually attend an Alberta postsecondary institution is affected by many of the things that are included in Bill 38. The bottom line, Madam Speaker, is that costs are potentially going to be going up. The gates are going to be opened up by this government so that the 2 per cent cap on tuition is going to be lifted.

3:20

But instead of letting the resulting increases in tuition be decided upon by postsecondary institutions as far as where to allocate the funds, the province is intent on trying to pick winners and losers, and that's consistent with the practices of this government in many different facets of its policy.

Now, what happened back in November 2024, Madam Speaker, was that the UCP government announced the creation of another expert panel – sound familiar? – to review and evaluate the public funding of postsecondary institutions in Alberta. Then in October 2025 this panel's report went public, and the government said that they would review the recommendations and take their time to implement the changes. Over the summer of 2026 this report got out and became public, and it became news that the government was talking to stakeholders about a new funding formula.

This is something that we've heard time and time again over the history. I remember a period of time when many members in this Chamber would have been going through their university degrees. I believe it's factual that the majority, a large majority, of members of this Legislature have actually graduated from a postsecondary institution, but many of them did so at a time when it was assumed that they could afford the education that they wanted to pursue in the postsecondary institution of their choice, regardless of their family income. That is potentially going to be changing, Madam Speaker, because of the changes that are contemplated under Bill 38.

As I said, over the summer of 2026 word got out that the government was talking to stakeholders about a new funding formula. On October 28 the minister posted a video about how the government would introduce legislation to add clarity around items such as institutional neutrality, freedom of speech, academic freedom, and student codes of conduct. Nothing, Madam Speaker, that the public was demanding, nothing that postsecondary students who were considering whether to go to a postsecondary institution in Alberta, their home province, or come in from another province to attend – none of these items were things that were on the shopping list of postsecondary students, potential students who are looking for a place to spend their education dollars on to attend a postsecondary institution in Alberta. None of these items were things that would be on their shopping list and be attractive to them to come to the province to study.

No, Madam Speaker. These were the shopping lists created by the provincial government, on top of which they added a removal of the 2 per cent cap and a clear indication that the floodgates would

be open for institutions to raise tuition. As the government likes to say, it's a matter of choice. Well, they're allowing institutions the choice to increase tuition. It's not a matter of choice when the government since 2019 has been on record as reducing the funding for postsecondary institutions in this province. The announcement that the 2 per cent cap under Bill 38 would be removed is a clear indication that institutions will be left with no choice. Postsecondary institutions in the province will be left with no choice but to bear responsibility to fund themselves by increasing tuition.

On top of the pressures that students feel now, on top of the lineups and food banks already that exist in postsecondary institutions, Madam Speaker, the funding envelope that is being offered to postsecondary institutions by the government isn't getting more generous. What it's doing is that they're being told: go find the money yourself from the pockets of your students or the parents of those students who are going to attend your postsecondary institutions. It's not becoming more attractive to potential students in Alberta to actually come to this province to study at a postsecondary institution. It's being made harder to allow that.

I recall that during the period of time when I was in university in the late '70s and early '80s the push was on during the Lougheed era to make it easier, to make university and postsecondary institution access easier, to make it more accessible for people to attend postsecondary institutions. Previous to that there were barriers. There weren't supports. The student loan program that was in place had a pretty good component, which was a grant program that allowed people of the blue-collar variety to be able to afford to go to university. There wasn't a question of having a food bank on campus at that time, Madam Speaker. I do recall that if a few students got together, they could rent an apartment and/or a house and, you know, could easily take a bus pass and afford it. School was affordable is what I'm trying to say. Now it's become less and less affordable. It's become a struggle for students in postsecondary institutions.

Bill 38 is making it even harder for people to consider going to university in this province or going to a postsecondary institution in this province because the government is now telling institutions: "You fund yourself. We're not increasing funding to you. This funding formula is going to allow you the choice to increase tuition how you see fit because the cap is being removed." That sends a chill, Madam Speaker, down the spine of any family who's looking at sending two or three kids to postsecondary institutions in Alberta. The fact of the matter is that just day-to-day living is near impossible for many families. It's not only food banks on campuses that are suffering lineups; it's food banks right throughout the province that are having record numbers of clients come to get food on a monthly basis from their food bank supplies.

The concern that everybody has, Madam Speaker, when it comes to making a decision about whether or not you can afford to send your kids to postsecondary institutions or for somebody to come to this province to attend a postsecondary institution, is what's happening in Alberta. What direction is this province going? How do people feel about making an application to come to a postsecondary institution in Alberta? We used to be very proud of our postsecondary institutions when they exercised a significant degree of autonomy. That is diminishing year by year, month by month under this government.

The autonomy of postsecondary institutions is something that should be protected in any democracy, yet it's open season on the postsecondary institutions in this province at the hands of this UCP government. What Albertans feel, what people are feeling as they're considering coming to a postsecondary institution in Alberta is fear. They're fearful that the tuitions may go up. Could a student who starts a four-year program actually afford to finish, or will the funding formula make it impossible? Will the amount of the grant in a student loan program allow the postsecondary student to complete their four-year program?

As I said, postsecondary education in Alberta used to be accessible. We used to pride ourselves in removing barriers for students to obtain a postsecondary education. Whether it would be at an institution like NAIT or SAIT or one of our universities or one of our colleges, it was a matter of absolute pride in our institutions. Now we see our institutions, Madam Speaker, under attack, being throttled by this government in terms of their autonomy and being forced to raise tuitions and put another burden on the backs of Albertans who are already struggling with day-to-day living expenses.

Bill 38 does nothing to make life easier for Alberta families who indeed wish that they could maybe see their way clear to a time when pride was strong in Alberta universities. Unfortunately, what we're doing is going backwards to a time when universities were only accessible to individuals whose families were independently wealthy or had an income that was sufficient to cover the cost. Now, indeed, that's the sad fact that we face with Bill 38 basically reinvigorating the thought that individuals who are able to go to university will have to have an income that's beyond what most individuals in Alberta have.

With that, I will allow others to contribute to debate.

3:30

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Member Tejada: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak to Bill 38, Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, in opposition to this bill. We come back to the same moment, it seems, with every bill where I'm thinking about how if brandishing the torch of culture wars and ideological make-work policy was the benchmark of government effectiveness, this UCP government could call itself an unqualified success.

Unfortunately, the ever unravelling thread through every piece of legislation that we've seen come through this place from the UCP just highlights a UCP obsession with identity and imposition of radical right-wing ideology that doesn't actually solve any problems in our postsecondaries. It doesn't make us more competitive, and it certainly isn't meeting the moment for either our postsecondary students, many of them young people, or our institutions. Rather than treat our institutions as beacons of innovation and consulting with them, this government has chosen the path of ideological impositions and very little consultation.

What we're seeing here is, of course, the repeated pattern of distractions from the UCP's lack of action on postsecondary funding. It does nothing to help the many students that we speak with every day. I know that the members opposite must hear from them as we do here on the opposition side. It doesn't help students struggling to make ends meet. I come back to a question often asked by my colleagues here in opposition: who is this for?

Does this bill make postsecondary more accessible for the many Albertans who are struggling through an affordability crisis? I understand that for many of the members opposite this may not be a circumstance that is relatable for them. Does it provide stability or predictability in funding for our postsecondaries tasked with educating the workforce, academics, researchers, innovators, and artists of tomorrow? No. Does it address current gaps in workforce or ensure that we meet what we know are often pretty predictable needs in our communities for futures to come? No. It creates uncertainty around how programs will be funded, anxiety about ideologically driven budget decisions, and anxiety for so many of

our young people, including many of the young people that are close to me but just in our community as a whole. It's a pretty common theme that comes up.

I've said it in this place before. I'm the mother of two daughters contemplating their future in this province. I remember being a young person of extremely limited means with a single mother who spoke very little English. Even with the lack of guidance that I had from other generations to help me chart a path in Alberta, I was able to do that. I felt like there was a future here. I feel like in this Legislature I would hope that each and every one of us would want that not only for our own children or not only for children of means who have those financial support systems but for all students.

What I'm seeing time and time again from this government are decisions that, like one of my colleagues mentioned earlier, pick winners and losers in our province. They create tiers of Albertans: those who belong, those who don't, those who can chart a future. If you're lucky and if you're resilient and you work hard enough – and I hear so many stories from students who are struggling. I am amazed by the stories that I hear of success despite the choices of this government.

For the last several years I've had the honour of engaging with postsecondary students, student leadership, university leadership and have noted their great accomplishments in an adverse environment that is created by the UCP. Is this bill for our young people? I would say, looking at this bill and looking at what the goals are here and contrasting that with the conversations that I've had with postsecondary students, that they don't have them in mind.

I'll just go through the major themes that have come up in my conversations with postsecondary students here in Alberta. Obviously, affordability. Along with concerns around affordability for students, they are also climbing a steep hill often of student debt. I'm hearing a lot about rising tuition costs, accumulated student debt, concerns over changes federally, of course, and around grants at the federal level but also provincial loan structures. The whiplash that students are getting from the changes made by this government provincially around access to student aid is a major cause of stress, of financial hardship and uncertainty for a lot of students.

Again, I don't know how many members opposite have had those struggles. I know that as a young student I had to apply for student loans after learning that I might actually have access to them, after realizing that I actually could attend postsecondary, and having to navigate all of those systems on my own. That was in 1993. I know I'm aging myself, but aging is a privilege. At the time when I was applying for my student loans, I knew that I would also need to apply for part of that student loan to cover living expenses, at least some portion of my living expenses while I was also working, sometimes 25 hours a week. I remember the feeling of dread and disappointment as a young person applying for my student loan and learning that I wouldn't be getting the amount of loan that I needed and that, supplementing that student loan while also working, I might have to make hard choices about how I would eat that day. One of the most memorable ones was having to roll pennies, back when we had pennies, in order to purchase one muffin in the entirety of that day and a coffee.

What I find absolutely unforgivable in one of the most prosperous provinces in our nation is that I am hearing stories that are worse than that. I talked to a young lady yesterday who was working full-time with a full course load and still struggling to buy groceries.

A big concern that I have heard from students is around lack of timeliness for student aid. Now, when people apply for their student loans, they're hoping to get them so that they can pay the university and get on with their studies and get on with the focus of what it is that they are at a university to do, which is to succeed in their academic careers, to train for the jobs that they need. Instead, they are waiting on student loans and falling into arrears while going to university. As a result of falling into arrears because of the lack of timeliness on their student loan, they are then denied any emergency supports or awards that would help get them through those first few months of school.

3:40

One of the other concerns that I heard about was the crushing weight of interest on student loans. It's getting harder and harder – it's no surprise to anyone here – for students to get those first few jobs. They don't pay well enough to pay off that student loan, and on top of that they have the crushing debt that is tied to interest. At the federal level we know that has changed, that we have interest-free student loans for postsecondary students. Among the recommendations that I've heard from students and that I know the members opposite have also heard, that is a measure whose time has come in our province: interest-free student loans.

The other stresses that this bill creates are around the ideological decisions that are being made by this government and the stresses that that creates through perhaps sudden program cancellations. Just hearkening back to the affordability issues, the fact that people have to work so much to supplement their student loans means that they have to extend their graduation timeline. They have to be in university a much longer time in order to finish because of affordability issues, administrative hurdles that they're facing through delayed fund distributions.

Another concern I heard recently was around mental health and well-being and the toll of this financial distress. I would recommend to the members opposite that it is time to have some very deep and honest conversations with our young people. Rather than focusing on ideology and on what to impose on universities, what to impose on our students, let's really focus on strengthening the workforce of tomorrow, on treating our younger generations like the gift that they are to our province. We owe them a better future, and Bill 38 does nothing to build a more prosperous future for either our students or us as a province.

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

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I think my remarks will likely be brief, but I look forward to another opportunity to perhaps speak at greater length about the concerns we have with Bill 38. I think my colleagues have ably outlined some of our concerns with this bill. This is a distraction, I think, from what postsecondary students are actually asking for in Alberta. It basically represents the government's latest effort to transform postsecondary education in the province largely by taking more direct control over it.

We've seen how successful that's been for them in so many other cases, Madam Speaker. The incredible success they've had with the health care system. You know, people that go to the emergency rooms tell me how wonderful it is that the government has raised the wait times there. I hear from people regularly who have increasing wait times for their surgeries – hips, knees, cancer – because this government took more direct control, quadrupled bureaucracy, and is spending millions of dollars on consultants.

We have seen what this government has done with their more direct control over the education system, Madam Speaker, where they stripped away teachers' Charter rights, where they tell them what they are allowed to say and not to say in the classroom while ignoring the fact that classrooms are overflowing, teachers are struggling, and our front-line workers are exhausted.

Now that government wants to turn that same excellent thought about design and approach to our postsecondary institutions. The challenge is, Madam Speaker, that this is a government that doesn't actually believe in using evidence to inform decisions. No. They prefer to start with their decision and then manufacture the evidence to support it. That is what we had with their postsecondary task force that they sent out to basically go out and do consultation in the way that this government does, which is not by actually listening to people but by going out and asking leading questions that get the answers that they want to get to be able to support the decision that they wanted to make in the first place.

We've seen this over and over. It's a repeated pattern with this government, Madam Speaker, with the Alberta Next town halls, where they chose the topics, used taxpayer dollars to create incredibly biased videos framing the issues and pushing their point of view, had the Premier's senior staff there to gatekeep the mic, and then had the Premier write a report as chair of that task force to herself telling herself what she thought she should do, which is what she wanted to do in the first place. We saw them do the same thing with the referendum: $4 million of taxpayer dollars to tell Albertans how to vote on the 10 questions the government chose. Luckily for Albertans, that one didn't go so well. This government didn't get anywhere close to a significant mandate on any of the questions it put forward.

Then, of course, we've got the gerrymandered elections map where, again, they actually had the independent commission, but they didn't like that result, so they struck a new committee overseen by a majority of UCP MLAs with their appointees to manufacture the product that they wanted in the first place, a rigged map.

Now we have them turning that same methodology to postsecondary education. I'll tell you, Madam Speaker, that I met with student leaders yesterday. They told us what they wanted. They wanted to see a funding and tuition model that keeps costs predictable and protects program diversity at institutions of every size. Bill 38 does exactly the opposite. It creates a chaotic landscape where nobody knows what tuition they're going to pay. The minister will decide, and the minister will also decide what programs he's going to offer. On one hand, the minister of education talks about how high school students need to have more choice. On the other hand, the Minister of Advanced Education is going to take that choice away.

Coincidentally, they're both undermining the same kinds of programs, the humanities. Things that teach students how to communicate, how to think critically, how to question authority. Student leaders have told us that they want to see a provincial student mental health grant that keeps pace with enrolment growth and inflation – the government has never done that for postsecondary, and they don't intend to with Bill 38 – and a student aid system that actually prioritizes nonrepayable support and protects the long-term financial health of graduates. Again, Madam Speaker, Bill 38 does precisely the opposite. They're creating more uncertainty, more bureaucracy, more direct government interference and control to push their ideology.

This is why, Madam Speaker, we will not be supporting Bill 38. I'm proud to represent three different postsecondary institutions: NorQuest College, Grant MacEwan University, and NAIT. All of them are doing excellent work to support their students and trying to provide a quality education, and all of them will suffer under the restrictions and the impositions that we're seeing from this government in Bill 38.

As I said, Madam Speaker, I think I'll keep my remarks brief today. There will be opportunities to speak at greater length to this bill in the future, so for now I will take my seat.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 38 read a second time]

Government Bills and Orders
Committee of the Whole

[Ms Pitt in the chair]

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

Bill 34
Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

The Chair: Are there members that wish to join the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-South.

Member Hoyle: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise to speak to Bill 34, and while I will be supporting this bill, I'd like to recognize some of the people whose work helped bring us to this point. [interjections] It's good to see the round of applause from folks on the other side. The Member for Calgary-Currie, who brought forward legislation around transparent pricing and ticket transfer fees; the Member for Edmonton-Meadows, who brought forward legislation to give Albertans stronger tools to protect their credit and prevent fraud; the Member for Edmonton-Manning, who has pressed this government relentlessly to recognize the right of Albertans to repair the equipment and products they own: their work deserves recognition because several ideas the government is presenting today will sound very familiar to anyone who's been listening to the Official Opposition. We proposed them, we advocated for them, and we clearly asked the government to act. In two cases the UCP members voted against our legislation. Now, months later, we are debating a government bill that moves in several of those same directions.

3:50

I'm extremely pleased that our persistence is producing results, but Albertans are entitled to ask why they had to wait. The need was for these measures in May. The financial pressure was there, as was the risk of fraud. Madam Chair, what changed the government's position? The position from Alberta's New Democrats has always been consistent.

Albertans deserve fair prices, real protections, and more control over their own money and property. That's why we brought these ideas forward in the first place, and that's why we will support progress when the government finally decides to act. As shadow minister of jobs, economy, and trade I also see a clear economic principle running through these proposals. An economy works better when people can trust a transaction. Businesses can compete fairly, and productive equipment can be kept working. That confidence matters when someone buys a vehicle, opens a business, or starts building a financial future here in Alberta, and it matters when a household is deciding how far its next paycheque can stretch.

I want to start with discussing ticket reselling. For many families attending a concert or a sporting event these days requires planning and saving. People should be able to look at a price and know what they will actually pay. They should be able to compare their options without facing additional charges after they've already committed time to a purchase. And if plans change, they deserve fair treatment when transferring a ticket.

My colleague the Member for Calgary-Currie understood that. Bill 209 proposed protections against advertised prices becoming higher and prohibited fees charged by secondary sellers and resale platforms to transfer a ticket to a purchaser. The UCP members had an opportunity to advance this; they voted it down. So when members opposite now speak about fairness and transparency in ticket

reselling, I invite them to acknowledge that this side of the House was already doing that work.

Bill 34 proposes clearer disclosure of the total resale price and authority to establish further rules. We support that direction, but the minister needs to explain what consumers will actually receive. What restrictions will apply to resale markups, and what will an Albertan do when a seller breaks those rules? Alberta's live events support performers, venue workers, hospitality businesses, and people working behind the scenes. A family's entertainment budget is finite. Money absorbed by excessive transaction costs is money unavailable for another local purchase. We also need clarity on whether this bill will address the ticket transfer fees that Bill 209 sought to prohibit. Madam Chair, if the government is prepared to adopt part of our approach, it should be prepared to explain why it has left other protections behind.

The same principle applies to credit protection. My colleague the Member for Edmonton-Meadows brought forward Bill 210 to give Albertans tools to prevent fraudulent credit applications. His proposal included credit freezes and security alerts with protections against charging consumers for those services. The UCP members – guess what they did – voted that bill down as well.

Consider someone who's moved to Alberta and is carefully establishing a Canadian credit history. They may be learning an unfamiliar financial system, and while finding work and supporting family and planning for their future, a fraudulent account could complicate that progress at precisely the moment they're trying to establish themselves. Financial securities matter to people, whether they can build a stable life or not here. We ask newcomers to bring their skills, work hard, and contribute to Alberta's economy. They deserve accessible tools to protect the financial foundation they are building. That means clear information and a process people can understand, including people unfamiliar with our credit reporting system. Prevention deserves to be treated seriously.

Now, Bill 34 moves towards giving Albertans greater control over access to their credit reports. Albertans should know what it can prevent, what it cannot prevent, and what additional steps may be necessary if their information has been compromised.

I also want to touch on the proposed pilot in this bill that will allow lottery ticket sales in select liquor stores under a 12-month pilot involving 30 stores. As someone with a business background I want to understand precisely how the success will be measured. The assessment should consider participating stores and existing lottery retailers. A convenience store owner may depend on a range of small transactions to keep the business viable. Someone entering to purchase a lottery ticket may also buy other goods. This government should examine whether the pilot creates additional businesses or primarily shifts transactions between retailers.

It should also assess staff training, responsible gambling safeguards, and administrative costs. The result should be public before any decision to expand the program. Small businesses deserve decisions based on evidence and fair assessment of the effects.

Ultimately, we will support Bill 34 because several proposals advance objectives that Alberta's New Democrats have already championed. My colleague the Member for Calgary-Currie brought forward solutions on the ticket prices and fees. Once again, my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Meadows brought forth solutions on fraud prevention and credit protection. The Member for Edmonton-Manning kept pressing for the right to repair. They listened, they developed proposals, and persisted, and that is effective opposition. The UCP government has now come around to several of those ideas. It should show the same commitment to getting the details right.

Albertans deserve protections that safeguard their earnings, support fair competition, and help them build a secure future here in Alberta. We have done the work to advance those objectives. We will continue to do what's in the best interests of Albertans.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to rise and offer some comments on Bill 34, the Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. I want to thank my friend from Edmonton-South for her comments and offer just a few comments in addition to that. As she quite clearly and capably laid out, we support the consumer protection mechanisms that are presented in this bill, and in fact we proposed many of them quite a while ago, and we're pleased that the government has finally listened to us on these few matters.

However, I do have a number of concerns with respect to how well these consumer protection measures will be implemented. All of the things about ticket resales require enforcement from service Alberta in order for it to be effective. Unfortunately, we've seen this government refuse to enforce the legislation on the books in any matter of areas, whether that's with respect to energy development, environmental protection, you name it. This government has a terrible track record of enforcing the laws on the books in multiple departments, and I don't think that it's a stretch for Albertans to wonder whether or not service Alberta will be able or willing to enforce the measures with respect to ticket disclosures.

4:00

With respect to the lemon law and the right-to-repair sections of the Consumer Protection Act, again, these are in principle good ideas, but the implementation of those protections puts the onus on the person who has been wronged to actually take the manufacturer of the product to court in the case of a lemon law if the manufacturer doesn't voluntarily comply with the legislation.

Now, imagine if you will that you are my friend from Calgary-North East who drives an incredibly expensive Mercedes-Benz. If that Mercedes-Benz were to become defective and need to be a subject of a court action, my friend would have to take the Mercedes-Benz corporation or whichever corporation owns that corporation right now – it's a shifting corporate mess that covers the automotive industry, but he would have to take that person to court. Now, my friend from Calgary-North East is a capable orator and a pretty smart guy, but he doesn't have the time and the resources to challenge the Mercedes-Benz people to get justice in front of the Court of Justice or the Court of King's Bench under this legislation.

I'm not just making up hypothetical scenarios, Madam Chair. This is a similar justice system that service Alberta already has for renter protection, but renters consistently get run over by landlords under the same system. Landlords are small peanuts, are small potatoes in comparison to a company like GM or Ford. How can people who buy lemons realistically expect to take on some of the largest automotive corporations in the world simply because the legislation allows them to take them to court?

I think there is going to be a lot more that needs to be done with respect to those provisions to make sure that the courts are a level playing field for people who have legitimate complaints under this legislation. I certainly hope that the government makes it a level playing field and doesn't allow the major corporations to just outspend the people who are trying to take them to court so that

they effectively never see justice even though the law is supposed to provide them that.

Now, with respect to the pilot program to sell lottery tickets in liquor stores, I have yet to have a constituent approach me and say: Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, what Alberta needs is more opportunities for people to gamble. In fact, anybody who watches TV or looks at a billboard or looks at a bus stop or looks at a bus, wears an Oilers jersey, anybody with eyes is constantly inundated with gambling advertisements. We all carry casinos in our pockets now. It's reality that somebody could be gambling on their phone while waiting for a clerk to sell them a lottery ticket, Madam Chair. This is completely unnecessary. In fact, I would say that this government has gone too far to promote gambling in this province, and we shouldn't be expanding lottery ticket sales to liquor stores.

One can only wonder why the minister thinks that this is a good idea. Perhaps he was in a tasting room in Kentucky and was lamenting the fact that he couldn't buy a lottery ticket there, so he decided that when he came back to Alberta, he'd rectify the situation and make sure that people have yet another opportunity to gamble their money away. It's completely irresponsible, Madam Chair, and I'm really quite distressed that this government continues to open up every venue of life to gambling. I think the government needs to realize that it's gone way too far down that road and needs to rein it in because a lot of people are suffering from their overexposure to gambling.

The final comment that I want to make is the changes in the legislation that restore the Surface Rights Board. It's rather timely that this piece of legislation is up for debate today because it was only a few days ago that the Alberta Surface Rights Federation issued a letter to the Premier and all MLAs outlining its concerns with the mature asset strategy and the government's failure to address the consequences of energy development in Alberta. There are a couple of pieces in here that I think are worth reminding all members of. The letter says that in the circumstances that are outlined in that letter, any attempt to celebrate the Surface Rights Board's re-establishment as a victory for landowners will be poorly received and, in fact, goes on to list a number of other issues that need to be addressed to make sure that landowners are treated fairly when it comes to energy development in this province.

A lot of those energy development issues include indefinite delays in cleanup, unreliable reclamation certification, contamination and deteriorating infrastructure, weeds and agricultural biosecurity, unpaid and inadequate compensation, unpaid municipal taxes, orphan liabilities and transfers to weak operators, Alberta Energy Regulator independence and enforcement, tribunal performance and access to justice, erosion of property rights and bargaining power, increasingly intensive industrial development, hydraulic fracturing and freshwater demand, repurposing wells and surface leases, carbon capture and storage, further weakening of environmental protections, new structures for transferring cleanup liabilities, expansion without meaningful landowner participation.

Those are 17 additional issues that landowners are requesting the Premier and this government take action on in order to make sure that landowners participate fairly and benefit fairly from energy development in this province. This government has done absolutely nothing on any of those files and, in fact, is charging ahead with significant changes to the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act without consultation with landowners or any members of the public. They're charging ahead with their mature asset strategy without involving landowners. All of it is the insiders and friends of the UCP who participate in these so-called consultations so that the end result is that landowners are stuck with the bill for cleaning up the mess that the energy companies have created in the first place, and that's not fair, Madam Chair.

For all of that, you know, this bill does advance a few consumer protections, but like I said in my comments, there are a number of caveats, especially with respect to the effective implementation of those protections, so I will reluctantly vote in favour of this piece of legislation.

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Mr. Kasawski: Thanks, Madam Chair. I know that when I was a kid, if you had lost your wallet, that was something you were worried about more because you thought someone was going to take the money in it, but often, you know, there were times you would find your wallet still with your pieces of identity left in it. Now we're in a world where identity theft is front and centre. It is probably the largest form of property crime. In Sherwood Park when we had the RCMP report on crime in the community, giving us our annual update, property crime is the number one crime in Sherwood Park, and a lot of that is coming from fraud and online crime.

We want to be focused on delivering here on our priorities in Alberta to ensure we have, you know, public services when and where we need them, delivering on world-class publicly funded education for our children, bringing stability to our overworked health care system that's being ransacked by the UCP chaos that they're bringing to the health care system. We want to make life more affordable in Alberta. The government has with every bill the opportunity, with its immense power, to try and make life more affordable for Albertans. Using that power through Bill 34, they could have done better.

4:10

In this Assembly we have opportunities to make life better. It was mentioned that so many of the bills were brought forward by the Alberta NDP, that brought in legislation that would do things like protect Albertans from fraud and online crime. On this side of the House we need to use this Assembly to introduce legislation that will make life better, not that is going to help the Premier get through her leadership review at the upcoming UCP AGM.

We introduced the Consumer Protection (Affordability Measures) Amendment Act in 2026. It would bring in transparent pricing, required to advertise prices to match the final price. We know that experience you've had where you're buying something, especially online now, and then you get to the checkout and there are these massive hidden fees that changed the price of what you were buying. Sometimes the fees will be as much as the product you're trying to buy. Transparent pricing is something that's important to Albertans that this legislation could bring in. The Alberta NDP brought in that legislation.

Easier subscription cancellations to prevent businesses from using complex multiclick processes to trap consumers into monthly subscriptions: that's something that the NDP brought forward in a bill for consumer protection.

Eliminating transfer fees to get rid of those pesky fees when you're just trying to transfer your tickets to a friend or someone else to use when you cannot use the tickets at an event: we brought that legislation in. It also had a cap on ATM fees, so Albertans are no longer overcharged to access their own money.

I had an experience this summer, Madam Chair, where I went to get money from a bank that's not my home bank. They charged me $5 to get the cash. Then I got home. I looked online at my own bank statement. My own bank charged me $5 to use another bank's till.

It was brutal. But I was going to a cash-only activity, and I needed the cash for that.

We brought in these pieces of legislation, and the UCP voted against that legislation. Only now with Bill 34 are they trying to bring back some of that consumer protection that we were trying to bring in to help Albertans, using this Assembly in order to make life more affordable for Albertans. So now we have Bill 34.

Also, we should mention that the Alberta NDP introduced consumer protection, fraud prevention measures this year. This legislation would have put in place provisions to help people freeze their credit card temporarily when their identities are compromised. It would put in place extra identity verification to help prevent fraud and identity theft. So back to that story about when I was young. If you lost your wallet, your biggest concern was that you would lose the money that was in your wallet. Now your biggest concern is that somebody is going to use your information to access your bank account or your credit cards online and rob you. That's what it is, Madam Chair. It is theft, and it is robbery. That's how police are classifying it, and that's how this legislation needs to classify it. We need to do better in order to treat Albertans with the respect they need but also to make sure that they get the protections that they need.

The UCP voted against fraud protection and consumer protection. They voted against the bill that would protect Albertans after a major voter data breach affecting nearly 3 million voters. We had in Alberta earlier this year people that used voter lists and Albertans' identities illegally and shared them illegally. In this Legislature the Alberta NDP brought in legislation to protect Albertans' identities, and the UCP voted against it. They voted against legislation to protect Albertans from identity theft after the largest breach of voter identity in Alberta's history. And now last week in an order in council the UCP have approved the sale of Albertans' information from Play Alberta player accounts.

So they voted against legislation that would protect the identity of Albertans after the largest breach of identity in Albertans' history, and now they're opening up the opportunity for Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission to sell the information collected by the government-run Play Alberta player accounts. They won't protect Albertans' identity. They won't protect it and do anything when our identity has been breached or illegally used through voter fraud. Now they are collecting information through players on their Play Alberta player apps, and they just gave themselves permission to sell Albertans' identities to the highest bidder.

Now, in Bill 34 the UCP is making changes to the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act to allow for selling of lottery tickets in liquor stores. Identity fraud is a major problem in Alberta. Increasing access to gambling is also a major problem for Albertans, and we don't seem to be showing enough concern for that here in this Assembly. The government is not taking on this problem; they're actually adding fuel to the problem.

Since their rollout this summer of online gaming in Alberta we have omnipresent advertising. We have 24/7 access to online gambling, and since July over $3 billion has been gambled in Alberta by Albertans, mostly by young men. Over $3 billion has been bet by Albertans since July when the government opened up online gaming.

The lottery is considered a tax on those who can least afford it. Disproportionately people that cannot afford to spend a lot of extra money are spending their extra money on lottery tickets, and now through Bill 34 we are trying to increase the opportunity for them to spend money on lottery tickets. They're proposing to increase access to lottery after they've already increased access to online gambling, and there's no mention in any of this legislation of guardrails that could be brought in to help protect people.

Gambling and online gambling is a disorder. It's a behavioural addiction. It is officially recognized as an addiction. So concerned are they about hard drugs, but what little concern they have for the youth when it comes to behavioural addictions that are brought into our hands, as mentioned by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, in our hands, online, 24/7 with gambling.

We have an online gambling problem. It's becoming a major problem in Alberta, and this government is ignoring it. At the intersection of online gaming, advertising, and gambling, this government is forsaking Alberta's youth to a cycle of debt and addiction, and I do not trust the UCP to increase and monetize more gambling and then somehow protect Alberta's youth. There is little to trust with this government when it comes to what's best for the youth of Alberta.

Here's someone who's named Rod, lost almost everything from a gambling addiction. He said: "I have nothing left. I have gambled it all away. I got my hands on whatever I could. I maxed out credit cards, lines of credit, everything." Gambling is a serious problem. It is being brought into the hands of our youth, and this Legislature is ignoring it, and the UCP is just adding fuel to the fire by giving the opportunity for more online gambling. I don't know to what end because it's not making for a better Alberta.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Are there others?

Seeing none, I will call the question on Bill 34, the Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

[The clauses of Bill 34 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Any opposed? That is carried.

4:20

Bill 36
Children and Family Services (Supporting Alberta Families) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

The Chair: I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's an honour to stand and rise and speak to Bill 36, Children and Family Services (Supporting Alberta Families) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. You know, I want to acknowledge that there are some provisions in this legislation that our team welcomes. We believe that strengthening kinship care and improving the participation of children and caregivers in decisions is critical. It's vital. Modernizing protections against sexual exploitation is very important.

But I also want to be very clear that there are some very – I'll get into the problems with this legislation. First of all, when Indigenous children represent approximately 78 per cent of the children in care, we cannot simply make these administrative changes to the child intervention system and declare that we are supporting Alberta families. We have to ask the real, fundamental, serious question: why are there so many Indigenous children in care in the first place, and what specifically is this government doing about that reality? What are they doing to change the reality of families?

If this bill, Bill 36, is truly about supporting families, then it has to be more about what happens before a child is apprehended and removed from their home. We have to do more before we're taking the children away. Prevention is key. If we look at research and data

on families: prevention, prevention, prevention. Yet here again we see legislation that's after the fact. We've got to look at unnecessary removals of children, the way we're strengthening families. We have to respect Indigenous jurisdiction and invest in communities where children can remain safe and connected to the people who love them.

As a First Nations woman, you know, I see many of our children. In fact, I was apprehended into foster care as a baby, and many of my cousins have been apprehended. I've had the honour of adopting children who've aged out of care. I've been a kinship provider. This 78 per cent of Indigenous children statistic isn't just a statistic. These are family members. These are babies that we love. These are children who belong to someone. They are the carriers of our prayers, of our songs, of our languages, and when they're put in non-Indigenous foster homes, how are they going to carry the language, the culture, our identity of who we are? They're not because they don't have access to it.

Here we have legislation saying that we're going to make kinship care a priority, we're going to talk about kinship care. Well, kinship care means that your relative is going to help take care of you. First Nations people are the poorest people in the province. We just have to look at the GDP indicators, the employment stats on the nations. We are already living in poverty, so the burden of taking on someone else's child financially, you would assume, would be at the same rate as a foster parent. That is not the fact.

If my daughter gets apprehended and goes to my sister's house, my sister will get a paid rate, but if my daughter gets apprehended and goes to a White house, that foster parent would get an increased rate of pay. If one family is getting paid more because they're not Indigenous and a family is getting paid substantially less in kinship, which is family and happens to be all Indigenous – gets paid less – that looks like systemic racism.

These connections around how systemic racism works aren't often explicit, so this legislation doesn't explicitly say: we're going to put the burden on the family without giving the adequate funding. Put a line, a financial line, to administer. Commit to making sure that kinship relatives are paid the same rate as foster parents. It's unacceptable, and it doesn't make any sense why you would pay one family more and another family less to do the same job, which is to raise healthy children who will thrive with love.

Instead, we're increasing the stats. I think we're up – what was it? – 7 per cent in two years of kids in care. Why are we having more kids in care? Why aren't we documenting why the kids who are aging out are being incarcerated, how they're dying? Why aren't we investing in the deaths of foster care children? Why aren't we finding out, particularly from the ages of 18 to 25 when they age out, where they go? You know what? Recently the Member for Edmonton-West Henday and I went to visit a federal prison, and all of those young people incarcerated who were over 18 were former foster children, which tells me we're systemically failing these children.

You can bring forward Bill 36 and talk about how we're going to talk about kinship care, but put your money where your mouth is and invest in Indigenous families at the same rate that you're investing in non-Indigenous families.

You know, it's tough not to be passionate about this, particularly when I think about the kids that I've had the honour to raise who've aged out of care. The problem is that I didn't decide I was just going to become a foster mom. These were kids who were homeless, who were living on the street. One was living in their car. My son came home and said, "Mom, this boy from high school is sleeping in his car; can he come and stay with us?" and I said, "Make the bed downstairs; we'll make space for him." He was 21 years old, aged out of foster care, and had nowhere to go, no connection to his biological family, had never met them, so essentially had no one to care for him.

He moved in with us. He lived with us. I adopted him. He's now one of my adopted sons. He's now in postsecondary, but it took a lot of therapy, a lot of love, and a lot of spending time going through the trauma in care. He was sexually assaulted by the foster parents who had him from the ages of 6 to 9 years old. He was beat by a few of his foster parents. So he had a tremendous amount of trauma around sexual abuse. You know, as a foster parent you want to make sure that the child you're raising has access to therapy so they can heal those wounds.

What I've learned is that my older kids who I adopted, because the trauma was so severe at such an early time in their development, have been in and out of incarceration and in and out of addictions. Not because of lack of love, because I love them with all of my heart and they always have a home to come to, but the trauma is so deep. The wounds are so deep because of the sexual assaults, the sodomization, the rapes, the being locked in closets, the being starved without food, trying to be a young woman at 33. My oldest boy is 38. He's in and out of incarceration, and he has had a home. I've had him since he was 11 years old and loved him since he was 11 and made sure he had access to all of the things that children who face trauma – but it just wasn't enough. It just wasn't enough, and I didn't have access to any resources as a foster parent.

Every single thing I did for my kids was out of my own pocketbook. I never was compensated for anything that I ever gave any of those children that I adopted because there are no services available when they age out of care. There is no place to take these babies to, and they are still children. Let me tell you that when it's Christmastime, they all come home and they all sober up because they want to see what mom's going to give them under the tree, because they're still babies inside. Every child is, particularly kids who've come from trauma or have been in foster care.

You know, Amy, my oldest daughter, had been in over 17 homes by the time she was 14 years old. Seventeen homes. The amount of rejection that she has faced – I didn't understand why she was so angry when I was providing a loving home and a safe home. It took years and years and years and still tons of therapy, but none of that is made available by the ministry, none of that support that these human beings deserve with dignity and love and respect. They deserve the opportunity to thrive and be treated with dignity. There's no dignity living on the damn streets. There's no dignity when you have nowhere to shower. That is where foster care is putting these kids.

4:30

And this kinship process, the idea that we are going to recognize kinship care properly: then give the nations the names of the kids that you have. Why are First Nations taking this government to court to get the names of their children? These are our babies. We love our children. Invest in our families so we can take care of children. We know that the number one issue is poverty. It is poverty. Economic development on the nations: build the economy on the nations. Support the Métis settlements so people can raise their families with dignity. You're creating systemic problems by removing our children, placing them in non-Indigenous homes. They don't know who they are. They end up on the street.

Bill 36 is not going to solve the problem of prevention. Renaming things does not solve the problem of apprehending children. Invest in families. Invest in prevention. Invest and build partnerships with nations. That's what's going to save children. It's going to be about relationships.

It's about wahkohtowin, the kinship. The law of wahkohtowin is kinship. That is paramount. This is moving in the right direction with wahkohtowin, but you've got to put the money behind the legislation. You cannot just say that you're doing something and then not financially ensure that, respectfully, the work can be done with integrity. As it currently stands, it is causing more harm to give extra responsibility to folks who are already struggling with economics. You're putting a financial burden on folks who already are struggling.

We want our babies. Don't kid yourself. We want to raise them. We want to teach them our language. We want them to miyo-pimatisiwin. We want them to live their best lives. I know that this government wants children to live their best lives, too. If that's the case, then put the money behind the legislation – that's paramount – and start documenting. Get back to tracking. I don't know why you stopped tracking children's deaths. Start figuring out why they're dying, how they're dying. What can we do to prevent deaths? Who's responsible for their deaths? Hold people accountable. Do the work. Track the deaths. It matters. It matters when our kids die. We want to know. Do the work.

Hay-hay. Nanaskamon.

The Chair: Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 36, Children and Family Services (Supporting Alberta Families) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. First off, I want to recognize that many of the recommendations, I believe, that came into this piece of legislation did come from the panel work that happened about I think it was a year ago – November 2025, right? – with two MLAs and a group of experts that work in the field. I want to acknowledge their work first and say as someone who's done this work in the past that it is a huge undertaking, and it is an emotional process, and there are a lot of stories and experiences that come through, so I want to thank the committee members for that work.

In saying that, though, I do think that the government has taken some opportunity to add some things to this piece of legislation that were not in the recommendations. I'd really like to focus on the high-risk-youth piece, on secure services and the removal of the 30 days from the legislation. The reason why I feel like that's important, Madam Chair, is that as someone that did this work for over 12 years, I spent a lot of time in the court system, working on secure services with the youth that I was trying to support and help.

One of the things that happens through that court process, through those applications, is the ability to prove that the restriction of a human's right is required to happen to keep them safe. There is a high threshold for that requirement. To put a child in a secure treatment facility, which is a locked building where we have removed their opportunity and their rights to go outside, where it's very regimented, where there are psychological assessments happening, all of those things, is an extreme move to make when you're trying to maintain a relationship with a youth that just wants to run.

The reasons why the legislation was written the way that it was, which was five days for initial assessment to determine level of risk and then to be able to move past those five days if the assessment deemed that risk was substantial, were put in place for a reason. That is because these kids still have a right to their autonomy, and they still have a right to their voices, and when you put them in a secure facility, you remove all of those rights.

Thirty days is a long time. It's a long time for a developing brain. It's a long time for a kid that may be struggling with family dynamics, that may be struggling with addictions, that may be struggling with their own mental health, and I would say that although these facilities serve a purpose within the services that are being provided to youth, they are not the solution to the problem.

To extend these days and to allow for continuous application: I guess I'm curious to hear from the government why it was done and who recommended it. It's not in the recommendations. I looked. It is the most serious application that you can make. Lawyers get involved, all of the things. I would say that when you're trying to rebuild family, when you're trying to get these kids back to whoever they believe is their person, the minute you put them in secure, you are starting at ground zero. Yes, there are services. There are psychologists. Yes, there's family counselling. Yes, there are all of those things, but there's so much anger attached to that process that it takes a really long time to rebuild that trust and that relationship. It is the last resort.

I'm not going to say that it's a bad service. I, unfortunately, put a lot of kids in secure. If they weren't going to jail, I was securing them. Like, it was kind of a trend that we had going on for a while with some of the youth that I was working with, and it was because it was the only way I could keep them safe and find out where they were. I was pulling them out of drug houses. They were being sexually exploited. They were gang kids. It was jail or secure, and it sucked. But I wouldn't want to have gone past those 30 days either because my job as a social worker that was working with those youth was to figure out: how do I get them into community, developing those skills, creating some form of relationship so that they are not in jail and they're not in secure? Who are those people, what skills do they need, and what can I do to make sure that I'm supporting that part?

Where I think our gap is created – like, what I worry about, I guess, to say this, is that I worry that we are now going to use this as a tool to remove some of the supports and programming that these kids need, right? This is a lot like involuntary addiction treatment versus voluntary treatment. I would love people to have voluntary treatment over involuntary treatment because that is when people buy into the process. Secure services removes that opportunity for voluntary engagement and makes it mandatory. And as parents in this room probably know, the minute you try to tell a child what to do and you take away all their opportunities, they tend to fight back on that process.

So how do you convince a youth that's going through this process to engage in community supports and to keep themselves safe? That's where we have to go. Extending secure services and just saying, "Well, you're still acting out in your secure site; we're going to extend you for another 30 days" is not going to change their behaviour. They're just going to get more angry, and, yeah, kids run. Kids run all the time. I mean, the amount of times I was chasing kids. It was a lot of my job.

4:40

What happened in the end – I had this one youth. She stays in my head all the time. She's brilliant. I don't even want to think about how old she is now, but she started with me when she was 12. She came from a pretty rough family. Lots of siblings, and they were all gang affiliated. She was being sexually exploited by her boyfriend, and it was a rough go. Her mom had died, so she had no person that she really felt like she connected to. She put herself through, like, 40 lives through all of the different things that she did. I locked that kid up quite a few times through secure services. I sent her to Calgary. I sent her to Lac La Biche. I had her in Edmonton. I had her everywhere in this province that I could possibly put her to try to get her away from the folks that were watching for her to return to Edmonton as fast as they could possibly get her back here.

But what happened with her is that I didn't stop working with her, and I didn't give up on her, and when she turned 16, we went to court.

I gave her a choice. I said: "I can continue to be your guardian under a PGO, or you can sign your own voluntary agreement, because you're allowed at 16, and you can just work with me voluntarily, but that means that if you decide to not see me for three months, then you get nothing. Like, I can't find you because I don't have a right to chase you down anymore." She made the choice to sign a voluntary agreement, and she graduated high school, and she became a mom. She did all of these things because she was given the choice to make those decisions. I offered her that opportunity.

I guess, in summary, because I want to recognize that I could go on forever on this, children's services is super hard. I would love to fix it, and I think everybody in this room would love to fix it. Nobody wants to see a child being abused, no matter what is going on. Nobody wants to see those children in those environments and removing them from their parents and placing them with other parents. It is a horrible process, and it causes a ton of trauma for kids. It is very difficult to fix, but we have to invest in our kids, and we have to invest in the system.

I am worried about the changes that I'm seeing this government continuously doing when it comes to children's services around removing those supports. Do not use the extension for 30 days for secure services as an opportunity to not look at how we do community service better with group homes, with supporting kinship, with supporting foster parents, with supporting independent living. It's not an opportunity.

The other thing that is not an opportunity is the change that this government made to remove the age from 24 back down. I think that that was a huge mistake because the kids I worked with needed me till they were 24. They just did. I was, like, the only adult in their lives, and they needed me around. Yes, my responsibility was to help them build that community so that I didn't need to be there, but they kind of liked me. You know, they still wanted to have that relationship, and they still needed those supports. They still needed help to finish high school. They still needed help to pay their rent and get groceries and do all of those things.

When we decrease it and go, "Well, 21 seems like a good age or 18 maybe," we provide a disservice to the kids that are in these programs. Honestly, their brains develop slower. They have trauma attached to them. They have nutrition issues that have been attached to them. They have all these other things that we all know in child development that kids need to have strong, functioning brains. We also know that, like, 24-year-olds are still developing brains, so you can't give up on them.

I just think that although I'll support the bill because I think any work is good work, I will be watching to make sure that there is no opportunity to use it as an excuse to start cutting services or removing our responsibility for a group of really, really vulnerable kids that don't deserve to just be locked up in a room.

The Chair: Are there others? The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's my pleasure to rise and speak in Committee of the Whole to Bill 36, Children and Family Services (Supporting Alberta Families) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. I'm just going to build a little bit on what my colleague was saying a little bit earlier. I think the program was called supports for permanence. Is that correct? That's what it was? [interjection] Right. This program was under this ministry, under children and families, and for children that had been in care it actually recognized the need to transition. The need for support doesn't end at 18, and it certainly doesn't end at 21. We've heard example after example of the trauma that so many of these children and youth – it's just a reality for them.

Of course, it made sense that government would extend those supports, but no, not for this government. They reduced it from 24 to 21. Why? They don't need it; they can apply for AISH. Oh. Okay. Let's apply for AISH. Wait. Hold on. We're going to trash AISH and create ADAP. Go find a job. You've been in care this whole time, maybe at 13, 14 foster homes, and we're going to cut off supports, but you'll be great. Go find a job.

That's the kind of governance that we have seen for years. We will see legislation that scratches the surface of need and that says, "Look at us; aren't we doing great things?" when really they're ignoring the massive problem underneath.

Let me give you some examples. Now, of course, my colleagues have been very clear. We agree that protecting at-risk youth and children is vital. It is paramount. We will always stand up for them. While this bill will expand the definition of sexual exploitation, as my colleague very clearly said over and over again, you can say all kinds of things, but if you don't back it up with actual resources to get the work done, it's meaningless. It is just a piece of paper.

Let me give you an example. This bill looks at supports for children in care, talks about adoption, talks about kinship care. Well, just yesterday I had one of my colleagues come up to me and wanted to ask me some casework questions. They're actually really related to this particular piece of legislation. What she said was: I met with some constituents last week during constit week, and their concern was that they have been providing care for a child with complex disabilities. Of course, this child with complex disabilities – if any of you have supported children like that, every child is so incredibly unique that you have to sort of meet the family and the child to know what they need, but this child needed complex support from FSCD.

Now, for those of you that don't know, FSCD is very closely aligned with this ministry, although separate, so they don't have to answer questions about each other. That's how this works. Let me back up here. FSCD, what they do is provide supports for families to stay together and to keep children supported, children with disabilities. What it does is that it provides something they call respite. We sort of refer to it sometimes as nursing care or on-site care. That is the staff that will keep the children – a lot of kids who are profoundly disabled, it is keeping them living. It is turning them at night. It's placing them in wheelchairs. It is suctioning. It is all those things, many, many things, but it also has specialized services.

For kids that have the potential to learn a spoken language or to learn ASL or to learn adaptive equipment, or perhaps they just need physio, perhaps they only need OT, perhaps it's just a seating clinic every 6 months they need because they're growing like crazy, or perhaps it's therapy for the family because we know that more often than not families of kids with disabilities are under a lot of stress and a lot of trauma, most of which is caused by government, and that's not a partisan accusation.

Most stress that families of kids with disabilities face is related to government decisions, and this is a prime example. This government goes out of the way to talk about how they're going to help people and recognize the unique needs of Indigenous kids and others, they say, and others, other marginalized groups. Specifics, no plans, nothing, just: other kids.

Now, never mind that the OCYA, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, in – when was that? – January 2024 went out of their way to issue a very specific report called Beyond Barriers: A Special Report on Young People with Disabilities in the Child Intervention and Youth Justice Systems.I'm sure all members of this House read that report, particularly the minister. He would have noticed the eight recommendations that took a deep, deep dive in what needed to happen to keep children safe, to keep youth safe in care, in kinship care, throughout adoption, and all services.

4:50

These are very specific recommendations issued years ago that have been basically ignored, so when there was a chance on a very limited legislative agenda for the Minister of Children and Family Services to address some of the massive problems and gaps in this area, he chose to just paper over top of it, ignore the months and months and years of work that went into these recommendations. Some of them go back to 2015, 2016. This is not a partisan issue. This was an independent office that said: we examined all these files, and here's what we think is really going to make a difference for the thousands of children that are profoundly and complex disabled that are in care. What did this government do? Absolutely squat.

That's unfortunate because they were actually good recommendations, and had you done your work, you could have made this bill so much better. You still have time. Back it up. Send it to committee. Do something, but this is just not good enough for the children and youth of Alberta.

Now let me give you an example. One of the recommendations that the report made in 2024 was that

> The Ministry of Children and Family Services should partner with external disability experts and young people to review and identify actions to meet the needs of young people with disabilities in placements.

That's pretty straightforward. That doesn't take a whole lot of work. You could have done that like that. We brought forward a very simple piece of accessibility legislation to try to even the playing field, physically even, and otherwise. Y'all didn't even care enough to learn what it was or read the legislation, and you think that you are doing people a favour with this piece of legislation? You are not. You are not.

Let me read you a little piece of this kinship and adoptive report. Page 12 from Beyond Barriers, and maybe the minister should go back and have a look and then look at your bill and make it better. It says,

> Supporting young people with disabilities is critical. We heard that families, including biological, adoptive, foster and kinship, play an essential role in providing this support, but they often struggle to access the necessary resources.

As we heard from my colleague.

> We were told that this puts a strain on families that [contributes] to children and youth with disabilities coming into care, adoption breakdowns, and the disruption of foster care and kinship placements.

We already know that. People are not moving forward in an adoption process because they cannot be guaranteed that they will immediately get the FSCD support that they need. How bad is that? How many people do you think are on that wait-list: 10,000, 20,000?

Inclusion Alberta did a report. They asked all families: give us some information because this government is antitransparent; the opposite of transparent. And so they started to collect their own information because none of us really know how many people are eligible for support and get nothing from this government because they hid the wait-list starting in 2021. Their guess is 20,000 children and youth. Do you know how much wasted potential that is? Do you have any idea what these specialized services do to children? For children and their families? It opens doors to education, to employment, to apprenticeship, to opening a business, to postsecondary, to all these things. When you fail to give the supports that people need when they need it, where they need it, you're missing out, and then you're going to be at the place where you say: I don't understand why our adult disabled services aren't sustainable. It's shocking.

Do your job. Do a better job. If you're going to bring in legislation to truly protect children and youth, protect them all, not just some, not just a distraction. Do your job because the reports are there, the recommendations are there, the experts have spoken, the people have spoken, families have spoken, youth and children have spoken again and again and again, and you are not listening.

The Chair: Any others? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

Member Miyashiro: Thank you, Madam Chair.

You know, I want to thank my colleagues for their impassioned words today, and I do want to say with this bill that I think that we need to support it because the changes that are being made are changes that are necessary, but again, I don't think they go far enough.

I think that our colleague from Edmonton-Rutherford so eloquently stated the issues for Indigenous kids in our system, something that we know has been going on for a long time. How do we know this? Well, you know what? I'm going to give a tell right here.

I first started working in the children services system in the early '80s. This was the 1980s, so before some people in this room were even born. Back when I started working in the children services system in southern Alberta, Blackfoot kids were punished for speaking Blackfoot in child welfare facilities. Punished. Not just reprimanded; they were punished. It was just the way that we did things back then. By the time I think I was able to run my own adolescent treatment centre on the Blood reserve in the late 1990s, we had a Blackfoot program. The kids spoke Blackfoot. We encouraged that. I think I spoke about this in the House before. They called me names. I didn't know what they were until my staff told me that they shouldn't really be calling me those names. But the fact that we had people teaching them Blackfoot and they were able to speak Blackfoot had some really good outcomes.

In the mid-90s we looked at a different way provincially to deal with kids and families. The government actually at that time – I think it was the Ralph Klein government – developed an office called the office of the commissioner for children and families. Our job, when I worked in that department, was to go around and talk to people around the province about what they wanted for kids and families. First time this had been done ever. In southern Alberta our team spoke with over 2,500 people in different communities about what they wanted for kids and families. In every community we helped them create a service plan on what they wanted to see for kids and families. How would they want to be supported? What kinds of services do they want? What would that look like? Then we rolled it all up into one big plan.

The preliminary service plan in southwestern Alberta was over 400 pages long. It listed everything that people in southern Alberta – this is children; this is parents; this is grandparents, community agency people – wanted for kids and families. By the time we were able to take this back to the communities in our region, distill it a bit more, work with our steering committee – by the way, we actually had Indigenous representation on our steering committee. We had working groups with the Kainai and the Piikani, urban Indigenous groups as well. We were able to bring that down to about, I think, 250 pages, the service plan.

But it was so good. This is maybe a cautionary tale, too. The plan was so good that the government shelved it. We had a plan for 17 regions in our province for what people in this province wanted for kids and families, and our government shelved it because it might cost too much. The attitude wasn't: what can we do to implement this, to make things better for people in Alberta? How can we gradually implement this plan? It was: no, we can't do it because it costs too much. That was the end of it. That was the end of that whole project, right? The only carryover from that project today are some of the really good early intervention and prevention programs

we have. They're now being funded through FCSS. I talk to you about that right now because a great deal of what we came up with had to deal with: how do we provide better, more effective services and more culturally sensitive and culturally inclusive services for Indigenous kids and their families?

In 1984 – let me see where my data is here; it's right here – we were looking at probably 50 per cent of the kids in care, and 40 per cent were temporary guardianship status. You know, that increased as time went on. It increased.

5:00

By the time I was working for the government in that project that I just named – I mean, I was going through a lot of data. In our region about 70 per cent of all children with a child welfare status were Indigenous. Shocking when it was about 9, 10 per cent of all the kids in our region. When we look at some current data, about 71 per cent of the kids receiving intervention services from the government are Indigenous. Seventy-one. So from the mid-1990s till now – is that 30 years? – we really haven't improved that number. We might have improved the services, and this bill makes a movement towards improving that number, but we still need to get to the heart of what that number is. If we're going to keep having Indigenous kids and families overrepresented in the system, this is what we're going to keep getting. It's that whole thing about if you keep doing the same thing over and over again, you're going to get the same result.

Something I learned a long time ago from, like, the old-timers, in quotes, in the system was: you wait long enough, and this comes around. The system reinvents itself to what it used to be. And now that I'm one of those guys, I can see that stuff that was happening when I first started and through my career in children's services back then. We're doing it again. We tried other things, and now we're going back to things that maybe we did before that maybe we should have kept doing.

There are a lot of good things in this bill that we need to do; don't get me wrong. But we also need to make sure that we're moving in the right direction and that we are talking to a lot of people and that we are making sure that these are things that are going to help all the kids. And when I say all the kids, I mean mostly Indigenous kids because they're so far overrepresented. The other thing we need to work on, I think, federally is maybe some different Criminal Code sanctions for people that engage in child exploitation and child sexual abuse and things like that.

Years ago I worked with a young lady whose own parents turned her out. For those of you who don't know what that means, they actually prostituted their daughter when she was about 12 till she was about 14, and she never made it to 18. Those are the people that you truly need something in the criminal justice system that's going to be effective to deal with that kind of behaviour for their own kids, right? I think with these kinds of bills that we can do provincially and some other things we can do federally, if we're really interested in protecting kids, because of the way technology is now and because of the access that adults have to kids, we need to be really serious about protecting kids and do it the right way.

When we look at placement for kids – and the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford talked about this. You know, if you have Indigenous kids staying with Indigenous families for support, you get this, like, blooming, and you get this great stuff that happens: 77 per cent stronger community, 74 per cent stronger ties to family. Those are the things that we want to work towards, and, Madam Chair, those are the things that this bill can start working towards, but we need to do better.

Thank you.

The Chair: Are there others? [interjection] I will decide when the question is called. I will call the question on Bill 36, the Children and Family Services (Supporting Alberta Families) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

[The clauses of Bill 36 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Any opposed? That is carried.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Williams: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee rise and report on bills 34 and 36.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Mrs. Johnson: Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bills: Bill 34, Bill 36.

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

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed, please say no.

So carried.

Next time the hon. minister will be in his seat when the vote is called. I missed that one.

Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading
(continued)

Bill 35
Education and Childcare (Securing Parental Involvement) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

[Adjourned debate November 3: Ms Wright]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Member Eremenko: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Lovely to be able to speak and stand to Bill 35. I have really enjoyed hearing from all of my colleagues this afternoon about the incredibly rich professional diversity that we bring to our caucus: social workers, advocates, counsellors. It's just incredibly inspiring. I think that we bring that diversity to bear.

I guess I'm going to follow suit, and I'm going to talk a little bit about my work around advocating for improvements to early learning and child care when I worked years ago with a collaborative in the city of Calgary. You know, certainly this is a system in want of a great deal of reform and improvement and one that I would say is improvement that is ongoing and continuous. This is a constantly moving target as the needs of families and children and the economy, the cost of child care change and what we learn around pedagogy and the way that children develop and learn. I think it makes, actually, for some kind of important and exciting work to be able to talk about how we can be in this constant quality improvement.

It's really special to be able to stand and speak to Bill 35, Education and Childcare (Securing Parental Involvement) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, which does several things but particularly around the ways that we inform parents of incidents and critical incidents, and we'll get into the definition of those a little bit, particularly about the ways that we notify parents when there has been something significant that has taken place in a child care facility.

Now, right off the top, I think it's important to note that this legislation doesn't identify a path to include unlicensed private day homes. They do recognize licensed day homes, so those are subject to the legislation, but unlicensed private day homes are not. You know, that does raise a significant flag that I've been aware of for a very long time – and many families are – around the prevalence of unlicensed private day homes that really have no standard, no regulations, are not kind of entities in any legal way so that they are subject to the requirements of any existing legislation.

[The Speaker in the chair]

I would really encourage this government, future governments to consider ways in which we can find pathways to bring unlicensed facilities kind of into the system so that there is a degree of oversight, there is a degree of assurance around quality and safety, of course, and the actual regulatory bodies that monitor the care there.

5:10

I also want to extend my deep gratitude and thanks for the persistence and the advocacy of the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, without whom I don't believe these improvements and enhancements to our child care system would have happened. An absolutely tragic, inexcusable event took place at a child care facility in Edmonton, where a child reported that they had been sexually assaulted by one of the workers. It was the work of the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar who pushed and pushed and would not take no for an answer and who fought so hard for the parents of that particular child and for the families who were all enrolled in that program to assure them that they could expect better and that they deserved better, that their children deserved a minimum assurance of safety in the place that they spent so many of their days.

I'm just deeply grateful for the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar to have not backed down and asked the tough questions in these Chambers of the minister and of others to say: what are we going to do about it? Now, I know, though, also that that member doesn't believe that this legislation goes far enough, and I just want to recap the ways in which this legislation does take some good steps but in the ways that it doesn't quite go far enough.

Bill 35 does legislate the requirement for facilities – licensed facilities, child care facilities, day homes – to report when there has been an incident or a critical incident. When I look at the definitions – I'm sorry. Yes, they are being reported. They are going to be posted on a public website, but where this doesn't go far enough is that the parents of that facility don't have to be explicitly, directly, intentionally notified.

It wasn't that long ago – sometimes it feels like decades; sometimes it feels like yesterday – that both of my kids were in day home, and I cannot fathom something taking place in that space that involved the abuse, the neglect, God forbid something more to a child, government found out about it, and I as a parent wasn't explicitly informed. I can feel the rage even now, imagining the fear and the anger in being told that: sorry; that's just how the system works. No. No. Not good enough.

This still doesn't quite do that. I still think that this does not kind of rise to the bar that parents would expect. They pay a great deal of money. They are provided many assurances around the quality, the certification, the qualifications of the people working in that space. They have the right to expect the highest standard, and the fact that they may not be informed of an incident or a critical incident is really quite stunning still. I'm not sure why the government chose to stop at this point where they say: "Yes. We'll post it, but we're not going to inform the other families who are attending the child care centre that an incident or a critical incident has actually taken place."

Maybe what we could have done is that we could have reconsidered what we qualify as an incident or a critical incident. I have a wonderful little guy in my life who had a bit of an accident at child care last year, and it did require some medical attention. He just has big ambitions and overestimated the gap at the playground and had a bit of a tumble. Slips, trips, and falls: do those qualify as an incident that other parents need to be informed of? Maybe not. But when we're talking about the death of a child, a child going missing, the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect, an injury to a child, a police involvement that relates to a child while attending a child care program or the operation of a child care program: now, that in my mind – I think most of us would agree – tips over into a different category in which I would expect parents would be informed.

We did actually do that. Through the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar we did in fact ask specifically in March earlier this year for a government-led notification system for situations involving serious physical or sexual abuse, the creation of a public online portal to access a child care program's full history, a mandated regular review of the Early Learning and Child Care Act to ensure that any future gaps can be addressed and updated as required. I know one of the very specific concerns and one of the very specific asks that came out of this incident in the neighbourhood where Edmonton-Gold Bar serves is that families very specifically were saying: yes, the parents of the child were notified, but I deserved to be notified, too. That just feels like the bare minimum that could have been provided.

In the one minute I have left here – gosh, that goes quickly – certainly there are other elements of the educational system that are being addressed here. As the daughter of two public school teachers I know how incredibly important the professional development days were where the days can be long, the demands can be high on teachers who bring their best to the school day every single day.

I would certainly hope that any kind of reporting around professional development attendance, what sessions were attended – I'm going to give the benefit of the doubt to this government to assume that this is simply valuable information to understand how teachers are enhancing their kind of core competencies in the system and that it's not, in fact, a mechanism to police where teachers are spending their time, what they are choosing to learn about to fulfill some other kind of political or ideological agenda.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 35.

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

Member Campbell: Thank you. The global supply chain discipline extensively studies lean logistics, a technique of production that was pioneered and perfected in Japan and has since been exported all over the globe to deliver better results, whether it's creating a product or a process. My education in this discipline drove home the importance of minimizing just how many times a product is handled. Every time it is moved or picked up or scanned or repacked, it adds labour cost. It increases lead time and creates the risk of damage without adding value for the product or the customer or end user.

The way we legislate follows the same philosophy. Half-baked ideas are expensive. They need to be picked up, scanned, and repackaged at least once, probably two or three times before it gets done right. It gets reviewed by both sides of this House and gets extensive commentary on the pros, cons, and gaps. Bad legislation

can also be challenged in court, which is inefficient. Of course, this novelty is unfolding before the eyes of this province right now.

Bill 35 legislation falls into the category of policy that will need to be picked up at a future date and fixed. The changes to child care reporting are a start but not a finish. Albertans deserve a government that tables complete, thorough legislation. It should be built to withstand the test of time, and this legislation has obvious gaps. It requires incident and critical incident reporting, but reported to who? It mandates notification to the parent involved and no other parents at the facility.

I get notifications like this from my kid's school. I actually got one this afternoon that's worth reading. This is what effective reporting looks like.

> Dear families,
>
> In keeping with our commitment to provide open communication to parents, I'm writing to tell you that an incident happened at the school today. A student experienced an event.

They go on to talk about how it was helped, and it says that

> to maintain privacy and give first responders room to respond, an announcement was made for students to hold in their classroom. I want to assure you that all students are safe and other classes proceeded as scheduled. Please feel free to contact me with any questions about today's response.

I appreciate having that communication from my child's school. Now I know that something happened, the severity of the incident, what the response was, that the school administration competently handled this situation, and that there is someone I can reach out to if I have further questions. This seems like a really great way to notify parents of critical incidents that are handled at schools, and it's surprising that we wouldn't adopt a similar approach to critical incidents that happen in child care facilities.

5:20

How does it define a critical incident? What are we talking about here? Here it says when "a child [goes] missing while attending a child care program" – well, I'd sure love to know if that happened at a place where my child was at – or when there was "physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of a child" who's getting care at that facility, "an injury to a child while attending a . . . program" that requires emergency medical care, and "police involvement . . . [for] the operation of the child care program."

These are really serious. I understand why the parent of the child involved gets notified, but the parents of every child who attends that facility deserve and need to be notified. I couldn't imagine finding out through the grapevine that the police attended to my child's daycare, especially if they were there – that is an enormous gap – or that there was sexual abuse at a facility that my child attended and I wasn't told. Only to hear from other parents months down the road, to continuously be seeking clarity and clarification: that is just absurd.

We know that children have a hard time articulating what happens to them. I struggle with this all the time with my kids trying to discern fact from fiction, not because it's a deliberate obfuscation of the truth but because they have a hard time knowing what exactly happened. You know, when my kids watch TV and the commercials come on, the commercial is, like, just a continuation of the TV show. So what happens at the school or at their child care facility deserves to have an adult intervention when things are truly critical.

This legislation only applies to licensed child care facilities. This is one of those gaps that will need to be picked up at a future date. What parent knows if it's licensed or unlicensed? Maybe they don't know that there is that requirement. We've accepted a lot of newcomers into our province who might not know of this licensing scheme, or they might be working through a friend or a family member who doesn't know that they're supposed to be licensed or what the advantages are of being licensed.

This legislation will need to be, using that earlier metaphor, picked up again, rescanned, altered, and repackaged. It's inefficient and half hearted. It deserves to be thorough legislation because this legislation arose from a real-world incident where a tragedy actually occurred, where parents were actually left in the dark and waited for months to understand what happened. From my time working in the construction industry I am well aware that safety regulations are written in blood. Workers deserve to go to work in safe working conditions. Children similarly deserve to be cared for in a safe environment. We shouldn't wait for another tragedy to occur to spur the government to take action to fix what we are working on today.

The UCP government lacks the ability to write policy with foresight. Just look at some of these recent doozies: dropping high school graduation requirements, flag bans that lack clarity and purpose, an Alberta Is Calling campaign with no clue on how to provide services to the people who actually came. Perhaps I shouldn't be surprised that this legislation lacks foresight.

Albertans are grappling with an education system in crisis. Schools built for 500 students with 700 students in them, 50 per cent of the teachers leaving the profession in their first five years, 15-year-old suburbs with no community school: no meaningful progress on any of these hot-button issues. And the UCP government's response? Best I can do is laws about report cards. What? Like, that doesn't meet the moment, unfortunately.

We can do remarkable work here in this Chamber. We have the capacity to care for those who are forgotten, to build a future that works for everyone, and give Albertan taxpayers the value for the taxes they pay. Instead, the top of the to-do list this fall is to lower educational requirements, to require extra flagpoles, and to legislate report cards.

A question was asked of the government this morning at the Alberta School Boards Association event: how do we consult with you? What a peculiar question to be asking. I haven't been an MLA for particularly long, two months and three days. Despite this short tenure, I've met with all four of my school trustees. I've visited every single public school in my riding. I've attended two classes and received feedback from numerous parents. I'm open to consulting with stakeholders, specialists, experts. How is it that the government gets asked: how do we consult with you?

I often discuss with constituents about the delivery of services through the province, but that's actually only one side of the coin. The other side is that the province of Alberta is the largest employer in the province. Are we a good employer? I don't think so. A good employer doesn't remove constitutional rights. A good employer effectively delegates tasks. A good employer creates a work environment that enables thriving careers. Does this legislation make Alberta a better employer? No. Does it make Alberta a better partner in education? No.

The absence of consultation appears to be the hallmark of this government. New electoral maps: no public consultations. Changing graduation requirements: no consultations. Standardizing report cards: no consultations. Bad legislation is expensive, and it's likely to get picked up again and corrected. Educators don't have the luxury of this government's bottomless bag of money to legislate, relegislate, litigate, and then eventually get something over the finish line.

I've been consistently impressed by how our school boards stretch every dollar of funding. They're brilliantly competent people. They're experts in their domain. They don't need the UCP government nanny state to get into their professional domain. I know the constituents of Calgary-Shaw have a few higher priority items, especially in the domain of public education. Bill 35 continues the

disturbing trend of eroding school board autonomy for further provincial control. Provincial control is clearly failing in their own domain. They should be putting their own affairs in order before jumping into the business of other elected officials.

What an unusual side by side of legislation we have here, that both don't adequately address the situation and the legislation addresses a problem that nobody asked to be solved. Both items dealt with in this legislation are aimed at trust. Mandatory reporting builds trust; the report card overhaul erodes trust that the government has the capacity to focus on the issues that matter most.

We have a disproportionately young province, and we must legislate for them. They deserve care, thought, and consideration. I receive report cards from my boys, but that isn't the most important part of their grading. The consultation I get with their teachers is the most important facet. This direct one-to-one with educators lets me know where my children thrive, where they struggle, and where their unique talents and abilities lie.

This mandatory report card business doesn't help any of that. It doesn't reduce class sizes where teachers have to talk with 30, 35, or 40 students about where they thrive and where they succeed. Instead, a standardized report card doesn't touch that issue at all. We're not moving the needle on helping our kids in individual ways. Instead, just another government policy that seems to be honing in on somebody else's domain and expertise without reaching what our students and children really need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms Hayter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 35, Education and Childcare (Securing Parental Involvement) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026. With this bill having two parts, I'm going to talk starting with child care.

This bill I think is coming from a place where, you know, we had a serious incident when a sexual assault occurred in a daycare and parents had not been informed in a timely manner. The daycare reached out to my colleague the MLA for Edmonton-Gold Bar. I appreciate the work and the advocacy and the representation he did for Willowbrae Academy, as the Member for Calgary-Currie has spoken so eloquently about, our colleague and just all of the advocacy and the work he did and how much he kept bringing it to the Chamber and trying to ask the questions and trying to get those answers and, because I have the privilege of sitting in front of the MLA for Edmonton-Gold Bar, getting to see how many times those questions start to get declined. He wasn't allowed to ask any more questions until he apologized to the minister, although he was advocating for Willowbrae Academy.

The parents for Willowbrae Academy continue to advocate for a legislative review of the Early Learning and Child Care Act. As a government in waiting I was very proud that the Alberta NDP provided solutions in March of 2026 in response to this. You know, we made three calls of action to the government to ensure parents were made aware of when serious incidents occurred. One of our requests was a government-led notification system for situations involving serious physical and/or sexual abuse. We asked that there be a creation of a public online portal to access a child care program's full history, and we asked for there to be a mandate of regular review of the Early Learning and Child Care Act to ensure all future gaps can be addressed and updated as required.

5:30

The Alberta NDP and an Alberta NDP government would advocate for better protections for families. We advocated, and the UCP refused. I think that's why I'm a bit disappointed with Bill 35, as this bill does not adequately address issues involving critical incidents and child care programs. The UCP should do everything in their power to protect all children and all families.

This bill needs to go farther. All parents should be notified when critical incidents happen at their child care facilities, not just the parents of the child that's been involved. All children, regardless of the type of child care program they're enrolled in, deserve to be safe, Mr. Speaker, so I'm very interested in Bill 35 as it doesn't also cover unlicensed private day homes. I'm hoping the minister at some point can let us know why he decided that unlicensed day homes would not be required to issue automatic notifications if there was an incident or a critical incident that had occurred.

Why does this bill only apply to licence-based facilities and licensed family day homes? Is it an intention of choice of the UCP to exclude unlicensed private day homes from the scope of this legislation? What consultation was done when that decision was made? I do feel that Bill 35 does not effectively address any of the actions that the Alberta NDP called on to do.

I'll move on to education now. I'm starting to get a lot of e-mails in the inbox around education again. It's been a lot in the last year, a lot of education e-mails coming into my office. It started, you know, a year ago when Albertans watched a historic strike. We watched teachers . . .

The Speaker: Any other speakers?

Ms Hayter: That was two minutes.

The Speaker: Okay. The bell went off too early. You have another 10 minutes. I don't know why the bell went off too early, but it did. Please carry on should you want to.

Ms Hayter: I would love to speak for, well, not 10 minutes. Sorry.

Education. We had this historic strike, and we watched teachers stand up for students' learning. I watched parents; I watched high school students stand up for students' learning. And then in this House we witnessed the UCP government take away teachers' constitutional rights. The UCP government stripped away teachers' rights and forced them back to work a year ago. I'd really like to know where this bill addresses those concerns that were raised a year ago. Bill 35 does nothing to improve learning conditions for students. Teachers and parents have been very clear about the challenges they're facing in the classroom. I'm quite sure that everybody else is receiving just as many e-mails as my office letting us know the needs of the classrooms.

And instead of addressing classroom complexities, we have a government that is wanting to enforce rules for report cards. I have not gotten one e-mail asking for me to come and advocate for report cards changing to standardized report cards. And it's a province-wide standard for report cards. It's going to apply to public, separate, and francophone school boards. I'm hopeful at some point, too, that the minister can clarify why this province-wide standard for report cards is not going to apply to charter schools or private schools. Why is it just for the public education system? Why did the UCP decide to change report card rules in our province? I'd love the minister at some point to address if there was a public demand and who asked for this. Which stakeholder asked for the report card changing?

Bill 35 also lays out new regulations regarding professional development days. They require the training received to be shared to the public within 60 days. Bill 35 also continues a disturbing trend of eroding school board autonomy for further provincial control over the education system. The UCP government is very against overreach. You know, like, they're very against overreach, but now we're seeing democratically elected school boards that – it's not their fault that the education system is in crisis. It is the lack

of provincial funding that our schools are getting and the school boards are getting right now.

I have a bit of a news flash. I don't think, actually, it's going to be that big of a news flash because Albertans are very aware already that the UCP has created a crisis in Alberta public schools. Teachers have been clear that they need more support with their complexity, they need more supports with the class sizes, and instead they're being told to write report cards. I hope that when they report it, they report it on their PD day that they were writing their standardized report cards.

Bill 35 does not address what is needed in education systems. This bill is not the priorities of Albertans. It's not a priority that Albertans have for this government. When the Alberta NDP was in government, I was so proud of all of those funded schools and all of the schools that were modernized. Some of you might remember how many empty fields there had been around our cities when the NDP took in. Lots of promises to build schools, and then they came in and they built 244 schools, and they modernized 244. Over the last seven years the UCP has funded the construction of roughly 100 schools.

The Alberta NDP also built playgrounds at those schools. I had the fortune with my own young children to see what happens when you build an extra school in the community. We had a school that had over 800 children in it. My oldest went to middle school in grade 4 because of the class sizes. Grade 4 children should not be in middle schools, but that was because of overcrowding. Our school council team spent a couple of years raising money for the new playground that was going to be needed at the new school that was being built. They raised enough for that new school, and then the Alberta NDP decided to actually fund playgrounds, so we actually had a playground built, too, on that ground. So we took that money and we put it into the libraries. When I drive by that school, when I drive by that playground, I am so proud of the work that has been done by the Alberta NDP. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. member, I'm happy to listen to you, but unfortunately I'm listening to people from both sides whose turn it is not to speak. Let's hear the hon. member whose turn it is to speak.

Ms Hayter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the day, the Alberta NDP built school grounds and schools and playgrounds, and it was fantastic for our children's learning needs. We also saw last Friday that one of the priorities of this government is more physical education for students. I think that's fantastic as an educational assistant. A great place to go off and burn off steam is to go to the gym, go outside, go play, go take them to the playground. I think it's great if we could maybe look at some playgrounds being built.

I know for myself the families in Ranchlands aren't writing my office asking for standardized report cards right now. They're not asking to know what the teachers are doing for PD days. Guess what they're writing my office for. Advocacy for an accessible playground. Ranchlands school is facing a very significant challenge as their playground is, unfortunately, at the end of the lifespan. Any guesses how much an accessible playground costs these days? It's approximately $500,000, the cost of a house. Ranchlands is an incredibly diverse, beautiful neighbourhood both culturally but also economically. It's something I love about that community, but it's going to make fundraising a challenge.

I'm wondering if the minister can address how realistic, how equitable it is to expect school communities to raise these kind of amounts, particularly in neighbourhoods where families don't have disposable income to contribute. This is an enormous financial responsibility to place on an individual school community, especially when access to safe outdoor play could be available to all children.

5:40

My office has received many letters requesting advocacy on classroom complexities, not asking what Bill 35 is introducing. I appreciate a letter I received from Lisa this week, an Alberta educator with 37 years of teaching experience. She was letting me know why she's finding this legislation very, very deeply concerning. To quote her:

> Unfortunately, I see Bill 35 as another example of a government introducing additional oversight, bureaucracy, and administrative responsibilities into an already overburdened education system rather than addressing the significant challenges of our classrooms.

Her concerns with this legislation are numerous, and I will table her letter tomorrow so everybody can have a read of the wonderful six-page letter she sent with all of her concerns. She has some requests of this government. She's asking the government to consider Bill 35 and recognize that the priorities of Alberta's education system are not adequately being addressed by this legislation. She's specifically requesting that the government reconsider or withdraw the proposed legislation relating to additional report card standardization and ministerial control over assessment. She would like to remove unnecessary public reporting requirements for professional development days and other noninstructional days.

She'd also like the government to reconsider the additional parent complaint management requirements in light of the process that already exists. Just duplication of work. She'd like the respect of the autonomy of the locally elected school boards.

You know, we need to consult meaningfully with Alberta teachers and educational professionals before introducing further legislation affecting their work. She'd like the UCP to direct resources towards smaller class sizes, additional educational assistants, specialized learning supports, and early intervention. Provide clear evidence demonstrating how each proposed change will improve student learning and educational outcomes.

I want to be clear that she supports parental involvement. She supports accountability. She supports transparency and continuous improvement of education. But what she does not support in this legislation is that it creates the appearance of improving education while adding layers of bureaucracy and oversight without addressing the fundamental problems that are affecting our schools.

After 37 years in education she says confidently that the greatest improvements in student learning do not come from additional government paperwork, reporting requirements, or increased scrutiny of teachers.

I think I'm going to end here with a statement from Lisa that I think will resonate with everyone in this Chamber.

The Speaker: You're done.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that members of the current government seem to think that history is something that should be optional, but I will start by quoting a news article from June 2, 2017: province commits $20 million to build school playgrounds; money will come in the form of $250,000 grants available to schools offering kindergarten to grade 6 classes. That was indeed when the NDP was in government, and it was backdated to all new school projects announced 2014 moving forward.

The member is absolutely right that that was a game changer for schools, and that's the kind of stuff that parents are asking for. Indeed, $500,000 is kind of the minimum for a playground, especially one that's seen as inclusive. The days of sand and monkey bars being sufficient certainly don't meet today's needs for what looks like an

inclusive environment. I remember talking to a student in a wheelchair who said that recess was the loneliest time of day because he wasn't able to access a playground. I know that those grants from 2017 moving forward have made a big difference in the lives of children. I want to say that I'm grateful that the UCP didn't cut that program, that they continued on with the program that was announced under Premier Notley in 2017.

I also want to take a few moments to touch on – there are many things in this legislation that I can agree with. In fact, I think I've explained before that my standard is if it doesn't make things worse, I'll probably vote for it. I think I'll probably vote for it, Mr. Speaker, but it certainly could make things far better.

Mr. Stephan: Yay.

Ms Hoffman: Oh, you're going to really like this next part, hon. member.

Bill 35 lays out new rules regarding professional development, and this is what I find incredibly rich. At the same time that the UCP is embroiled in scandal around their own professional development – a booze cruise to Kentucky, for example; a prayer breakfast in Washington, for example – they're telling teachers and all Albertans working in the education system that they need more transparency around their professional development.

I know that most teachers would be very keen to explain to the UCP and anyone else who wants to know exactly what they're doing with these precious days that they have to continue to sharpen their tools and make sure that they're bringing the best learning forward for students. However, we have a Premier in here defending the minister who was in charge of the booze cruise, taking his chief of staff and her spouse, not an employee, not an elected individual, on this trip to Kentucky, where they paid in excess of $5,000 to travel around. The Premier said: oh, that was the most economical way to do it. I beg to differ, Mr. Speaker. I've travelled a reasonable amount, and I know that if you aren't drinking, you can absolutely rent a vehicle and drive yourself from business meeting to business meeting. Even if there are nine people, you could get a van or you could get two cars. Certainly, the Premier is trying to imply that there were only soft drinks on these trips. The most expensive vehicle rental is far less than $5,000. Even taxis would have been much more reasonable. Instead, what they did is they booked something called You Sip, We Drive and used it to do professional development around Kentucky.

Again, I'm relating this to Bill 35 because . . .

Mr. Amery: Point of order.

Ms Hoffman: . . . Bill 35 talks about the PD days.

The Speaker: We have a point of order. The hon. Minister of Justice.

Point of Order
Relevance

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise on 23(h), (i), and (j). The hon. member does not appear to know which bill we are speaking about. I understand that we are speaking about Bill 35. I'd like for you to ask the member to stay on topic and speak about the particular bill. It is not an opportunity to use the platform to speak about anything and everything. We're debating a particular bill here before this Assembly. The good people of Alberta deserve for somebody to be focused on the actual bill in question and not to use it as a personal mission statement and opportunity to speak about everything and anything that the member does not like.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that the minister has not had the opportunity to serve in opposition. We hope he will.

What I will say is that I think we all know that it is you, Mr. Speaker, who affords this opportunity for members and that certainly we may range on topic and may talk about things that are analogous or connected and then bring them back to the bill. I did hear the member specifically refer to the bill, refer to the fact that the bill is talking about creating codes of conduct for teachers and schools and that she's simply discussing and contrasting that with the seeming lack of code of conduct with so many of the government's ministers. I don't think that this is a point of order, but certainly I'm sure that the member will be returning very quickly to connecting it with the bill.

The Speaker: Anything else? Okay.

Well, let me just say that it would appear that all four of us are in agreement: the Deputy Government House Leader and the Deputy Opposition House Leader and the speaker, who was about to rein herself in. Just before she finished, she said: I'm going to get back on topic or related to the bill now. I think we can all agree it's time to get back more directly on the bill, including the speaker, so I just look forward to the speaker doing exactly as she promised before the point of order was called.

Debate Continued

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, Bill 35 does talk about new rules regarding professional development, PD, days for teachers. Now boards will be required to share with the public information about the training received on those PD days within 60 days of that professional development. We've certainly allowed far more than that for the minister who is saying that it was professional development around the Alberta Whisky Act to go to Kentucky and engage in a multiday booze cruise with folks who were both . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I'm just reminding you again. I think your own House leader is right that we give a certain amount of latitude to wander off, but try to keep wandering back if you don't mind.

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely speaking to the context of the bill and specifically the professional development and professional conduct of the bill. Sadly, this certainly feels like a double standard, I think, to a lot of Albertans who certainly want and expect everyone who is on the public purse to act with regard for that public money and demonstrate how it will benefit their work.

The government certainly thinks that that's the case when it comes to teachers and professional development days. I believe teachers have lots of respect for their profession. I've attended many teachers' conventions. I've attended also many representative forums and other conventions for other health professionals. These do provide opportunities for professionals to sharpen their tools, and the government is asking them to report with greater transparency about what they're doing. It would behoove the government of the day, the current government, to do the same with their own conduct, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 35: I'll touch on a couple of the things that – you know what? Actually, I'm just going to say at this point, because I do want to make sure that we use our time most effectively, that the pieces around reporting do not go far enough, Mr. Speaker. The pieces around reporting incidents, the definition between critical incident and incident, I think, is not sufficient. For example, an incident includes a serious injury to a child that occurs while a child is attending a child

care program, and that doesn't require immediate reporting. Critical incident does, which is death. Well, I should hope so. If your child dies, I should hope that everyone is notified immediately that somebody died. But a serious illness or injury also should warrant immediate notification. So while this certainly doesn't go far enough, parts of it, I guess, are an improvement that the government has been pressured into.

5:50

The other piece I want to mention lastly is that the government has recently surveyed teachers about the K to 3 mandatory screening that they imposed on, again, five-, six-, and seven-year-olds. They surveyed those teachers to see if it was providing any benefit, and 75 per cent responded saying no. It would be of great importance for the government to actually look at the legislation, look at the kind of feedback they're getting before they continue to make sweeping changes and to indeed act with the same kind of professionalism they expect teachers to act with.

Mr. Speaker, I think my point has been made.

The Speaker: The hon. minister of hospitals and primary health and surgical services.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to correct the record, while the NDP did put a grant forward for playgrounds, it was $20 million that was used up very, very quickly. If you divide $20 million by $250,000, that's only 80 playgrounds. It was under my leadership and under the UCP that we actually made sure that playgrounds, as they are an essential part of every new school build, actually are covered to $250,000 for every new school build going forward. There is no limit on how many, and it isn't just a grant that ends in time. It goes on forever. Really proud of that because we had some schools that . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. We're going to hear from the . . .

Ms Hoffman: Actually, point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You'll get a chance to speak. I'm on my feet right now. Let the hon. minister speak.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms Hoffman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Ms Hoffman: Relevance to the bill, the exact same standing order that I was just called on.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I've corrected the record.

The Speaker: There we go.

I don't see any more speakers, so that brings us to – does the mover of the bill want to close? Closed.

[Motion carried; Bill 35 read a second time]

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to all members of the Assembly for the robust and engaging debate. It is nearly 6 o'clock, and I want to move that the Assembly be adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:54 p.m.]

Table of Contents

Prayers 2179

Introduction of Visitors 2179

Introduction of Guests 2179

Members' Statements
- Immigration Policies 2180
- Calgary Water System 2180
- Government Policies and Cost of Living 2180
- Investment Attraction and Job Creation 2181
- High School Graduation Requirements 2181
- Hate Crimes 2181

Oral Question Period
- Health Care System 2181
- High School Graduation Requirements 2182, 2183
- Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction Minister's Travel to the U.S. 2183
- Alberta Delegation to U.S. National Prayer Breakfast 2184, 2185
- Optometrists' Scope of Practice 2184
- Oil and Gas Well Liability Management 2185
- Sporting Event Hosting 2186
- iGaming and Digital Asset Promotion 2186
- Economic Development and Job Creation 2187
- Education Policies and Funding 2187
- Health Care Capital Funding 2188
- Sports and Recreation in Red Deer 2188

Introduction of Bills
- Bill 41 Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2) 2189

Tabling Returns and Reports 2189

Tablings to the Clerk 2189

Orders of the Day 2189

Government Bills and Orders
- Second Reading
  - Bill 38 Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 2189
  - Bill 35 Education and Childcare (Securing Parental Involvement) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 2203
- Committee of the Whole
  - Bill 34 Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 2195
  - Bill 36 Children and Family Services (Supporting Alberta Families) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 2198

Alberta Hansard is available online at www.assembly.ab.ca

For inquiries contact:
Editor
Alberta Hansard
3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 St
EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E7
Telephone: 780.427.1875
E-mail: AlbertaHansard@assembly.ab.ca

Published under the Authority of the Speaker
of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta

ISSN 0383-3623