

Province of Alberta

The 31st Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday morning and afternoon, November 19, 2026

Day 70

The Honourable Ric McIver, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 31st Legislature
Second Session

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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)
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Vacant, Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland

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

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

10 a.m. **Thursday, November 19, 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 his government, to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to all in positions of responsibility the guidance of Your spirit. May they never lead the province wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals but, laying aside all private interests and prejudices, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

Hon. members, as it is Thursday, we will now be led in the singing of *God Save the King* by Kalyna Brytan, and I would invite all to participate.

Hon. Members:

God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King!
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the King!

The Speaker: Thank you.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, seated in my gallery today is our anthem singer, also a third-year page, Kalyna Brytan. She enjoys writing poetry, caring for her guinea pig and two dogs, and participating in her school's Med Fields Club and mosaic club. Kalyna has served as a member of the City of Edmonton Youth Council and is an honours student, receiving honours with distinction in high school in 2025. She is interested in pursuing a career as a doctor of obstetrics and gynecology and potentially exploring a career as a politician later in life.

Kalyna is joined by Yuko Takasaki, founder and owner of White Rabbit Ice Cream in Edmonton. Starting with just an ice cream truck in 2021, her company has grown exponentially, now boasting three shops across Edmonton in addition to the beloved truck. Yuko and White Rabbit were featured in *Tomato*'s top 100 in 2024, and they did their part in promoting democratic participation by offering free scoops to anyone who voted. Kalyna has been working summers at White Rabbit since 2025 and has touted Yuko as an incredible boss. Both of you, please rise and accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

A school group this morning, starting with Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 62 students from Parkview school, which is in my riding. Could they please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to introduce to you and through you this year's Grey Cup champion team, the Edmonton Elks.

[Standing ovation]

All right. Let me tell you who they all are. Here today we have head coach Mark Kilam. He's the guy with the fetching, majestic handlebar mustache. We are also joined by several executives and star-studded players, including Elks owner Deb Thompson and her son Cody, president and CEO Chris Morris, general manager Ed Hervey, offensive lineman David Beard – and we have a member here who has a close relationship with him – linebacker Joel Dublanko, defensive lineman Malik Carney, and starting running back Justin Rankin. Congratulations on your hard-fought Grey Cup victory. Thanks to you, Edmonton is once again the city of champions.

Please join me in welcoming the team.

[Standing ovation]

The Speaker: Well, that's a tough act to follow, but Edmonton-South is going to get it done.

Member Hoyle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is actually my great pleasure to introduce my constituent Chris Seggewiss, a high-risk cancer patient who is here with us today. He's a fierce advocate for strong public health care. Chris, please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation.

Mrs. Sawyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you some farmers – Nevin Rosaasen, Kevin Auch, and Scott Keller – from the Alberta Pulse Growers. They had so much fun yesterday that they came back again. They want to remind us that pulses contribute over $6 billion annually to the Canadian economy and are an affordable high-protein option, so please rise and accept the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Member Boparai: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Aashish Kumar, Sumit, and Sikander Singh. They came to Canada as international students and now advocate for their rights. I ask that they rise to receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a good day when family comes to visit us at the Legislature. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislature my wife of 43 years, Barb, and also our son-in-law David Beard, offensive lineman from the Edmonton Elks.

The Speaker: Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you members of Edmonton's cycling community, many of them my constituents and advocates for safer cycling: Heather Young-Leslie, Keith John Heslinga, Mike Sacha, Terrance Skidnuk, Tyrel Brochu, and Aaron Budnick. I thank them for attending and ask them to receive the warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Grande Prairie.

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm excited to introduce to you and through you three young ladies from Grande Prairie: Laura Sikorski, Lydia Jardine, and Annette Peitsch. They are three wonderful real estate agents that are serving the Grande Prairie and the Peace area. I'd ask you to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to rise this morning to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the Legislature six proud advocates for active transportation: Brandon Kwong, Joshua Goldberg, Kevin Wirtanen, Natalie Darrah, Rachel Bembridge, and William Keith. Please rise.

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you members of the Alberta Real Estate Association. Buying a home is a massive investment, and realtors help make that process easier. I'd ask members of the association to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly people from Enserva, Peaskie Minerals, and Streamflow: Stuart Barnable, Zoraver Cheema, Keith Arsenault, and Markus Lemke. I ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

10:10

Members' Statements

Health Care System Capacity

Member Hoyle: Mr. Speaker, behind every health care statistic is a real person, a parent, a grandparent, a neighbour, someone waiting for care, hoping they haven't been forgotten. For seven years the UCP has failed Albertans. Families cannot find doctors, emergency rooms are overwhelmed, and patients wait months for essential treatment. In Edmonton-South this government cancelled our desperately needed hospital after spending approximately $69 million. Now they're offering an urgent care centre as a solution. But an urgent care centre is not a hospital, and Albertans deserve both.

Today my constituent Chris Seggewiss is here in the Assembly. Chris is a high-risk cancer patient who waited 289 days for an urgent urology referral – 289 days. Imagine facing cancer and waiting nearly 10 months for an urgent care referral. Chris is now undergoing radiation treatment, but serious questions remain. Why did he wait so long? Who is accountable? And what guarantees that he will not have to face these delays again if his cancer returns?

Chris, I want you to hear this clearly. You matter. Your life matters, and I will not stop advocating until you get the answers and the care you deserve. I am calling on the health minister to investigate Chris's case, provide answers, and take action to prevent this from happening to others because no Albertan should have to fight for health care while they're fighting for their life. This UCP government must be held accountable.

The Speaker: I didn't interrupt that, but I will remind all members that all comments have to go through the chair and nowhere else.

I'll now recognize the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Federal Firearms Policies

Mrs. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For generations responsible firearms ownership has been part of Alberta's way of life. Farmers, ranchers, hunters, sport shooters, and collectors are not criminals. They're our neighbours, our friends, and our family members. They follow the law, safely store their firearms, and take their responsibilities seriously, and they deserve a government that will stand up for them.

For years Ottawa has pursued firearms policies that punish responsible gun owners while failing to address the criminals who actually make our communities unsafe. The federal government has committed more than $740 million to its so-called firearms buyback program. That money would be far better spent going after gangs, stopping illegal firearms trafficking at our borders, and putting violent criminals behind bars. Enough is enough. Just last week Alberta's government stood up for firearms owners in the Supreme Court of Canada challenge to the firearms ban because the rights and interests of Albertans deserve a strong voice.

Last year our government made it clear that Alberta will not participate in the federal firearms confiscation scheme. We have taken steps to ensure anyone attempting to seize firearms in this province must be properly licensed by Alberta's Chief Firearms Officer, and we've made it clear to law enforcement that resources should be focused where Albertans expect them to be focused: on violent criminals, not law-abiding citizens. Alberta will not stand by while responsible citizens are treated like criminals simply because they lawfully own property that Ottawa has decided it no longer likes. Mr. Speaker, public safety matters, but scapegoating hunters, farmers, sport shooters, and other responsible firearms owners doesn't make our streets safer.

Criminals are the problem. Illegal guns are the problem. Gun trafficking is the problem. Law-abiding Alberta firearms owners are not the problem. And as long as this UCP government is here, Albertans can be confident that their provincial government will stand up and fight for them.

Transgender Awareness Week and Transgender Day of Remembrance

Member Irwin: When I knock on doors and talk to people all over this province, I ask them what issues are top of mind. What do they say? Health care, education, and paying their bills. What don't they say? Transgender people. In fact, that doesn't come up at all. Yet nearly a third of this UCP government's bills last fall focused on attacking the rights of Alberta's trans community. And as we mark Transgender Awareness Week and Transgender Day of Remembrance, I wish I could say that this government has changed. They haven't. This Premier is banning pride flags, and at her party's upcoming AGM, a suite of anti-queer and trans resolutions will be debated.

Will this Premier push back? She has a nonbinary family member, after all. She claims so many times to be a libertarian. "Live and let live," she said. But when it became politically inconvenient, it was easier to target the queer and trans community instead of stand up for them. People will say that I'm brave for speaking out on trans rights. I'm not brave. What's brave is being a trans person in Alberta who shows up every day while knowing the real threats they face for simply existing. No one should have to just be brave. They should be able to live authentically and safely, and I miss the days when people in power understood that.

We saw recently what happened in the United States to politicians who tried to scapegoat the trans community for their own political and moral failings. They lost. So to all Albertans: don't fall into this government's hateful trap. You're better and you're kinder than this Premier wants you to believe.

And to Alberta's trans community: you are seen, you are loved, and we stand with you today and every day.

St. Mary's Hospital

Ms Lovely: Mr. Speaker, St. Mary's hospital plays a vital role for the well-being of those in Camrose and east-central Alberta, providing essential services to tens of thousands of Albertans every year. The hospital serves the local geographic area of Camrose and Camrose county, which together home nearly 30,000 residents. The importance of this facility is reflected in the level of care it delivers. In the most recent reporting year St. Mary's hospital recorded more than 32,000 patient visits and interactions. That includes over 16,700 emergency department visits, nearly 3,000 acute-care discharges, more than 9,600 outpatient visits, and almost 2,800 surgeries performed. These numbers demonstrate just how critical this hospital is not only for the people of Camrose but for families and communities throughout the surrounding area. This is why I'm proud that our government is making significant investments to ensure St. Mary's hospital can continue delivering high-quality care for years to come.

Alberta's government is investing $14.3 million in surgical and clinical infrastructure upgrades at the hospital. This work includes $5 million in operating room upgrade; $1.9 million in pharmacy, compounding infrastructure renovations; and $7 million in HVAC upgrades, supporting three operating rooms. These projects will modernize surgical spaces, improve safety and reliability, strengthen infection prevention and control measures, and ensure safe medication preparation that meets the current clinical and regulatory standards. Just as importantly, these upgrades will help staff continue providing excellent care in an environment equipped to meet today's health care needs. A hospital can't run without committed staff, and for all the hard work they do, I want to give a sincere thank you.

Mr. Speaker, these investments are part of our government's broader commitment to strengthening health care infrastructure across Alberta, particularly in rural and regional communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Women's Entrepreneurship Day

Ms Hayter: "Good women give courage when there is fear, hope when there is despair, and strength when the world is breaking. We aren't here to weather this storm. We're here to change it." These stirring words are from remarkable Canadian businesswoman Arlene Dickinson. They ring truer than ever today as we mark Women's Entrepreneurship Day. It's an opportunity to recognize the women across Alberta who are building businesses, creating jobs, and strengthening their communities in every corner of our province.

From main street storefronts to innovation and technology start-ups, from tourism operators to tradespeople, agricultural producers to professional services, women entrepreneurs are driving Alberta's economy forward. They're creating opportunities, solving problems, and they're taking risks that benefit us all. Women entrepreneurs are paving the way for others, too, mentoring young people, supporting other women-owned businesses, and showing the next generation that leadership, innovation, and entrepreneurship can be for everyone.

We know entrepreneurship isn't easy. Women entrepreneurs are navigating rising costs, higher rents, labour shortages, and more. We need investment certainty, confidence that can plan for the future, attract investment, hire staff, and make long-term decisions without constantly worrying about economic and political instability. They deserve a stable, trustworthy government that will ensure that Alberta can go back to being a place where businesses grow and they thrive. An Alberta NDP government will improve affordability, expand access to capital, and invest and create the conditions that business leaders need to succeed.

Behind every successful business is someone who took a risk, someone who believed in an idea enough to invest their time, savings, and efforts to bring it to life. To Alberta business leaders: thank you for your leadership, your determination, and your contributions to the future of our province.

10:20

Oral Question Period

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

Cabinet Travel Expense Policy

Mr. Nenshi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All week the Premier has been talking about the value of trade missions. I agree that they can be very useful, but the Kentucky trip was not a trade mission in any sense of the word. The minister found time for two meetings with low-level Republicans, no promotional events, no public events, but he also found time to visit 11 bourbon distilleries, and we're asked to believe that he didn't sample any of it and there was nothing in the glasses in the photos. In the middle of a trade war how did this minister's booze cruise actually promote Alberta according to the Premier?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier of Alberta.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's spirits industry generates about $750 million, so we see this as a great opportunity for growth. We know that our incredible farmers export their grains around the world, including to places like Ireland and Scotland, so they can build wonderful malt whisky. We want to be able to have them do that here. Going to Kentucky to see where they do it the best – they have a $10 billion industry. We're expecting us to be able to grow to the same amount, and some of the great insights he got led to the Alberta Whisky Act, which the members opposite supported. That's the benefit.

Mr. Nenshi: But, of course, this trip had nothing to do with any of those things.

Now, on November 5 the Premier said that the government strives to stay within a reasonable amount for travel costs. Indeed, her own travel and expense policy requires expenses to be "necessary and economical." Speaking of trade missions, what would the Premier say is a reasonable amount for a two-kilometre, 10-minute return trip in London, England?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Expenses are incurred. They are reimbursed, and they are disclosed in accordance with the government's travel, meal, and hospitality expenses policy. We have rules in place. If there are any expenses that exceed and need to be reimbursed, they are reimbursed. Spousal travel is reimbursed. There is no alcohol that is allowed to be reimbursed. These are the rules that we have. These are the rules that we follow.

Mr. Nenshi: You know, Mr. Speaker, the mayor of London takes the tube. Even the Prime Minister of England takes the subway sometimes. Double-decker buses: super fun. And if you're in a pinch, even though it costs a few bucks, those black London taxis know how to get through traffic. But on May 1 the Premier spent $2,300 to take one chauffeured trip for 10 minutes to her only meeting of that day. Does she think $2,300 is reasonable and economical for one trip?

The Speaker: I'm not sure the three questions are related, but go ahead, Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, when we have delegations that go, sometimes we rent multiple-passenger vehicles. As a result, sometimes you have a larger cost associated with it than you would with a subway. Sometimes you need to be able to have everybody go together so that you can be at the meetings together. That's sort of a practical reality of how you do travel. The member opposite did this kind of travel when he went to China. He did this kind of travel when he was hosted by the Rockefellers and went to Italy. He understands that this is what happens on trade missions.

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

Mr. Nenshi: Yet the very next day it was okay for the Premier's entourage to take taxis to the airport.

Food Prices and Affordability

Mr. Nenshi: It's been a year since the Premier's private Saudi jets and her seven-star hotels that we still don't know everything about. It's been six months since the $2,300 limo trip for one meeting of one day, and that was at the exact moment that this Premier was refusing to reduce the gas tax to bring relief to every single Albertan. Last week the Premier told us all that there is no crisis for grocery prices or food insecurity. How does this Premier, with her extravagant, taxpayer-funded lifestyle, look Albertans in the face?

The Speaker: Premier, if you choose, go ahead.

Ms Smith: I have no idea what this member opposite is talking about, Mr. Speaker. He says things and attributes them to me. What I can tell the member opposite is that he should go to the Tsuut'ina Costco in Calgary because gas prices are now below a buck a litre. We are among the lowest in the country. If you were to fill up in Vancouver or St. John's, Newfoundland, if you drive an F-150, you'd be paying $50 to $100 more per fill. That's the Alberta advantage, and that's how we're supporting regular taxpayers.

Mr. Nenshi: The Premier, with her seven-star, taxpayer-funded lifestyle, told Albertans to go shop at pocket stores because they were so much cheaper. So we did. The prices at the Loblaws pocket store she told us to go to in downtown Calgary were the same or more expensive than suburban stores. So Loblaws – big surprise – lied to her. Does the Premier still believe that getting all her intel from foreign billionaires, lobbyists, and Twitter is a good idea?

Ms Smith: Oh, my goodness, Mr. Speaker. Prior to me meeting with Loblaws, he said that I wasn't meeting with Loblaws. I met with Loblaws. Now he's saying: why are you meeting with Loblaws? The member opposite: I mean, he doesn't meet with anybody. If he wanted to meet and find out how to do things, he would have taken a trip up to Edmonton to find out how EPCOR managed their water system. They don't have leaks. They don't have broken pipes. They actually have an accountability process where they reinvest in their pipelines. That's why you need to talk to experts. That's what I do. That member opposite has proven he doesn't.

Mr. Nenshi: Ground beef: $7.99 a pound, same at both stores. No Name eggs, No Name chips: still up 50 per cent, though 2 cents cheaper than Superstore, same at both stores. A dozen eggs in the northeast: $5.25. At the Premier's favourite pocket store that Galen Weston told her to shop at: $7.09, more expensive. The minister of service Alberta, the same guy who was supposed to shake down the grocers and reduce prices – how's that working?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, the German discount model has to have a number of different stores so that you end up with more competition so that people have choice. They're very early stages in rolling the model out. They have 48 additional stores that they'll be rolling out over the course of the next year, including several in Alberta, and that's the way that you reduce prices. You make sure that there are more options. You allow for large companies to leverage their buying power. It certainly makes a lot more sense than government-owned grocery stores, what his opposition is asking for. [interjections]

The Speaker: Are we done? Okay.

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

Mr. Nenshi: I look forward to the minister's chauffeured limos to Lidl in Germany for his next fact-finding trip.

High School Graduation Requirements

Mr. Nenshi: I'm going to take a piece from the Premier and quote from something I read on Twitter.

> A report . . . showed that a quarter of post-secondary graduates, don't have adequate reading and math skills. In a fast-paced world and changing economy, it's critical that our graduates have mastery over [these] 'basic skills.'

I agree. That's what the minister of education said. Now he's changed his mind and says that fundamental skills don't matter as long as you can hold a tool. Why the change?

Ms Smith: He continues his war on tradespeople, Mr. Speaker. That used to be a party that represented blue-collar workers. Now all they do is represent people who can flash equity cards and make sure that they use the right pronouns. That seems to be their priority. We're the ones who care most about what real people are talking about. We're the ones who care about what blue-collar workers are able to do. We're the ones who care about them having a good education so they can go on to having a reasonable lifestyle so they can buy a home, so they can support a family, so they can live an independent life. That's what it's about. [interjections]

The Speaker: There's quite a bit of crosstalk from both sides. The person recognized that we should hear from right now is the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Nenshi: Free advice: the Premier might want to look at the comments under some of her posts or talk to a normal Albertan to see how badly her communications strategy is failing. Here's the thing. For careers in the trades we know that math, science, and English are mandatory. Yesterday I met with workers representing allied health professions, great jobs, some of which require a pretty quick designation or certificate but all of which require math, science, and English. School boards say that the Friday the 13th change will lead to more students taking four or five years. So one more time: who asked for this?

The Speaker: Just 35 seconds is all we get.

We didn't do a great job of listening to the question. Maybe we'll do a better job of listening to the answer.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, dual credit programming for trades-focused students has gone up from 11,000 to 18,000 in the time that we've been in. Registered apprenticeships have doubled, increasing from 40,000 to 81,000. What we heard from students is that the thing that would prepare them most is learning about what kind of careers and professions are available earlier in their career, going

back to grade 7 and ensuring that in career and life management skills they're also taught financial literacy, which they will have mandatory courses going all the way up to grade 12. That is what is going to prepare our young people for the jobs of the future, giving them more time to pursue these great careers.

10:30

Mr. Nenshi: Of course, no one believes that.

The Premier quoted from radio interviews with William Aberhart high school students thinking that was their consultation. I heard that interview, and in fact they didn't quote the very first students in that interview who said that social studies 30 is the most important course because it helps you deal with propaganda. That's what this government is really about. They don't want students or anyone to know who they are or what they're really about. This has precisely zero support in Alberta. Why are we leaving our students in the dark this way?

The Speaker: The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Students are going to be able to take whatever courses appeal to them. They are still going to be able to take social 30 if they choose to. They'll be able to take math 30 if they choose to. They'll be able to take English 30 if they choose to. The point is that we need to make sure all kids get a meaningful education that is in line with their areas of skills and experience and interests. We have too many kids who are dropping out of school because they feel it's not relevant to them. We have too many kids who are entering the workforce immediately without having the skills to go on to their first job. We're going to fix that.

The Speaker: The next set of questions belongs to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: The Premier and education minister think Alberta students don't need math, science, or English to go into the trades. Interesting, because here are the recommended high school courses for a student who wants to be a carpenter, a bricklayer, a welder, or an ironworker: English 30, math 30, and 10 science credits. To be a heavy equipment technician, gas fitter, plumber, or electrician: English 30, math 30, and 15 science credits. Guess who's making these recommendations? It's the government of Alberta, from their own tradesecrets apprenticeship and industry training website posted two months ago. Hmm. Did the minister of education talk to his own government before he decided to lower high school graduation requirements?

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

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, students will still be able to take all of the courses that they need to depending on their specific pathway. If they intend to pursue programming in university and need 30-level English or social studies, they'll be able to do that. If they need 20- or 30-level math or science programs for a particular trade pathway or another pathway, they'll be able to do that. The changes that we're making here will give students more choice. The NDP is fundamentally opposed to choice. They think they know better, but I'm happy to listen to students all day and give them the choices that they need. [interjections]

The Speaker: I'm sure everybody that's talking now will get recognized by their House leader to have a question, but right now we're with Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: The government's tradesecrets website is the result of a joint partnership with industry, so industry is also recommending that a student interested in becoming an instrumentation and control technician should complete English 30, math 30, physics 30, and chemistry 30. Oh, and if a student wants to go into the aviation program at Mount Royal, well, they can't even apply unless they've completed English 30 and math 30. The UCP didn't consult with industry, didn't consult with itself, and didn't consult with postsecondaries before lowering high school graduation requirements, so which jobs exactly does the UCP think they're preparing our kids for? It's not the trades.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I just mentioned, students will have full discretion to take all of the required courses that they need for whatever pathway it is that they choose. If they choose a pathway in the trades, those courses are there. They can take them. If they choose a university pathway, those courses are there. They'll take them. Again, the NDP just doesn't want to give students choice. They think that they know best. They think that, and they want to be able to tell students what they should do. We believe in freedom of choice. We believe in giving students the flexibility . . . [interjections] And you see how upset they get when we mention it because they disagree and they don't want students to choose.

Ms Pancholi: You know, Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to do the same level of vigorous consultation the minister did with students, so I asked my teenage son and his two friends, and they agreed that more gym and less English would be awesome. I mean, they also think they should get unlimited screen time, high school credits for playing video games, and laundry should be optional, so I guess it's up to me to be the grown-up and actually do what's best for them and their future. Too bad there aren't any grown-ups in the UCP. Can the minister tell us if he actually spoke to any adults before he decided to limit the options our kids will have in their future?

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, there you have it, Mr. Speaker. How incredibly patronizing of the NDP. I'm happy to listen to our young adults. I'm happy to take direction from them. I'm happy to give them more choice. The NDP think that they know best, and this is completely on brand with the NDP because they want to use our students and make them agents of change. They want to make sure that they learn a particular world view. They tried to do it when they were in government, and we stopped them. Now they're upset that we're bringing more choice.

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

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

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before the minister of service Alberta arrived in Kentucky, he told the Premier that he would visit two or three distilleries for $1,000 a person. They spent $5,400 and let his chief of staff's husband tag along on the taxpayer dime. Why did the service Alberta minister tell the Premier that his booze cruise trip would only cost $2,000 when he spent $5,400?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, the NDP continues to be not forthright with Albertans. Not a single dime was used of taxpayer money to spend and pay for the travel of the chief of staff's husband on this trip. End of story. What the NDP fails to understand is the value of selling Alberta in foreign markets and better understanding how other places do things like a whisky trail, something we passed a law on and we're

going to try to emulate here because it's a multibillion-dollar business we would love to have right here in Alberta.

Mr. Sabir: Given that the government updated the travel and expense disclosure policy last year to explicitly require individual expenses to be attributed to that individual and given that the You Sip, We Drive booze cruise did not have a single receipt for Mr. Gary Davidson and given that after the minister's chief of staff edited the passenger list, her own husband's expenses were folded into government's, will the Minister of Finance admit his colleague broke the law?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, what we will admit on this side is that we will continue to sell Alberta and the advantages we have in this province to other jurisdictions. We will also continue to learn from other jurisdictions to better understand how we could take their success and implement it here. Everything was done according to the Auditor General requirements. It's gone through the proper processes. The Minister of Finance has already confirmed that as well. The members opposite need to quit fearmongering and quit misleading the public because what they're saying is inaccurate. [interjections]

The Speaker: You had quite a few chances earlier, but . . .
The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Given the minister never informed the Premier's office that he would be bringing along his staffer's husband, a rejected UCP candidate, and given that the Premier's office signed off on a 2 per cent trip and given that no amended request was ever filed when the chief of staff's husband joined, which is what the government's own policy requires, will the Minister of Finance ensure every dollar of Gary Davidson's cost is repaid to Albertans and tell us when?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, spouses, if they join members or staff on the trip, have to pay all of their costs. That's why there's no reimbursement, because there was nothing expensed by the member or, rather, by the member's chief of staff's husband. What I can tell you is that the members opposite are clearly indicating how they would govern if they were on this side of the House. They would never go into other markets, they would never sell the province of Alberta to other jurisdictions, and we've already seen this playbook between 2015 and 2019. They drove businesses away, and I can guarantee you they'll do it again.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

10:40 Skilled Labour Supply

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the leader opposite seems to think that skilled trades are jobs of the past, our government knows they are the jobs of today and jobs of the future. As Alberta continues to attract major investments in energy, manufacturing, construction, and emerging industries, having a pipeline of skilled workers has never been more important. To our government: what is our province doing to expand apprenticeship training opportunities and help more Albertans pursue careers in the skilled trades?

The Speaker: The minister of postsecondary education.

Mr. McDougall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Skilled trades are a major driver of Alberta's economy, and we are investing where it counts. We modernized the system with the Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act, and this year we are funding more than 33,000 apprenticeship seats, up from fewer than 24,000 in 2021. That's a 38 per cent increase. We've also committed $384 million to NAIT's advanced skills centre, which will support 5,500 more apprentices each and every year. While the members opposite call these jobs of the past, we are building the jobs of the future.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Yao: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for that answer. Given that Alberta continues to need skilled trades professionals, including electricians, welders, heavy equipment operators, technicians, carpenters, and plumbers, to support this province's growing economy and given that more and more Albertans are choosing rewarding careers in the skilled trades, can the minister update this House on apprenticeship enrolment and what our government is doing to support the next generation of skilled trade workers?

Mr. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, more Albertans are choosing the trades, and the numbers show it. Registered apprenticeships have more than doubled since 2021, from about 39,500 to more than 81,000 last year, an all-time high. In '24-25 over 7,000 high school students were enrolled in the registered apprenticeship program, earning credit towards both their diploma and their trade, and 96 per cent of apprenticeship graduates are employed. We are giving the next generation a clear path to rewarding careers.

The Speaker: Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those are phenomenal numbers that the minister just expressed.

Given that Alberta's construction sector employs more than a quarter million Albertans and is going to require another 59,000 additional skilled workers over the next decade and given that introducing young Albertans to hands-on learning experiences can help spark interest in rewarding careers in the skilled trades, can the minister share how initiatives like the Alberta trades discovery centre are helping students to explore skilled trade careers and build our province's future workforce?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. McDougall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is right. The industrial commercial construction sector will need over 59,000 additional workers in the next decade. That is why we support partners like Careers and Skills Canada Alberta and projects like Telus's Spark blueprint and why Alberta's 2026 commits $51.9 million over three years to partners that promote the trades. Add the $6 million industry-led Alberta trades discovery centre to be opened next year, and the jobs of the future start with a student discovering the trades today.

Alberta Delegation to U.S. National Prayer Breakfast

Ms Hoffman: The government might quibble about who the Minister of Municipal Affairs met with in Washington, but it really doesn't matter because American voters made sure that MAGA Trump supporters aren't there anymore. Albertans are still in the dark about his junket, though. Last year the minister posted his Washington receipts. This year he only shared his taxi receipts. Where are the rest? Who paid? And why did the husband of the service Alberta chief of staff come along on that trip, that didn't even include that minister?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Williams: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've said in the past, we are firm about building relationships with America on both sides of the aisle, when we went to Washington, DC, through faith and cultural connections as we're in the middle of a trade dispute, and these kinds of relationships are important. As a minister and a member of caucus I travel, of course, and am compensated that way. Government staff, obviously, travelled to support the ministers in the work that we did. We met with dozens of officials and continue to build those relationships. These relationships are essential for smoothing out a trade dispute, and Alberta will continue to advocate for economic interests.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Given that the question was "Who paid?" and given that the government's own policy requires a news release at least 24 hours before any minister travels abroad, listing everyone that's in that delegation, but given that no release was issued for the minister's trip in February to Washington, why didn't the minister tell Albertans that he was going to Washington and who was going with him? Is it government policy now to hide junket expenses when Gary Davidson is included?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, I surely didn't hear a question there about government policy, but I am happy to reaffirm our position as a government that will continue to attract investment in foreign markets, and that is seeing real results. For example, like we saw De Havilland Field, who recently announced that they're going to be setting up a new manufacturing facility for their water bombers. And who's going to build that? Those archaic jobs that the Leader of the Opposition talked about, those jobs of the past. The trades are going to build them, and we're going to help support them through their educational process, right through high school all the way through postsecondary. That's what we're doing, focused on the jobs.

Ms Hoffman: Well, given that service Alberta paid more than $4,400 to send its minister's chief of staff to Washington on that junket and her own minister didn't even attend and given that the Minister of Municipal Affairs already paid for a staffer from the Finance minister's office to accompany him and given that Albertans deserve transparency, how does the government justify this waste of money? And who paid for her husband, a failed UCP candidate, an antivax conspiracy pusher, on the official Alberta delegation? Is this government policy?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, the individual in question paid for himself. Please let that resonate for the members opposite and whoever is writing their questions. The individual in question paid for himself. What I can also say is that we engage with members on both sides of the aisle in the United States. They are our largest trading partner, and instead of insulting the United States, like the Leader of the Opposition continues to do, we continue to meet with them, like when Adam Schiff, Senator from California, was here just the other day. We're not going to stop building relationships with people in the United States.

The Speaker: The next question goes to the hon. Member for Edmonton-South West.

AI Data Centre Projects

Mr. Ip: Mr. Speaker, this government didn't consult Albertans on AI data centres before rolling out their plan. Shocked by the backlash, the UCP arranged hasty public consultations to placate upset Albertans. Now the UCP is walking back their full promotion of AI data centres, rearranging the deck chairs with no meaningful impact. Albertans do not trust this government to prioritize their needs over those of American tech billionaires. Will this minister admit that they don't intend to take any meaningful action to actually address Albertans' concerns?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Technology and Innovation.

Mr. Glubish: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No meaningful impact? The members opposite just demonstrated they have no idea what they're talking about. We have now implemented, with this legislation that we have proposed, the strongest, highest standards in all of North America for what responsible AI data centre development looks like. We now have setbacks of 600 metres. We now are protecting over 14 million acres of prime agricultural land. What are they doing? We are now also implementing standards on water consumption that will virtually eliminate the water consumed for any cooling systems. Evaporative watering will be against the law.

Mr. Ip: Given that the minister's too-little-too-late regulations barely touch on water usage standards, given that reports indicate data centres will cause a sharp increase in power prices in the coming years, costs which will fall on the average Albertan already struggling with the affordability crisis, and given that this government's new bill on AI data centres provides few details on actual regulatory standards on water and electricity, will the minister tell us when he might get around to actually regulating AI data centres?

Mr. Glubish: Mr. Speaker, if that member had ever been in government, he would understand that you start with legislation and then you follow it up with the supporting regulations. Thank goodness he's not in government. The legislation we're bringing forward implements water standards that will ensure that evaporative cooling can never happen in this province. It will be against the law because we heard clearly from Albertans that they want to protect their water. Instead, they will have to use the best available technology for liquid cooling, closed-loop systems that do not consume water. The final standards will be in the regulations, and we're confident we're on the right . . .

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

10:50

Mr. Ip: Mr. Speaker, given that really none of this is in legislation and given that the minister's proposed legislation only applies to new projects, not those that have already been or are near approval, and given that the minister himself said that only 30 per cent of the nearly 70 data centre projects proposed will be affected by the new regulations, will the minister agree that they have not done nearly enough to address the growing concerns Albertans have with this unchecked explosion in AI data centre building, and will he and the Premier do the responsible thing and call for a pause today?

Mr. Glubish: Mr. Speaker, the responsible thing to do is to define the standards of what responsible development looks like instead of doing what the NDP would do, which is what they did for 10 years supporting Justin Trudeau's crusade to leave Alberta's oil and gas in the ground, devastating our economy, devastating jobs for Albertans. They would do the same thing to AI data centres, which are critical infrastructure for the economy of the future. Instead, we're taking a different approach. We're defining the standards that are the best in North America. Only responsible projects will proceed. Those that are not responsible will never proceed.

The Speaker: The next question goes to the hon. Member for Airdrie-East.

Road Construction in Rocky View County

Ms Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's highways are essential to connecting our communities and moving people and goods safely. Highway 2 is critical to the people of Airdrie and the businesses in Balzac, serving as an important high-load corridor. However, rapid regional growth continues to contribute to severe traffic congestion at key points in this area. Can the Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors please provide this Assembly with an update on when the construction for the new interchange on highways 2 and 566 will begin as well as maybe an expansion of additional lanes on highway 2?

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

Mr. Dreeshen: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Member for Airdrie-East for her advocacy for this project. For years she's been on this government to make sure that it can get the design, engineering, and construction dollars, and I'm happy to say that it's working. We, obviously, have construction that could start next summer on this project. Again, I'd like to thank the member for her strong advocacy to make sure this project can be a reality and can just improve the quality of life for Albertans in her area.

The Speaker: Airdrie-East.

Ms Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that highway 22 and highway 567 is an important intersection for residents, commercial traffic, and visitors travelling to and from our mountain region and given that many motorists that have raised concerns about navigating the intersection have asked for a roundabout to alleviate these concerns, to the same minister: what steps is our government taking to improve the intersection at highways 22 and 567 so that drivers can navigate the intersection more safely?

The Speaker: The hon. the minister.

Mr. Dreeshen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to say that the detailed design continues to advance on this project as well, and we're hoping to see that the tender would go out in early 2027 next year and that construction would begin summer of next year. Obviously, the right-of-way acquisition and utility relocations are the difficult parts, when you start to dig underground and work on water pipes, which I think the NDP leader probably knows all too well by now, hopefully, but we're going to be working on this project to make sure that it can get completed on time and on budget.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Great news.

Given that the traffic on highway 2 frequently slows as vehicles approach and access the weigh station between Airdrie and Balzac, creating disruptions to traffic flow and increasing the risks of collisions, and given that major provincial transportation infrastructure must balance commercial vehicle requirements with the safe and efficient movement of all motorists and given that the city of Airdrie has also asked that this weigh station be moved, is the minister considering moving this weigh station to improve safety for drivers along this corridor?

Mr. Dreeshen: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are. Obviously, we're looking at a possibility of a new alignment of highway 2, which would then have the weigh station go around the city of Airdrie, which would clean up a lot of congestion in that very important stretch between Airdrie and Calgary, but we are working with municipalities to make sure that we can build infrastructure that improves quality of life for all Albertans, and we'll continue to do that as a government because it's the right thing to do.

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

Continuing Care System

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The UCP has promised to update the funding model for continuing care since they were elected back in 2019. Several ministers later, along with reshuffling areas of responsibility, we still do not have an updated funding model. Providers are running huge deficits, and residents are not receiving the level of care needed. When will the minister of assisted living provide the needed funding for the model update?

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

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have taken a responsible step forward. We have increased our funding for continuing care. We know that seniors all across our province need to be taken care of well, no matter where they live in this province, no matter to what age they live in this province or what ailments they may face. We are funding this to record levels. We put more money in continuing care to build more spaces. We continue to update and increase our funding for operations and care. We're doing the responsible thing and taking care of our seniors.

Ms Sigurdson: Given that I tabled a report earlier this fall by Chris Ryan, a resident in a continuing care facility, entitled Lower Standards than Prison, detailing the significant issues in his facility, and given this report details lack of support for physical activity, poor food quality, and lack of support for personal hygiene, what's the Minister of Assisted Living and Social Services doing to address these issues?

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

Mr. Neudorf: Again, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've invested more than $5.3 billion for assisted living in Alberta. That's an increase of $669 million, or 15 per cent, this year alone. We are making sure we put our money where our mouth is. We are looking through these facilities all across the province. We are bringing the level up to the highest level of care across all of Canada. We continue to advocate and take care of our seniors. We're doing the responsible thing by investing wisely, not just for today but for tomorrow.

Ms Sigurdson: Given that the last report regarding the Protection for Persons in Care Act identified that founded complaints had tripled under the UCP watch, demonstrating that Alberta's continuing care system is in crisis, and given this means that issues of uncleanliness, unresolved odours, rodent droppings, inadequate personal hygiene support, unhealthy food, and unchecked outbreaks of mould in commercial kitchens continue due to lack of enforcement of standards, why is the minister not ensuring seniors are living in healthy environments within the continuing care system?

Mr. Neudorf: Mr. Speaker, in fact, we've rolled out new compliance and licensing monitoring regime issues and standards all across the province. In fact, for the first time ever in Alberta's history our government, this ministry, has put out a fine for not reaching the level of care that we expect. We have done enforcement that no other government in the history of Alberta has done. We've set a new standard. We continue to monitor all of our sites and facilities. We investigate all complaints. We are seeking to have the highest level of service all across Canada, and we're very proud to serve our Albertan seniors.

The Speaker: The next set of questions belongs to the hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Families in Grande Prairie work hard for their money. They have groceries to buy, mortgages to pay, and kids to raise. They expect the province to plan ahead with the same care they bring to their own household budgets. Given that Albertans expect their government to address today's needs while also saving for the future, can the Minister of Finance directly compare how our United Conservative government and the previous NDP government managed the heritage fund?

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

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP pillaged the heritage fund when they were on this side of the aisle, stealing from our grandchildren in the future. This government, though, has doubled the heritage savings trust fund since they came into power, up 80 per cent in the last five years alone . . .

An Hon. Member: Point of order.

Mr. Nixon: . . . a year ahead of our goal to get to $35 billion and years ahead of our goal to get to $250 billion to take Alberta off the resource roller coaster and secure our children's and our grandchildren's future in this great province. That's this side of the House's legacy. Their side is pillaging it.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 10:59.
The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Parents who put money aside for their children know that savings need time to grow. Given that under the spendthrifty NDP their government continued transferring heritage fund earnings into general revenue, including $563 million in 2018 to 2019 alone, and once those earnings left the fund, they could no longer earn any interest, to the Minister of Finance: how does keeping those earnings in the fund strengthen Alberta's finances and protect essential services in the future for our kids and future generations?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP pillaging the heritage savings trust fund resulted in six consecutive credit downgrades underneath their leadership, not one balanced budget, and almost bankrupting the province of Alberta. This side of the Legislature now has the heritage savings trust fund doubled since we came into power, up 80 per cent under this current Premier's leadership and well on its way to $250 billion, which, again, will secure the future of our children and grandchildren in this province for generations to come, something everybody should be excited about, and the NDP is still not apologizing.

11:00

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe every parent wants to leave their children with opportunity, a good job, a home of their own, and a future they can afford, and given that Albertans know from their household budgets that borrowing comes with interest payments, every dollar spent servicing debt is a dollar that cannot go toward the services and their own personal budget that families count on, to the Minister of Finance: how will our spending decisions and heritage fund strategy give our kids and the next generation more opportunities?

Mr. Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the NDP wanted to sell out our kids' birthrights by giving away all of our resource revenues to Ottawa and stopping the oil and gas industry. We went a different way. We went with Peter Lougheed's legacy, making sure that we invest in the heritage savings trust fund now to be able to secure our future, to be able to make sure that the tax advantage that we enjoy as Albertans our kids and grandchildren will be able to enjoy going forward. That is the contrast between this side of the House and that side of the House. We're able to pay our bills now, save for the future, and secure the province's future. They pillaged things like the heritage savings trust fund and almost bankrupted Alberta.

Funding for Calgary Schools

Member Campbell: Forty high school students in a single class, 27 grade 1 students with no educational assistant, four educational assistants to support 750 students, two classes being conducted simultaneously in a single library, storage closets converted to classrooms, gymnasiums closed off for athletics and converted to classrooms, students sharing desks as there aren't enough in the school: these are the facts that I've heard from parents and teachers in south Calgary. Does the minister think this is what success in Alberta education is supposed to look like?

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

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's precisely why we're moving forward with a number of projects in the member's riding, including a new K to 9 Catholic school in Walden, a new elementary school also in Walden, another junior high school in Legacy. It's also why we've completed two projects in the member's riding under the schools now program, particularly a new K to 6 and junior high complex in south Calgary and the Legacy K to 9 school. These schools will add significant capacity to help alleviate these concerns.

Member Campbell: Given that children continue to struggle to learn under this UCP government and given this government is asking educators to teach students in numbers that disadvantage their ability to teach and given that teachers cannot instruct while being kicked and punched by students with high needs who continue to go unsupported because of this government's cuts and given that an educational assistant from Calgary-Shaw wrote to my office saying, quote, there are so many kids that need the help, but we can't help them, unquote, does the minister think these are appropriate working conditions for Alberta's educators? [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, we can give each other English lessons later. For now the minister of education has the chance to speak.

Mr. Nicolaides: Indeed, Mr. Speaker. Over the last four years our education system has felt the pressure of 90,000 additional students, and that's precisely why we've instituted a number of significant changes. I mentioned some of the school projects already that are under way as part of the schools now program. In addition to that, we've also successfully hired 2,100 net new teachers, over 1,000 net new EAs, and, in addition, filled approximately 80 per cent of the 700 complexity teams that we have earmarked. This additional staff will help address some of these concerns, but there's more work to do.

Member Campbell: Given that instead of building schools in south Calgary, the UCP is micromanaging the number of flags schools should fly and given that school boards warned the minister that every extra mandatory flagpole will cost tens of thousands of dollars that should be going to crowded classrooms instead and given that the schools right next to the Premier and education minister's constituency offices only have one flagpole, why are the Premier and education minister oblivious to the infrastructure of the schools beside their workplaces, let alone the rest of the province?

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we're already moving forward with a number of school projects in the member's riding, and I just want to take the opportunity to remind the member that when they were in office, when the NDP was in office, the Calgary board of education asked for additional schools in the member's riding, and the NDP government said no and declined to fund that project. However, when it was put back on the capital list, our government funded it and is moving it forward. I'm proud to stand by our record in contrast to the NDP's when it comes to building schools in south Calgary.

The Speaker: The next question belongs to the hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis.

Eastern Slopes Protection

Dr. Elmeligi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The water of the Rocky Mountains trickles down creeks, into streams, and into the rivers of the eastern slopes. That feeds us, our livestock, our crops, our wildlife, and our land. That water is naturally stored by wetlands and trees that guard our communities from flooding and drought, and it is the reason why government policy, planning, and legislation must and always has protected our water above all else. Why won't the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas implement those policies and prioritize the protection of Alberta's headwaters?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment and Protected Areas.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can tell the member that we are doing everything to make sure that the water coming out of the eastern slopes is the most protected water in the world. We have the most protected and monitored water on the planet. We have 80 in that area that she's talking about to be able to monitor the water that's coming out of the eastern slopes. I can tell the member that when people talk about coming and building businesses here, they come here because we have the best water quality in the world and they know that.

An Hon. Member: They lead into the Athabasca delta.

The Speaker: Were you recognized? I don't think so, but Banff-Kananaskis was.

Dr. Elmeligi: Well, given that this government actually removed water monitoring stations upstream from the Oldman dam, that answer is a bit rich.

This government's environmental plan is endless reports and constant international trips instead of protecting our headwaters. Given Albertans have been camped out for eight weeks in the southeastern slopes to protect the last vestiges of Alberta's old-growth forests, including endangered whitebark pine, from clear-cutting and given this logging will also destroy a section of well-loved community Nordic ski trails and given the minister of forestry still hasn't met with any Albertans to try to negotiate a solution, why is the minister more focused on travelling to sell hunting tags than solving real problems right here at home?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Forestry and Parks.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Alberta has a world-leading regulatory framework for forest management, and that promotes a balance of economic activity, environmental sustainability, traditional land use, and recreation. This framework is designed to limit and mitigate impact on the overall forest ecosystem, including endangered species and water resources. When we look at some of the work that we're doing on the landscape right now, some of it is part of the community hazardous fuel reduction program, done to protect communities and protect Albertans. We have members opposite that clearly aren't concerned about our resources, they're not concerned about our communities, they're not concerned about jobs, and they're not concerned about the environment either. They're here to do clickbait Facebook posts.

Dr. Elmeligi: Given this government is prioritizing Australian coal mining billionaires instead of Albertans who depend on keeping our headwaters safe, given Crowsnest Lake fish are no longer edible because of pollution and ranchers don't have enough water for their cows by August, given that spring runoff now floods our flatlands because there aren't enough wetlands and forests to store the water, given the government would rather prioritize foreign mining corporations than Albertans' drinking water, when will the ministers realize that you can't eat coal or drink contaminated water?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, I would think the last thing these folks want to talk about is water. Water is something that's managed, something that's very important. I've mentioned in this House that water is life. But the leader of the leaky pipe committee here has indicated that he can't control water and he can't manage water. I would think that the last thing Albertans want is him doing anything with water.

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

11:10

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 11:10.

Immigration Policies

Mr. Gurtej Brar: One month ago, Mr. Speaker, Calgary and Edmonton voted against the UCP's attack on new Canadians. This UCP government started the Alberta Is Calling campaign to double our population. This Premier's constantly changing views on immigration are not helpful for businesses. Will the Premier hit the brakes and talk to businesses and community leaders before making sudden changes on immigration?

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

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the member for a very important question and one that we take very seriously, particularly now as we've seen the results of the referendum, understanding that we need to move forward cautiously but understanding as well that the damage done after years of poor immigration from the federal government has caused havoc in our province. It's impossible to keep up with the housing builds, infrastructure, and things like health care. That is why we're focusing on economic migration that meets the demands of industry going forward. I'll have more to say in the next answer.

Mr. Gurtej Brar: Given that the economic development officer for the city of Brooks warned that, quote, anything that might restrict immigration to our community would not be a benefit, unquote, and given that the Premier's own riding depends on targeted immigration programs to fill key job openings and given that thousands of newcomers in Brooks have started families and businesses to build their lives, will the Premier listen to her own constituents and end her attack on new immigrants?

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

Mr. Schow: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I totally disagree with the way the member opposite has framed this question. The Premier and myself and members of the government caucus have been very clear that we want to make sure that Albertans have first crack at Alberta jobs and that we can have immigration in a stable, sustainable manner that makes sure that youth have opportunities for employment and that they can get the skills they need to get that job that comes after their first and the second and the third and the fourth and so on. It is important that we support Albertans in their employment path. That's why we're working with the minister of education and the minister of postsecondary . . .

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

Mr. Gurtej Brar: Given that the Calgary Chamber of commerce and the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta have warned that the referendum would damage our economy and given that even a business advocacy organization led by the Premier's former principal secretary is calling on the Premier to pause and consult before making changes to immigration or cutting service for new residents in Alberta, will the Premier listen to the business community and hit the pause on these high-risk changes?

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, the members opposite and members of the government caucus have both raised the alarm about youth unemployment, but the members opposite refuse to acknowledge the root problem, and that is that the federal government for years has mismanaged immigration to the point where it is unsustainable into our province. Of course, we're an attractive destination to work and we continue to press that, but it has to be done sustainably, and that's why we want the skills from outside of the country to come here to help build things like De Havilland Field, Dow Chemical, and other major projects that this government has attracted and they would drive away.

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

Members' Statements
(continued)

The Speaker: The next member's statement belongs to the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

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

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't so long ago that honourable politicians did the right thing when they made a mistake with Alberta taxpayers' money. When Alison Redford built the sky palace for her own personal use in a building that MLAs use as offices, that was enough. She stepped down. When Jason Kenney sat in that same sky palace rooftop with the current Finance minister sipping whisky, they apologized. So what would it take for this government, with its roots in the same Conservative movement, to feel an ounce of contrition for its flagrant misuse of Albertans' money?

The minister of service Alberta spent more than $5,400 on himself, his chief of staff and other untold dollars for the husband to visit 11 distilleries around Kentucky on the taxpayers' dime. They wanted Albertans to not think that one single drop of alcohol was consumed on this trip. Really? Albertans are smart people. No one is buying what they're spinning. In the words of the health minister: they know that nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr. Speaker, honourable politicians come to this Chamber to serve their constituents. That is what we are called to do. In the Premier's own words: we should only be spending what is reasonable. Why does this UCP think that this is reasonable? The only answer is that they feel that they're entitled to it. Come next election, we'll see whether Albertans agree that an 11-distillery booze cruise in Kentucky is reasonable or a $2,300 ride in a chauffeured limousine. Until then the service Alberta minister should pay the money back and apologize.

Introduction of Bills

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

Bill 43 Transportation (Safe and Sensible Roads) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill being Bill 43, Transportation (Safe and Sensible Roads) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

With that, Mr. Speaker, if I could continue? Thank you. Obviously, I'm introducing this bill, but before we get into the content of the bill, I'd like to recognize five individuals that actually helped write the bill. That would be Lindsay-Anne Freire, Lacey Squires, Bonnie Chan-Maier, Kara Boles, and Patrick Zaph, who are all from Transportation and Economic Corridors. They're here with me today in the gallery.

If passed, Mr. Speaker, Bill 43 would update the Traffic Safety Act to keep pace with transportation requirements and support Alberta's population growth. The proposed changes would improve safety on Alberta's roads, ensuring greater accountability in the trucking industry while creating a provincial framework for personal micromobility devices and common-sense rules for bike lanes. Bill 43 also improves the newly named urban rail transit act, which will improve the collaboration with municipalities when it's in regard to LRT and development and planning across the province. Ultimately, this will ensure that passenger rail systems better serve Albertans, and together these improvements would update Alberta's legislation to meet up with our growing population. I would be happy to do further discussion on this.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 43 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite five copies of, I believe, thousands of postcards that were written from cycling advocates and people here in Edmonton to the minister of transportation expressing their opposition to his interference in municipal jurisdiction and support for cycling infrastructure.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont. Three reports, I understand. Yeah. Go ahead.

Mr. Lunty: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In accordance with section 20(2) of the Auditor General Act it is my pleasure as chair of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices to table the following reports from the office of the Auditor General: Effectiveness of Ministry Annual Reporting; Services to Support Young Adults Transitioning to Adulthood; and Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses of the Premier, Ministers, and Their Staff. Electronic copies of these reports will also be provided to members.

11:20

The Speaker: That takes us to points of order. The first point of order was noted at 10:59 a.m. Let's go to the Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order
Allegations against Members

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that around that time the Minister of Finance, as he was speaking in answer to a question, referred to our previous government as stealing from Alberta's children and grandchildren, or our children and grandchildren. I don't have the exact – I don't have the Blues.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a ruling March 4, 2014, at the time Speaker Zwozdesky, issued a caution on the word "stealing." The context at that time was that MLA Anglin was saying that TransAlta was stealing from customers. The Speaker said:

> I think that sometimes we are prone to asking very tough questions . . . This was up to a point . . . a . . . well-worded question [but] the allegations that were made against somebody not here and the use of the word "stealing" . . . going to admonish anyone . . . from using that kind of language.

We also had another previous ruling, Mr. Speaker, from more recently, May 5, 2025. Now, at that time the Member for St. Albert in her question said, "Premier, how do you justify stealing $200 from [obviously] disabled Albertans?" The argument from the Deputy Government House Leader stated that – pardon me. To provide a little precedent, they called on a ruling from back in 1960 where

> the member was accused of stealing. The Speaker at that time said that the word "stealing" has significance beyond that of alleging that somebody is depriving, for example. It is improper language for this Assembly. I would submit to you that the member should get up and apologize for that. It is just simply inflammatory language that has no place in this Assembly.

To be clear, Mr. Speaker, that is different from saying that I feel that was inappropriate. Saying "inflammatory language that has no place in this Assembly" to me suggests that this is a term that is on par with suggesting that another member is lying.

I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that we do differentiate between the collective and the individual. However, I think even in the use of a term such as "lying," that is something that we generally say that we do not use in this House in application in either case.

I would suggest that "stealing" rises to the same. Certainly, the Minister of Finance has many other creative ways he can express it. He used the word "pillaging" quite often. I like to see some colourful use of language. I would love to see a bit more creativity, perhaps, but I would suggest that "stealing" applied individually or to the collective should be a point of order.

Thank you.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the assertion from the member opposite, though he did not cite any specific standing orders that have been broken. I also don't see the correlation between "lying" and "stealing." They are two very different words. While I also can appreciate that at times we need to be judicious and, you know, use better language or even get a little flowery with the way we describe things, it's also important to be direct, very direct.

In this instance, Mr. Speaker, it is important to note to the public, which is why the Minister of Finance said it, that while the NDP was in government in that terrible time between 2015 and 2019, when the Member for Calgary-Buffalo was the Finance minister and he oversaw it . . . [interjection] Don't even say it.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, that billions of dollars were taken from the heritage savings trust fund that belongs to Albertans. It is their birthright, and the money that is being spent there on pet projects to try to cover their tracks after the dramatic and historic and, frankly, diabolical deficits they ran: I tell you that, in fact, is stealing from Albertans and their birthright.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that this is a point of order. In fact, I believe this is the appropriate term to use for this specific instance, and I disagree with the member's characterization, but as always I leave it in your very capable hands.

The Speaker: Do you have more to add, Edmonton-Glenora?

Ms Hoffman: Yes, please.

The Speaker: I beg you to be brief, but go ahead.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is a personal experience, in fact, in an exchange with the now Finance minister. I used the words "stealing from children and educational assistants." The then – I'm not sure exactly what his role was, but he's currently now Finance – minister called a point of order, and in fact it doesn't show up under the points of order because the Speaker of the day, Speaker Cooper – this was Halloween 2019 – interjected and asked me to apologize immediately, that that was inappropriate. So I did. And that's why it doesn't show up under the points of order because it was deemed so inappropriate at the time. And I learned my lesson, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. I hope the government does the same.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you, everyone, for your submissions.

This is what the Blues say; I'll read them out loud. "The NDP pillaged the heritage fund when they were on this side of the aisle, stealing from our grandchildren in the future." I understand why the point of order is called. I understand why it's debated that it could be a point of order. If I was out there, I might also.

Here's the problem that we run into here. First of all, if the hon. member had said that a particular member was stealing, that would just be a point of order. Full stop. No doubt about it. But the tradition here is that there's a little more latitude – not unlimited latitude – when you refer to the party on the other side of the House. Not unlimited latitude. The problem here is the "stealing from our grandchildren"; it's, I believe, the way that phrase is used here. It's not intended to allege an actual crime; rather, the members disagree with how the money was spent. It's not a helpful way to say this

because, as I get reminded by House leaders here and I agree with them on this, context matters. This is contextually very close to the line. It could be ruled either way.

I'm going to caution the Government House Leader to talk to your minister to try to refrain from going down this road. The word "stealing" will never be helpful. I think here we're going to call it a matter of debate but not a helpful matter of debate. To be perfectly clear, on another day, a slightly different context, it could be a point of order. So don't interpret what I'm saying now as encouragement to talk the way the minister did today, because that's not what this is.

That deals with that one.

The next point of order is at 11:10 a.m. The Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order
Referring to Proper Titles

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under 23(h), (i), and (j). I apologize for neglecting to mention that earlier. This is in regard to a comment that was made where – and I apologize; I have misplaced it. There was a comment made referring to the Leader of the Official Opposition as the leader of the leaky pipe committee. Pardon me; I believe it was the minister of energy, if I recall correctly.

We know there is a very clear ruling on this, Mr. Speaker. There's a very clear ruling that we must refer to members by their appropriate titles. Now, we've seen today that there's a lot of desperation across the aisle. The government is flailing and grasping at straws to make accusations of ourselves and our leader, but the fact is that we had a ruling from Speaker Cooper on June 8, 2020, on a point of order called by the then Member for Calgary-Hays. The former Premier, Ms Notley, was speaking, and she referred to the minister of health, first of all, as the Member for Calgary-Acadia and then talked about Shan-splaining. The Member for Calgary-Hays called a point of order and the Speaker agreed. The Speaker's comments were:

> As I've noted, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states that members shall refer to ministers by their title, which the Official Opposition has developed quite a habit of not doing with respect to the Minister of Health . . . the Leader of the Official Opposition used a portion of that . . . name in combination with a word that much has been said about here in the Assembly by the previous Speaker . . .
>
> As such, this is most certainly a point of order.

Mr. Speaker, again, while the ruling refers to ministers, I think it is also something that reasonably extends to the Leader of the Official Opposition and certainly would go a long way to improving the decorum in this place. Again, there are many ways, as the government has ably demonstrated, that they can go on their crusade on their taxpayer-funded report from the city of Calgary, but I would suggest that altering the title of the Leader of the Official Opposition should not be one that is allowed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

11:30

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the members opposite are sensitive, specifically about this topic. When the term, without the benefit of the Blues, "leaky pipe committee" was used, it was obviously referring to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition was overseeing, as mayor of Calgary, a report that came in, that he chose deliberately to not share with his city council, that the critical infrastructure of the city, Alberta's largest city, was in jeopardy. The report contained nine recommendations, but only four were presented to council. This is a matter of fact. As a result, Albertans are now, today as we speak, being forced to take showers that are three minutes or less.

Now, as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are a little concerned . . .

Mr. Amery: A little touchy.

Mr. Schow: . . . a little touchy about this topic, so it's classic that the member opposite would suggest that anyone's flailing when in reality it is the members opposite who are flailing because they are trying to bury the fact that their leader can't lead and that no one will follow. It's why he refuses to stay for all of question period. Mr. Speaker, this is the fact that . . .

The Speaker: No. Now you're going to stop there and apologize and withdraw for what you just said.

Mr. Schow: I withdraw.

The Speaker: And apologize.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, in closing my arguments . . .

The Speaker: And apologize.

Mr. Schow: I apologize.

Mr. Speaker, in closing my comments, I will simply say this. The members opposite are touchy about the fact that their leader cannot lead. They're touchy about the fact that Calgarians are taking three-minute showers. They're touchy about the fact that they didn't like the title that was attributed to their leader.

The Speaker: Okay. All right. We're into straight repetition now, so we're going to call that an argument.

Let me just say, criticism for both sides, that this isn't a place to have further debate; it's to settle the point of order. It was already going to be five minutes of our life we're never going to get back, and you've made it 10. Congratulations on both sides for that, wasting everybody's time.

Back to the point of order that we're actually supposed to be talking about in this part of the agenda. Here's what the Blues say: "But the leader of the leaky pipe committee has indicated that he can't control water." Okay. It's unclear from this whether the minister was talking about the party across or the one member of the party across. In either case it's a point of order. You can't mock other members. You use their official titles in here. We've been reminded of that a number of times. I don't know if it's the same point of parliamentary procedure that the Deputy Opposition House Leader said, but the one that I've been made known is a citation on page 525 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice,* that says that you'll use people's proper names, whether it was the party name or the individual member's name. That was not done. A clear point of order.

I will ask the Government House Leader to apologize and withdraw on behalf of the minister and to please instruct the minister of the ruling so that he can do better in the future.

Mr. Schow: I apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: This concludes that matter. [interjections] Order. Order. Order. No. I said that this concludes that matter. This isn't a cue to carry on with that matter. We're done here. Stop. On both sides, just stop.

Orders of the Day

Government Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Evening Sittings

47. Mr. Schow moved:
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) and for the duration of the 2026 fall sitting of the Second Session of the 31st Legislature the Assembly shall meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings for consideration of government business unless the Government House Leader notifies the Assembly that there shall be no evening sitting that day by providing notice under Notices of Motions in the daily Routine or at any time prior to 6 p.m.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Do I have time to go and make comments, or is this a nondebatable motion? Remind me.

The Speaker: It's not debatable.

Mr. Schow: Gotcha.

The Speaker: Okay. As we've just established, this is not a debatable motion.

[Government Motion 47 carried]

Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading

Bill 40
Electoral Divisions Act

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Mr. Amery: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and move second reading of Bill 40, the Electoral Divisions Act.

At its core Bill 40 is about ensuring that Albertans continue to have fair, meaningful, and effective representation in this province. If passed, Bill 40 would repeal Alberta's existing electoral boundaries and replace them with 91 new electoral boundaries approved by a resolution of the Legislative Assembly.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Madam Speaker, Alberta's electoral boundaries must be reviewed every eight to 10 years to reflect changes in our province – changes to population, changes to communities of interest, changes to traffic routes – and to ensure that communities across our province are properly represented. The previous electoral boundaries took place in 2016 and 2017, but as we know, since then Alberta has experienced significant changes. Communities have grown. Population patterns have shifted. Roadways, connectivity, communities look a lot more different today than they did 10 years ago. That's why this work is necessary.

Now, in 2024 the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act was amended to increase the number of seats from 87 to 89 to help reflect some of that growth and changes. Members of the Electoral Boundaries Commission were appointed in March of 2025, and the commission's final report was tabled in this Assembly on March 26, 2026.

Now, in spring the majority of that commission concluded that it would have been more proper if the proposed representation included an additional two electoral divisions. That is to say, the commission itself proposed more effective representation if this Legislature had provided for two additional electoral divisions, bringing the total, of course, to 91 seats. The commission's chair, Justice Dallas Miller, was extremely candid in the recommendations about the challenge to the commission and the work that they needed given the 89-seat breakdown. He noted that much of the objection to the commission's interim report was based on the loss of two rural seats, and he and his fellow commissioners lamented that result. Those were his words, Madam Speaker. Justice Miller then recommended that the number of divisions be increased from 89 to 91 for the next general election.

The Legislature responded to the recommendations made by the commission. Last spring it passed legislation increasing the number of proposed electoral divisions to 91. The Assembly also established a special select committee to oversee an independent review of boundaries, again, as recommended by Justice Miller's report. That committee engaged an independent advisory panel that was tasked with dividing the electoral boundaries of Alberta into 91 proposed electoral divisions.

Madam Speaker, the panel was also required to incorporate the direction contained in Justice Miller's recommendation 5. It's important to be clear about the independence and the credibility of this process. The panel that was formed – that is, the independent advisory panel – was chaired by former Court of Appeal Justice Brian O'Ferrall, a highly respected jurist who served on Alberta's Court of Appeal for over a decade and has served Albertans in the courts for two decades. The panel included two members that were appointed by the government and, of course, two members that were appointed by the Official Opposition. Panel members met, they deliberated, and they debated the proposals that were put before them.

The resulting report was a product of those independent consultations and discussions by that panel. Members of this Assembly then had the opportunity to debate the proposed boundaries before the Assembly passed a resolution. Bill 40 is the next practical step in the process required to implement that resolution.

Madam Speaker, some of the proposed electoral divisions combine urban and rural communities. These are what we often call hybrid divisions, but this is not a new nor an unusual concept in Alberta. Matter of fact, it's not a new or unusual concept anywhere in Canada. Hybrid electoral divisions have appeared in almost every Alberta electoral map since this province was created. They were also recognized by the Court of Appeal here in Alberta in the early 1990s. These divisions can bring together communities that share employment, infrastructure, health care, education, transportation, public services, and economic interests, among many more things. The panel noted that Alberta has 19 cities and that every one except Lethbridge had previously been included in a hybrid electoral division.

11:40

Now, Madam Speaker, no political party will ever receive everything that it wants from an independent boundaries process, and electoral boundaries should not be designed for the convenience of any one particular political party. They should provide Albertans with effective representation, whether they live in Calgary, in Edmonton, in Lethbridge, in a small community, or even in rural Alberta. It is important for people everywhere in this province to be able to have an accessible representative here in this Assembly.

If Bill 40 is passed, the new electoral divisions will come into effect when the writ is issued for the next provincial general election. Our responsibility here is to debate this bill on its merits, make a decision, and, most importantly of all, give Elections Alberta the certainty it needs to prepare for the election coming in October of 2027. That's exactly what we are doing on this side of the House. I encourage every member that believes in fair and effective representation in Alberta to vote and support Bill 40.

With that, Madam Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 40. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others who wish to join the debate? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Wow. It's almost hard to speak to this bill because of just the level of insanity that we are seeing. Voters should pick their politicians. Politicians shouldn't pick their voters. That seems like a basic and fair rule. I think most Albertans understand it, but the UCP apparently could use a few lessons because they think that it is the job of politicians to pick their voters.

The maps implemented by this act are disrespectful to Albertans. No one asked for this. Well, no one asked publicly. Many of the absurd and irrational changes seem to have the interesting collateral impact of benefiting specific UCP cabinet ministers so they don't have to face their voters. Well, I mean, if I had governed like them, I might be afraid, too. One might infer that some people asked for this rather intently. Otherwise, why are we here?

This new map means that on average urban constituencies have 7,000 more people than rural. That's 14 per cent. The UCP have certainly pointed out that the report of the independent commission had the smallest disparity in representation in recent history. Now, myself, most people with any legal training, probably most Albertans watching particularly closely would consider that fair and equal representation to be a feature, Madam Speaker, but the UCP consider it a bug. They decided that it was in need of fixing, and they went out to do so.

Now, there are four more reasons that these maps disrespect Albertans, erode the rule of law, our institutions, our democracy, and the rights of Albertans than can be stated in 20 minutes, but that is the time I have. I want to touch first on costs, which remain – quelle surprise – undisclosed. I want to touch on the extremely irregular process and some of the things it heavily suggests to the critical observer, and I want to close with some of the most egregious outcomes.

Let's begin with the obvious, that everyone can agree with. This process was entirely unnecessary. The UCP could simply have accepted the fair maps drawn by the commission that did extensive public consultation with – and somehow this has gotten lost in the conversation – a majority of UCP appointees. In the alternative, had it been the genuine intention of this government to insert two additional rural seats, they could simply have asked the existing commission to do that, and we all could have moved on months ago. There was such an obvious solution to the stated goal, the loss of the two rural seats, which this government refused to consider at all for reasons that defy logic and were never stated on the record. We were justifiably, as it now turns out, extremely skeptical that the Premier was, in fact, just intending to add two rural seats. We now know that the maps added three rural seats and cut Lethbridge up into pizza slices because, according to the report of the UCP panel, the voters there – and these are voters; they're the right-holders; they're supposed to be the point of this process – are nothing but spare population to be used as the UCP sees fit.

It's also an interesting side effect that, in total, this map protects from, again, the voters, the voters who are supposed to be the point of this process – it protects at least seven UCP cabinet ministers from facing those voters in a fair fight. The fact that we just heard the minister try to continue singing this two rural seats song when we're literally looking at a map that adds three rural seats, to say nothing of the rest of the absurdity, I mean, honestly, Madam Speaker, that minister deserves an Oscar. Like, wow.

Ms Hoffman: His acting is not perfection.

Ms Ganley: Okay. Fair enough. We can debate whether his selling of that stated goal was good or not.

How much did it cost? Like, in light of the fact that this is a completely pointless process, the stated goal was clearly not the actual goal. The stated goal was not what we got in the end. So how much did it cost?

The chair of the commission, Mr. O'Ferrall, a retired judge and mysteriously the only judicial applicant – not even judicial; formerly judicial. He's the only applicant – and this is after the courts refused to participate, the Canadian Bar Association refuses to participate, the Law Society of Alberta refuses to participate – given compensation, that has never been used before. No one, neither UCP members of the committee, the chair, the staff supporting the committee, could point to an instance in which someone had been remunerated with the hourly rate plus just an extra $5,000 a month. The total compensation on full-time work would be $20,000 a month paid to the only applicant after every other judge refused to participate.

We don't know the cost. The UCP never disclosed the cost. We don't know any of it. We don't know when we will know. The UCP declined absolutely every attempt at public transparency. The UCP refused to disclose the costs of this debacle. I don't know, Madam Speaker, but that doesn't scream "I'm proud of my work" to me.

The process. The UCP came into this Legislature and picked 89 seats. It was a number they picked. They're like: "Oh, no. The number is wrong." Well, that sounds like a you mistake. The commission was set up, and, yes, this part of the process is totally normal. I know the UCP have their trolls online working overtime, trying to convince people that the fact that electoral boundaries have been redrawn in Alberta before is somehow just the same as what happened here, but it isn't. The process of redrawing ridings is totally normal, and the point of that process is to respect the rights of voters. Normally what we get is a process that respects the rights of voters. In this case the process that respects the rights of voters played out, then the UCP intervened because they weren't so into respecting the rights of voters.

11:50

Then we get this. We get a committee for politicians to pick their voters, in which we participated under protest because Albertans deserve to see someone fighting for their rights. This is our democracy, and Albertans deserve to see someone stand up for it. That set up a panel. Every attempt at transparency was rejected. Every attempt at figuring out the costs was rejected. The entire process was rejected as unconventional – it wasn't the word, but it was some similar word – by the courts, by the Law Society, and by the Canadian Bar Association. You want to know why? Because those are people who care about our institutions and about the rule of law, so they weren't going to participate in something that eroded it. So out goes the UCP panel, and they don't consult with anyone.

The commission consulted extensively with Albertans. Their drawing of the maps was based on fairness, equity, and Albertans. The panel, instead, deliberated in secret, although they reference arguments reaching them from we know not where, arguments which seem to really help UCP cabinet ministers who don't want to face their voters. Then they come out with the maps. Yeah. The maps are egregious.

To touch a little more on the process, this was set up by a government motion. That government motion referenced an addendum. Now, the government tried to sell it as the majority said 91 seats. That's blatantly false. It's blatantly false in black and white words on a page. Again, that minister deserves an Oscar. The addendum was an addendum of only Justice Miller, and it was very specific that nothing south of Airdrie should be impacted. Both Calgary and Lethbridge are south of Airdrie, it's worth stating for the record. They were redrawn in ridiculous fashion for no reason at all, at least, again, no stated reason, because they do have the collateral impact of protecting six separate UCP cabinet ministers from facing the voters in a fair fight.

This process: we don't know how much it cost. It's clearly unfair. Everything about it is questionable. It was unnecessary from the outset. And then we get the maps. Lethbridge is the most egregious example without question. The submissions in Lethbridge to keep their two urban ridings outnumber opposing submissions 5 to 1, so it's clear what the people of Lethbridge wanted. For reasons that defy explanation and are not stated in the report, the UCP panel decides that it has to carve this up into pizza slices and then proceeds to justify the reasons why it's okay to do so. But, again, why are you doing it at all, right? You could have just let it be. Essentially, what they say is that there are some communities of interest here and, hey, those people in Lethbridge are just spare population anyway, they're surplus, and the UCP can use them to achieve their ends.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

Again, I realize I keep saying this, but the whole point here is respect for the voters. That's what the process is supposed to do. The process is supposed to respect the voters. Instead of talking about the voters like they are the thing that is driving this process, the UCP talks about the voters as a secondary thing that they can use to achieve their objective of protecting UCP cabinet ministers, and that is incredibly offensive. This is a technique that is used by Republicans in the U.S. It is referred to as packing and cracking. They basically push all of the voters in the middle of Lethbridge into one riding, and then crack up the rest of the voters to essentially dilute their vote so that the UCP doesn't have to hear from them.

We see a very similar thing happening in Calgary. We begin with a riding of Cochrane that includes portions of Springbank, which is already 9 per cent below the average population, so it's already a small riding. Inexplicably, the UCP panel decides that that's too big, 9 per cent below the average, so they carve out a bunch of voters for no reason that's any good. Well, golf courses, apparently, are the reason. Golf courses. Multiple golf courses. There is an absurd amount of discussion of golf courses in this report, and I don't think that's how most people see – like the out of touchness that is occurring on that side is crazy to me. It's crazy to me that the UCP live lives so divorced from the average person in Alberta who is struggling to pay their mortgage and put food on their table, that they think that communities are defined by where people golf.

With this absurd justification, Cochrane becomes 14 per cent under, and, like, the really interesting thing is that when they break up Lethbridge into rural and urban ridings, they use Cochrane as a town that has Springbank in it as a justification for that, and then say that Springbank can't stay with Cochrane. Like, the irrationality is just staggering. And then they say: "Oh, well, the Calgary ridings are already over, so we can't put Springbank into one riding, so we're going to have to break it up. We're going to have to break out Bearspaw and two halves of Springbank in order to support three different UCP cabinet ministers who don't want to face their voters." Yeah.

To take a moment, this is incredibly disrespectful to the people in Springbank. The UCP are treating them as a gimme, like: these people will vote for us regardless. It doesn't matter how we behave. It doesn't matter what we do. It doesn't matter how irresponsible we are. These people will vote for us regardless, so we can use them to shore up our weak cabinet members. It's egregious, Mr. Speaker. It's egregious.

We have before us these maps at this point, and they're extremely problematic. Again, they disrespect the voters, which I guess was the entire point here, but in addition to doing that, the degree to which this deviates from the UCP's stated goal, not just in result but in process – so the UCP came in here and the Premier says multiple times on the record that this motion only makes it the case that they can add two rural seats. We're only doing addendum 5. We'll stay completely within the bounds of addendum 5, and the UCP's panel just diverges from that immediately. They say they don't have to care what the addendum says. They don't have to respect it, and, in fact, they are extremely aggrieved that the minority members that the NDP appointed argue about what the mandate of the panel was.

Like, it's a creature entirely created by this new, made up UCP process, and when very respected people try to keep it bounded by what the Legislature said, try to keep that panel within the rule of law, the panel chair is aggrieved about it. Like, "How dare they argue that we should respect the Constitution?" but then proceeds to make a series of weird arguments about golf courses. So that's always fun. They go completely outside not just what the Premier said but what the addendum said and what the motion said, and the fact that we're still hearing members over there come in and talk about how this will only add in two rural seats: like, have you looked at the maps? It adds three. Like, three isn't two.

12:00

I mean, there's a whole bunch of other stuff wrong with it, but the fact that they can look at the addition of three rural seats and say, "We're only here to add two" with a straight face is incredibly problematic. It's incredibly problematic, and we are seeing the push-back, not just from the NDP but from people in the community in communities across Alberta because, Mr. Speaker, voters in this province, all voters – Conservative, NDP, otherwise – Albertans agree that fairness is relevant. I think, you know, we saw Republicans in the U.S. This is a Republican technique that, like many others, the UCP and Danielle Smith – sorry; Premier Smith – have imported into this province, and voters aren't interested in it. Nobody wants it.

Yeah. It has been imported from the U.S. It is incredibly problematic. There's no good reason for it other than that the UCP think their objectives are more important than what the people of Alberta want. This runs entirely contrary to democracy although, honestly, it's pretty par for the course for the UCP, right? They're not interested in people struggling with their costs or health care. I would urge all members to vote against this.

The Acting Speaker: Are there any others wishing to speak? The Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I rise to speak to this bill. I think the government believes that the fix is in, and their attempt to rig the next elections is now public for all to see. As my colleague mentioned, free and fair elections, rule of law, and citizen participation: that's the hallmark of democracy. However, what we have seen from this government over and over and over again are attempts to subvert democratic norms, processes and undermine institutions just to stay in power. And throughout their time in office we have seen that kind of behaviour, that undermines the rule of law, that undermines democratic norms, and that undermines citizen participation in the democratic process.

We have seen this government change the rules of the game whenever they think things are not going their way. We have seen this government attack judges, attack the independence of the judiciary time and again. When their actions were challenged in the court, the court told them that their actions are unconstitutional. Instead of respecting their decision, which a democratic government will do, they moved to change the rules so they can get the judiciary out of the way and do what they want to do anyways. That's how we were pushed into a referendum, which, again, nobody was asking for. What we have seen from this government: that they would even withhold funding for the judiciary if they don't

get their way. Again, that's against the rule of law that a democratic government is supposed to follow.

We have seen this government time and again curtailing civil liberties and attacking people's rights. In the history of this province no other democratic government has used the notwithstanding clause. Whenever this government was challenged, they were willing to invoke the notwithstanding clause not just once, not just twice but four times to attack the most vulnerable in this province and their rights, to attack the most fundamental constitutional rights, the right to bargain, collective bargaining. That's what they did, which no other democratic government ever did in the history of this province.

They also destroyed all checks and balances that a democratic system requires to flourish just to stay in power, be that ethics rules now that most of the government only reports to the Premier's chief of staff, be that election rules, or be that any other rules that are inconvenient for this government. They are willing to use and abuse their majority just to change things the way they see fit, what's convenient for them, and to do that, they will use public funds to spread propaganda, to spread untruthful things, to spread conspiracy theories, to just hide their own failures. They would blame immigrants, label them as outsiders so they can distract from their own failures. They ran a whole referendum with millions of dollars so they can just distract from their failures and scapegoat immigrants.

Mr. Speaker, I'm outlining all these things just to make the point that this government's behaviour, this government's attitude are not democratic. Most of these things are bordering on authoritarianism. With this bill we are seeing an attack on free and fair elections, that I said earlier are the hallmark of a democratic system. You can have elections, but that doesn't mean that you will have democracy. We see elections in many parts of the world that no one believes are democratic. In order for democracy to exist, you need free and fair elections. You need the rule of law.

Section 3 in the Constitution gives everyone, every citizen, the right to vote, and when we look at the jurisprudence from the Supreme Court of Canada, it's clear that that right to vote means effective representation. Without effective representation that right to vote doesn't mean anything. It's effective representation that ensures citizen participation in democracy, and that's what makes democracy work and flourish. By moving forward with this bill, what they are telling Albertans is that they will use and abuse their majority and do everything they can just to win the next election, just to cling on to the power.

12:10

For months this government had the opportunity to do the right thing, accept the recommendation of the majority report of the independent commission, and pass the new maps as recommended by the independent commission. Unlike this proposed bill and the map attached to this bill, in the previous round the independent commission went to every nook and corner of this province, heard from thousands upon thousands of Albertans, heard from pretty much every member of this Legislature, unless somebody chose not to present, and they came up with a map. Was that an ideal map? No one is claiming that. But that map was a product of public consultation, public participation in a process that everyone can get behind and have some faith in.

Instead, the UCP refused to accept that map. They cooked up a process that would suit their political needs, their desire to stay in power. They passed a motion, Government Motion 37, from this House that was based, as per UCP claims, on recommendation 5 of Justice Miller's addendum to the final report. Recommendation 5 was not the majority opinion. It was an addendum that was only supported by Justice Miller. Even if we take the government on its word that they will only do what was recommended in that recommendation 5, that recommendation talked about the restoration of two electoral divisions which should not have any impact on electoral divisions in Airdrie or contain territory south of Airdrie's southmost border with the exception of Drumheller-Stettler. But that's not what they did with their own panel. They changed many things south of Airdrie, which recommendation 5 actually said: don't do it. They carved Lethbridge into four ridings. Nobody was asking them except for one MLA from Lethbridge. Nobody was asking for that. There is a record of public consultation that an overwhelming majority of Lethbridge people wanted Lethbridge to stay the way it is now.

This proposal is only benefiting the UCP cabinet ministers, and it's diluting the words of everyone who is in the city. Again, that goes against the fundamental constitutional principles of effective representation. No one would agree with this government that a vote in Taber, in Lethbridge, in Calgary, in Peace River, in Edmonton are equal, because they are not. These maps benefit the UCP cabinet, UCP MLAs. This is just an attempt to stay in power.

The second thing I would highlight is that not only are the UCP not following their own Government Motion 37; they are walking roughshod on the rights of Albertans when it comes to effective representation.

The minister earlier talked about that the reason for them adding two more seats, making it 91, was the influx of population. If we look at the population distribution, it's obvious that that growth is in the major cities and to some extent in the cities around those major centres. [Mr. Sabir's speaking time expired]

I urge everyone to oppose.

The Acting Speaker: I recognize the Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Member Kayande: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have come to a very pretty pass here in Alberta. I've never lived in any other Canadian province than Alberta. This is my home. For all the time that I have lived in Canada, I feel as though I've been blessed to live here because we've had successive governments that invested in health care, invested in education, invested in our lives. They invested in me, a kind of socially awkward four-eyed kid from the Edmonton suburbs. They made it possible for me to live a great life here, to marry somebody from another country, come here, raise our kids very far away from sunny California, where my wife is from. I've been blessed, truly blessed.

I never dreamed or even in my worst nightmare I never thought that I would be a politician and a legislator and have to be in this place defending the very fabric of democracy itself. It's incredibly sad, Mr. Speaker, and it makes so many of the constituents who live in Calgary-Elbow not just enraged, but it makes them sad, too, that this is the world that we're living in right now, where the fundamental principles of democracy that we have grown up with and that have permeated the very air that we breathe are so incredibly fragile.

It turns out that this government thinks that our democracy depends on the person in charge, that the person in charge can pick and choose their voters and decide based on whatever data that they have that they can slice and dice voters to change the rules of the game.

For months this UCP government had the opportunity to do the right thing and pass the independent and transparent map created by the Electoral Boundaries Commission. This government is very sloppy in how they talk about the various different panels and committees and various different groups that they have empowered. There is only one election boundaries commission that is legitimately empowered to set the electoral boundaries of this province. That is the Electoral Boundaries Commission. That Electoral Boundaries Commission had

a report. There is only one report. It is a report of all of the 89 different ridings and their maps, and that's it. This government still has the opportunity to do the right thing and pass that map.

12:20

This bill does not pass that map. This bill passes some random map, some random map that has no legitimacy, that has received no public input, that has received information from goodness knows what sources, because we've never been able to obtain them, that costs I don't know how much. The Electoral Boundaries Commission's map, the only map that the Electoral Boundaries Commission published, was the product of a significant amount of public consultation, maybe the greatest amount of public consultation that any provincial process has ever had in two rounds.

The first version of the map that the Electoral Boundaries Commission promulgated, that they published, their interim report, was a unanimous report of all five boundary commissioners. It was unanimous. Sometime between the interim report and the feedback thereto and some of the changes that they made and the final report, that unanimity was lost. I don't know how it happened. People can disagree about how, you know, different committee members probably felt as though there were things going on. I don't know. That unanimity was lost, but it doesn't matter because there was a majority report of that boundaries commission.

This illegitimate process that we are investigating, that we are being implored to pass by this government, carves Lethbridge into four ridings and widely expands western Calgary out into the hinterland. I know a few people in Springbank. They live in Springbank because they don't want to live in Calgary. They don't consider themselves politically Calgarians. They like living next to a golf course. That's great. The people of Calgary and the people of Springbank are different. Again and again in the boundaries commission testimony people talked about their community, how much they love being part of their community, how much they love having a representative that is part of their community. None of that matters because what this UCP government has done is that they have created a map to disrespect and water down your vote, all to protect the UCP and certain cabinet ministers.

Let me back up a little bit, because as part of how we got here, there's the conversation, the manufactured controversy that this government has made up between 89 and 91 ridings. You see, this government could have chosen in its legislation empowering and empanelling the boundaries commission to go with 91 ridings. They could have done that, and they didn't.

It's kind of funny because it actually reminds me of a time when I was playing – I don't play Trivial Pursuit all that often, but this is many, many years ago, 25 years ago, and it was a small group of friends, one of whom included my wife. We sat down for an evening of Trivial Pursuit, and there's some rule in the game where people can only earn those triangle wedges when you land on certain squares. Anyway, there's some requirement. It was seen as onerous, and it meant that the game went on for a very long time; you know, people got bored. So we made a house rule where you answered a question correctly, and you would earn that wedge. Then within 15 minutes I had five wedges. And everybody else around the table, looking at me with five wedges and themselves with either zero or one, said: "You know what? New rule."

Middle of the game, new rule. I couldn't earn wedges that way anymore. It's funny, right? Like we're just, you know, all a bunch of friends, and we're sitting around having fun in this game, but I still remember that because it was so egregious. It was so egregious changing the rules right in the middle of the process. So when this government talks about, "Oh, oh, oh, look, sorry; change, change, change. We said 89, but we meant 91" right in the middle because they didn't like the results of the 89, they didn't like the results of the properly empowered, legally empanelled Electoral Boundaries Commission, they didn't like the boundary commission report, they had a look at that, and they said: "You know what? Change."

Why did this government not have 91 ridings right at the beginning? It's because of population growth. Maybe those two ridings, the four additional ridings from the 87 that we have, would have all gone to the cities. It's very clear from the machinations that this government has done that preserving the representation of people who live in the cities is not okay with them because they would have to fight for those votes. This process, the process of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, the properly empanelled Electoral Boundaries Commission, the only legitimate Electoral Boundaries Commission, and the only legitimate Electoral Boundaries Commission report was not to achieve a particular partisan outcome; it was meant to redraw the boundaries and redraw the maps in a way that would preserve and, in fact, be consistent with our section 3 Charter right, our right to vote.

I want to be very, very clear. Any process that is outside of the legitimately empanelled and empowered Electoral Boundaries Commission, the original panel, the panel that included Dallas Miller, John Evans, Greg Clark, Julian Martin, and Susan Samson, any process other than that is illegitimate. And I want to be very clear that when I say that that process is illegitimate, it means that it's taking away our right to vote because that is the only process that is consistent with how section 3 has been interpreted to operate by the courts.

12:30

The government has made a number of daft arguments. First of all, they said: well, we only added two seats. They added three rural seats, not two. Three is not two. They say that representation still remains effective. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what they say because there is only one way to move forward, and that is through the properly empanelled, the properly empowered Electoral Boundaries Commission that came up with one report, and that report under normal circumstances would be the law. That report should be the law, and any other process is illegitimate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that, I'd like to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 39
Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2)

[Debate adjourned November 18: Ms Goehring speaking]

The Acting Speaker: I will recognize the Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Haji: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to Bill 39, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2). I want to start that this morning we heard the member's statement from the Member for Edmonton-South speaking to the challenge that Albertans are facing when it comes to access to health care. It is also important that we reflect and speak to how much, provincially, we spend on the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 39 creates a legal framework that will enable the current minister as well as future ministers to expand the private financing of physician, diagnostic, and other health care services through ministerial order. It is through regulations rather than debate in the Legislature on one of the most important social infrastructures that our province has. It is one of the most important, where we spent close to $35 billion of our budget.

Bill 39 is not in isolation, Mr. Speaker. It's better that we talk about how we got here. This is part of a road map that the UCP government had not campaigned on in the 2023 election. It's a road map of health care privatization that the UCP did not discuss and

disclose with Albertans. It's a road map of health care privatization that the UCP during the Alberta Next Panel did not bring up for a conversation.

It's also good for us to remember that that summer of 2025, when they were doing the Alberta Next Panel, is the summer where they were working on a couple of the bills that privatize our health care system. You will think that they will bring up one of the most important things that Albertans care about into the conversation and see what people have to say. They didn't.

In 2025 they passed Bill 55. What is it? It was a bill, Mr. Speaker, that allows private entities, corporations, to run Alberta hospitals. It's significant change. You will think they will talk to Albertans about it. They didn't. So once you allow private entities to run the hospitals, the next step is that you have to think of who will be operating in the hospitals: of course, physicians, doctors, nurses, allied health workforce. They started with allowing dual practice for physicians who will operate in those hospitals in Bill 11. That was the phase of the hospitals.

Now in 2026, this year, they passed Bill 29. What was it? It was enabling self-referral and private-pay diagnostic and imaging where you can pay out of pocket. That didn't include labs. That did not include when you want to see a family physician. That was what was left.

Now we have Bill 39. That's what we are debating today. What does it do? It creates a financing mechanism, which means insurers that are private insurers as well as providers can charge on private insured services. That is what is in debate, Mr. Speaker, and that is the road map of privatizing health care. From 2025 up to date every single bill from the health ministers that was tabled was part of a building block for a road map to privatize health care: something that was not shared with Albertans, something that Albertans never had a say on, something was not disclosed to Albertans even in their town halls. It is a road map for privatization. That is what is in conversation, and Bill 39 fits into that framework.

At a glance, it amends a number of health-related statutes. Most of them are fixes of what they have rushed through in those bills that I have already articulated. It's a government that tables a bill without proper consultation. Not proper, actually; without consultation. Then after that they realize: "Oh, we messed up here. Let's fix it." Then they will announce and say, "Oh, we're making it easy; we're fixing a problem," without saying that they have created it, Mr. Speaker.

The amendments that it makes shape who funds health care in the future. Mr. Speaker, this includes Alberta business owners. Because of that, you have to insure the health care system for your employers, which will be a cost downloading on small-business owners in our province. Never they were consulted with. They have never been shared with, but this is the change that Bill 39 will be making.

It doesn't stop there. It also changes who controls the future health policy decisions. How? It doesn't come to the Legislature for a debate like this. It will be decided through Executive Council and executed through ministerial order. The big concern, Mr. Speaker, is that the bill will transfer significant future decisions and policy-making authority from the Members of this Legislative Assembly to the minister and the cabinet. Less oversight, greater executive order power, reduced transparency around the future of health care privatization: this will be the outcome and the buildup that was made starting from Bill 55, Bill 11, Bill 29, and now Bill 39.

12:40

As I said, bills 55, 11, 29, and 39 may show as an increment, and the government members will say: no, no, no; this is not privatization. Mr. Speaker, on Bill 11 we debated if this included family physicians. The answer we got during those debates was: not for now. The responses that Albertans got on the key messages that the government members have been sending to their constituents was, like: not for now.

The Member for Edmonton-Glenora tabled a private member's bill to protect and make sure that family physicians are not included in this. But at the same time we have a bill that is coming forward – this is Bill 39 – that will include family physicians. Mr. Speaker, not only family physicians; it's inclusive of specialists as well.

We already know that as a province we have one of the longest wait-lists when you need a specialist. We heard this morning from the Member for Edmonton-South about how long the wait time was for a constituent to see an oncologist.

Bill 39 is simply one of the latest steps in a multiyear restructuring project that privatizes Alberta's health care system. There's nothing wrong with – the government members can have the idea of privatizing the health care system, but they should run on it. They should share with Albertans. They should speak in their town halls. They should have explained it during their Alberta Next Panel, where they just focused on immigrants and newcomers as the core problem of our province's health care and education mess.

Bill 39 amends the health care insurance that all Albertans rely on without Albertans hearing what the change will be. It authorizes self-insurance arrangements, which means setting up private insurers to come into Alberta and provide private insurance coverage. Why would they not, Mr. Speaker? They have lobbied. What we know is that, for example, the American Medical Association is registered as a lobbyist that meets with the ministers of health, that meets Executive Council, that meets with the Premier's office. Because of what? Because they know that there is $35 billion. It's a market for them. But for Albertans it is life saving. It is the thing that they rely on. It is the thing that they know when they need care, there is one that is available regardless of their socioeconomic status.

This bill will establish restrictions and requirements through ministerial order or regulations. What will be considered insured services and what will not be considered necessary health care services? It will determine which health services may be paid for by employers or self-insurance health plans. The bill does not specify which physician services may be designed for private coverage and which ones will not be.

This is about moving forward, Mr. Speaker, with two-tier, American-style health care. If the ministers designate physician services for private financing, then those with employer health plans, self-insured health benefit plans, or the ability to pay out of pocket will have faster access, Mr. Speaker, to physicians. Bill 11 had already done a faster access for surgeries, but this one will have faster access for seeing a physician, faster access for a specialist consultation, because the wait time for a specialist consultation is long in our province now, and faster diagnostics because they have done that on Bill 29 and they are also doing it on Bill 39. This is two-tier, American-style health care.

Bill 39, Mr. Speaker, will formally recognize a new legislative category called patient-charge clinics, clinics that will ask you to pull out your private insurance card. Clinic staff will ask you to pull out your credit card before even asking for your Alberta health card. So this is a bill that will privatize, and I ask all members to oppose and reconsider.

The Acting Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleague from Edmonton-Decore for his thoughtful remarks. So far this afternoon, as we debate what the government has titled Bill 39, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2), often governments, including this government – and this is a substantial bill – will put in brackets a different title to actually try to help explain what the bill is

about. For example, this session in Bill 35, the education and child care statutes amendment act, they say "securing parental involvement". For 36, again, another children and family services statutes amendment act, they say "supporting Alberta families." The government doesn't explain at all in the title of this bill what it's about, and that's, I believe, for good reason. This is a significant piece of legislation amending eight different acts, and the government wants to try to convince people that it's just simply some simple amendments.

Well, it's not, Mr. Speaker. This overwhelmingly continues the government's agenda that they have had for as long as I've been alive probably, but in the past other Premiers backed down because they knew what we all know by looking at the research: Albertans overwhelmingly support a publicly funded and publicly delivered health care system. Full stop. Poll after poll, research after research. However, this current iteration of UCP government is intent on continuing to Americanize and privatize the health care system.

Probably the biggest way Bill 39 continues down that path of eroding the principles of public health care and the Canada Health Act is around the components being set up around the minister having expanded abilities to continue to make ministerial orders or regulations that change policy without any debate in the Legislature around some of the pieces within here. It's very enabling legislation. And I think most of us know that the job of us as individual legislators is to help make sure that the pieces of provincial responsibility – and I would argue that some of the biggest areas of provincial responsibility in terms of service delivery are health care and education. We shouldn't be delegating our authority to one individual behind closed doors to be able to make these changes. We should be doing so in the light of day, and we should be transparent about the processes that we are following and the conclusions we come to with our constituents.

Instead, in this bill it's very much an enabling piece of legislation that takes the transparency away from this Chamber and gives that power away to one individual to be able to make these decisions or a subgroup within cabinet. And, Mr. Speaker, when you look at who Albertans trust with their health care, it's probably not a surprise. The Canadian Institute for Health Information just this spring released another report saying that of those who are most trusted, it is not politicians or ministers or deputy ministers. It is indeed front-line service providers and scientists who Albertans continue to trust with their health care decisions. This is something that I hear echoed over and over again.

12:50

We've had many health care town halls, but also I've attended town halls organized by other organizations such as Friends of Medicare, had many town halls all across the province over the last year. Dr. Paul Parks spoke at many of those. It felt like sometimes I got to see Paul more than I did my own family. It was a great opportunity for us to hear from somebody on the front lines, people who are certainly in this position of trust, as CIHI highlights. As well, the Canadian Medical Association has lots of other pieces around trust. It is certainly that family physician or your family physician, specifically, that people often say is the most trusted or a registered nurse or other allied health care professionals that they have regular contact with. Maybe it's a social worker. Maybe it's somebody working in a lab that they see on a regular basis. It's those people that they have the individual relationships with.

When I went to these town halls organized by Friends of Medicare, Dr. Parks and Chris Gallaway would often speak at the beginning a little bit to talk about some of the latest information that was out there, some of the pieces of legislation that had gone through the Alberta Legislature, and then open the floor for questions and comments. The courage that it took for a lot of people to come to these meetings and talk about their own health journeys in front of a room full of friends and neighbours: I want to take my hat off to them because some of those conversations were very difficult, much like the conversation earlier today where it was highlighted that a constituent waited 10 months for a neurology referral that was considered urgent and, of course, is now undergoing cancer treatments.

What I want to say is that Albertans over and over again say that, yes, there is absolutely a need to improve health care. We have nearly a million Albertans in this province without a family doctor today. That is something that is appalling. We know that people are concerned that if they show up to the emergency department, are they going to get the care that they need before it's too late? We know that people are waiting in pain or worried that their cancer diagnosis is getting worse. Every day you wait between diagnosis and treatment feels like a lifetime, and it could cost you one if it does indeed take too long, Mr. Speaker. We also know that people are waiting for lab results longer than is medically recommended in a large proportion of the province.

I know that when I had the honour of serving as Alberta's first NDP health minister, one of our priorities was to reduce . . . [some applause] Well, thanks, friend. The wait time for people needing breast cancer surgeries: I was very proud that we cut that in half. Of course, we're seeing the trend reversed now, sadly. I want to acknowledge that there is increased demand. Cancer rates continue to rise. The number of people who are living longer is great news, but that means that more and more people are getting cancer. We're not matching the demand with the supply. It is of significant concern to most Albertans. That's where they really want to see their government focus their resources: on making sure that they can get a family doctor, that they can get results from medical tests before it's too late, that if they do have to show up in an emergency department for themselves or a loved one, they will get the care that they need when and where they need it, and that they don't have to wait outside of the medically recommended window for any type of surgery that would be required.

I recently met with representatives from the hospitals closest to where I grew up, well, probably two equidistant hospitals, one in Slave Lake and one in High Prairie. The High Prairie hospital: we opened the new building when I was minister. I was very excited about that. They still haven't been able to deliver babies in that hospital. Well, I shouldn't say that. Some babies have had to be delivered in the emergency department because there wasn't time to get them somewhere else. But it is certainly not recommended to be delivering babies in that environment and is only a very last-minute emergency response when necessary.

We should get back to the practice of making it safe for people throughout the province to be able to deliver as close to home as possible. We know that more stress is not good for either baby or parent. One of the reasons why they haven't been able to deliver close to home is because they haven't been able to secure anaesthesiologists. Anaesthesiologists are a finite resource. We only have so many in the province. We would love to have more people trained and move here who are anaesthesiologists.

The principle that has governed my philosophy around public health care is around triage and making sure that you have those who are most in need be able to access the care that they need. Instead, what we've seen under the current government and that I worry that this bill will continue to further is an expansion of private delivery and now an expansion of insured services being moved out, so people being expected to pay for things that are currently insured, pay for additional private insurance to be able to jump a queue and to get into a line for private services, whether it be a family doctor through a fee-style system or whether it be other types of things like surgeries.

Those anaesthetists that we have right now, certainly not enough, have a choice between working in a rural community like High Prairie

with just a few thousand people who live there, when the acuity of the cases you have could range, when you don't know how full your operating room will be or if it will be full on a regular basis, or you can work in Edmonton or Calgary in a 9 to 5 environment where everyone is low acuity and high volume. So you're being asked to consider a job in an urban centre with more predictability and less risk and more pay or a job in a rural community with variable pay, increased concerns about what types of cases you'll be seeing, increased responsibility, and not a lot of folks – nobody has in fact done their medical school in High Prairie, so we're asking people to move and relocate there in a community where there are no rental properties and there hasn't been an investment in government housing either.

I will say that those are the types of things, when I'm travelling this province, that people talk to me about for real concrete solutions. So to the folks of Big Lakes county, including the representative from my hometown, Roberta Hunt: hats off for the continued advocacy that they do day in and day out on behalf of all folks who live in that region. It would be wise for the government to think about the downstream impacts of the decisions that they make on bills like this that result in fewer and fewer services and professionals who are available to practise in rural Alberta as a result.

While the government might say that it won't immediately create a two-tier, American-style system, it does absolutely give the minister the authority to expand this type of service through private health care markets alongside the existing public or mixed public-private health care delivery systems through ministerial order or regulation. This bill does amend, as I mentioned, I believe it's eight different pieces of legislation, the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act being probably the largest one but also the Compassionate Intervention Act.

I want to say that, like many people, I'm sure, in this room and who are watching this debate, I know people who struggle with addiction, and I know people who have put their hand up time and time again to seek access to detox and to treatment and been turned away because there isn't enough capacity for those who voluntarily want to go. If the government wanted to do something right now to increase and to demonstrate compassion, it would be to find a way to make sure that Henwood can be reopened immediately.

We've lost those beds, and originally what was said was that it was because of the flooding that happened here in Edmonton in July. Henwood is somewhere that is being publicly funded, a publicly delivered addictions treatment centre, and it has been full. I imagine the only time that they have flexibility in beds is if somebody has left, and the next day it'll be filled. This is a space that has been shut down now since July, and that is of significant concern. So if they want to actually do something around demonstrating compassion to those who are struggling with addictions and desperately want to have an opportunity to live another day, they would act as swiftly as possible to open publicly funded, publicly delivered detox and treatment spaces. It is still a significant barrier for the vast majority of people who want to access them.

They would also make sure that they weren't doing things through the Health Professions Act that could cause concerns down the road to – sorry; I just want to say that there are pieces in the Health Professions Act that are being amended around the protection for persons in care amendments. I hope that those are general housekeeping amendments, but I know that folks have a lot of concerns around things being less transparent than they once were, and that certainly is the case. The last time we saw changes made around the minimum hours of care for people who are living in continuing care facilities, it was about removing the floor, that really base minimum of what would be required for hours of care. What people are asking for – patients, patients' family members, and staff – is to have staffing ratios put into legislation to make sure that there are minimum hours of care that are higher than what the floor used to be.

1:00

By saying, "Well, taking out the minimum, we're allowing for more flexibility" – flexibility means lower standards in this case because there's always a flexibility to provide greater care than what was the floor, but now the floor is removed. So that creates flexibility for providers to provide even less care than what was previously required. Nobody has asked for that when I've been out canvassing.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

There are also additional amendments to the Protection for Persons in Care Act as well as the Public Health Act, the Public Service Employee Relations Act – again, we're told that this is housekeeping related to the transition to the four new health agencies that have been created, so many agencies, so many new CEOs, executive directors, boards often, adding to the upper-level management and bureaucracy within the system – the Public Sector Employers Act as well as the Pharmacy and Drug Act, Madam Speaker. These changes are broad and sweeping. That's why this bill is so significant. Again to highlight, this is the second time in this session that we're dealing with a health statutes amendment act. This is something that the government continues to move forward on even though Albertans across the province are saying that this is not the solution.

The real solution is investing in the front lines. I think that anyone who's had to wait in an emergency department knows that we need more front-line care, we need more acute-care capacity, that we desperately need that hospital that should have been opened in Edmonton this year to be built, and that we need to make sure that across this province we have expanded access to health care providers on the front lines, not just increased management, often sitting in offices in Edmonton and Calgary, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others to Bill 39?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak to Bill 39, the first opportunity I've had to speak to a health bill since recently taking on the shadow minister portfolio for Mental Health and Addiction, so I appreciate the chance. What we have here with Bill 39, as my colleagues have ably noted, is the UCP government giving themselves more power to make major decisions that affect access to our public health care system behind closed doors.

As my colleague from Edmonton-Decore laid out, this has been part of a pattern of bills: Bill 55, which allowed private as opposed to public entities to operate our hospitals; Bill 11, which removed the long-standing firewall between doctors simultaneously working in both the public and the private system; and then, of course, Bill 29, which allowed for self-referral and private pay for diagnostic services. It's been part of a pattern that we see from this government across the board where they seek to undermine public services.

Now public services, Madam Speaker – health care, education, all of these things – are intended to serve everyone, to ensure that everyone can have equal access to quality services, but this government has no interest in serving everyone. They've made that very clear throughout their time in government. They're not here to serve all Albertans. No. They're here to serve big corporations like the ones the Premier used to lobby for, the ones that are lobbying them now. They're here to serve people with deep pockets, serve their donors, serve their party members, and that's what they've been doing with their previous work to try to privatize health care.

This isn't about serving all Albertans. It's serving their agenda, and that's what they're continuing to do here. Their agenda is to throttle and starve the public system, exhaust front-line workers who provide the

care in it while at the same time boosting and enabling a parallel private system to compete.

We knew this was their intent, Madam Speaker. We talked about this during the 2023 election. They denied the fact, but the fact is that the Premier, on the record before becoming the Premier, said, "once people get used to the concept of paying out of pocket for more things themselves then we can change the conversation on health care." That was the Premier's intent. That was her agenda. I'd say she's been successful. Albertans' conversation about health care is about how much worse it's gotten since this Premier came in.

Now, of course, we have on this file, Madam Speaker, one of the health care ministers, and we have four now. They love to multiply the bureaucracy. One of the ministers that's taken the lead on this is the same minister who did much of the same in our education system, undermining teachers and school boards, forcing a new funding model that year over year cut into budgets in Edmonton and Calgary and other major cities and growing municipalities in Alberta.

They're doing the same thing in social services, Madam Speaker, under the former minister of community and social services and the current minister of social services, carrying on that fine legacy of stripping funding from organizations that have been serving and advocating for their communities for years, decades in some cases, in favour now of bigger, more consolidated corporate contracts or handing out contracts to friends of the government. And they are, as I said, creating competition and undermining public services in part because they give the private providers all of the easiest work, the simplest surgeries, the easiest cases to handle, the easiest work to do. Hey, those are the easiest ones to make a profit. And you know what? Those are the easiest ones in which to claim a success.

See, the public providers get the tough cases, the most expensive ones, the ones where it's a lot harder to prove success. It takes more time. At the same time this government leaves those public entities, those public services, those public health care providers underfunded and understaffed, so it's a vicious circle. This government undermines them, makes their work harder, and then comes back and says: why are you doing such a terrible job compared to our corporate friends over here who seem to be doing so much better?

It's a manufactured result, Madam Speaker. That's what this government does. They manipulate, they manufacture to serve their ideological agenda every bit as much as their so-called consultations on things like the referendum, the Alberta Next Panel, hey, their rigged election map. This government manufactures the results they want to see, and they do that to the point that they're willing to attack and undermine our public services to create more excuses to privatize. This is a government that's obsessed with control because, again, when you come in with that kind of an ideological agenda as we see here in Bill 39 in the changes to public health care, when you know it's not going to be supported, well then you need to have control. You know what you want to pursue doesn't line up with the facts, it doesn't line up with best practice, so you have to squash and control the people that are working in that system so that they lose all will to resist, so they don't dare speak publicly and undermine you.

That is what we've seen this government do. I mean, hey, particularly when you lack competence, Madam Speaker, on top of that ideological agenda and have no idea how to actually advance these things, how to do these things properly and efficiently, as we've seen as this government has pursued $300 million in private contracts to advise them on their health care transformation because they don't want to talk to the people that actually work in the system and the people that actually know. You've got to shut down those actual experts.

You know, as I said, I've recently had the honour of taking on the file for Mental Health and Addiction, and we've seen a lot of that happen there with this government. While I haven't held the file, I've certainly thought about it a lot, talked with a lot, worked with the Member for Calgary-Currie a lot because it affects my community directly. What we've seen on that file with this government under consecutive ministers is that they strip funding from the organizations that have served the community for years, the folks that have deep expertise in dealing with complex cases, with cultural competency, like organizations that have been serving Indigenous communities for decades, folks that work with youth, both public programs and facilities and nonprofits. This government has been systematically undermining them, stripping their funding, making it harder for them to do their work.

Just this week we met with folks from HSAA, you know, and there was somebody there who works as an addictions counsellor in a public program, decades of experience in helping Albertans with complex needs find stability, sobriety, recovery, youth in particular, a specialty in youth coming out of the corrections system. What that individual told me was how much harder their work has become, increasingly challenging because they're short on funding and they're short on staff because staff are getting exhausted and burnt out.

What they were telling me is actually the same thing we heard from paramedics. Those folks get stressed; they get burnt out; they can't handle the pressure. They either quit or they move to casual. And when they move to casual, they do that because, well, they can't handle the full-time hours, the stress, the shift work. They at least get to pick and choose their shifts on casual, but that means then that those that are left working there full-time have less and less support. They're sending the e-mails out and making the phone calls to the 40 people that are in their pool of casuals, but those folks are burnt out. They might not come in. You have less staff available to do this complex work.

1:10

Here's the other thing, Madam Speaker. Again, we're talking about how this government is systematically undermining and gutting the public system. These trained addictions counsellors are folks who – let's be clear – have one to four years of education, earning a diploma or a degree. When they quit, the government is systematically replacing them not with new addictions counsellors but with peer support workers or recovery coaches. These are folks who by comparison have a high school diploma. These are the requirements: high school diploma, lived experience, and a short specialized certificate course, 12 to 82 hours of training.

There's no comparison, Madam Speaker. That's what you call deskilling: taking away skilled employees, replacing them with people with fewer skills and less experience who are able to provide only a lower level of care. They're certainly not able to handle the kinds of complex cases like they see in that particular facility. That's a disservice both to the people who need the support, Madam Speaker, and a disservice to those workers. You send somebody with 12 to 82 hours of training into these spaces. We have young people that have come out of the corrections system who have challenges regulating their emotions. You're putting them potentially in danger.

But this is what we see this government doing, and with Bill 39 it is just another step in that direction in giving the minister the power to do more of that, to apply that to more and more areas of our health care system without ever setting foot in this Legislature. It's a stroke of a pen behind closed doors. Albertans won't know about it until they're the ones showing up in need of care and it's not there.

It's what we're seeing across the province. That's what we're seeing, as my colleague from Edmonton-Glenora noted, at the Henwood treatment facility here in Edmonton. Henwood specialized in complex cases. They were unique in the landscape, and this government is in no hurry to restore that. In fact, I'll be surprised if it comes back as the public facility it was. Chances are it's going to be privatized, handed over to another one of this government's corporate partners. Albertans who have complex needs are going to find themselves without access.

We see it across the province. These guys keep undermining and displacing the public programs and facilities in favour of these private contracts with these companies that didn't even come from Alberta. They came from outside Alberta, and they've been steadily building their own little corporate kingdom here, fed by government contracts, taxpayer dollars, most of them introduced to Alberta by the Premier's former chief of staff. We all know how the quality of the contracts that that individual helped facilitate in Alberta is going. It's the subject of RCMP investigations.

Bill 39 does make changes to this government's intended system of forced intervention, compulsory treatment. Again, the fact is that this government isn't interested in doing the actual work, solving the actual complex problems. We still have people on the streets in my constituency who, when they voluntarily want to go and get help, are facing four to six weeks to voluntarily access treatment. Individuals that this government has been allowing to be dropped off in Chinatown with no connection to supports are not allowed to apply for access to treatment before they leave the correctional centre. That's a change under this government.

This government isn't interested, again, in actually doing the right things. They're interested in the things that let them claim easy wins while they ignore the hard work, things that let them hand out more private contracts to their friends and supporters. We see them continue to seize more direct control but not actually solve the real problems, designing new, more privatized systems that require significant new bureaucracy to implement. Let's be absolutely clear. This compassionate intervention system is a massive expansion, and we have seen no evidence that this is a government that has the capability to manage something that complex. It's certainly a government that hasn't demonstrated that they have any understanding of the legal implications for people's rights as they continue to invoke the notwithstanding clause.

We all agree that we need to have a level of support, programs for individuals who may not be able to help themselves, and I see the evidence and the impact of that in my community. What I hear from people in my community is that, yeah, they want to see solutions, but what we are seeing from this government and their record and their program does not give me any confidence. The fact is that this is a government that promised in 2021 11 recovery communities. Six years later they've managed to get six open, one more potentially about to open, and four others still in progress and mired in legal challenges, again, because of shady contracts and what sure looks like corruption under this government.

There is nothing in Bill 39 that is going to make things better for my constituents, for my constituency, or for Albertans in general. What it does is advance a crooked agenda from this government, one they hid from Albertans and did not campaign on and one that is leaving Albertans suffering in emergency rooms, in their homes, waiting for an ambulance, or trying to get care for a loved one who is struggling with addiction.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to join the debate on Bill 39, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2). Certainly, this is, once again, another omnibus bill that the UCP is bringing forward. Of course, what that means is that there are several previous pieces of legislation that have been opened up and are impacted by one document. Of course, this makes it difficult for legislators in this Assembly to debate this bill because maybe they agree with some aspects of it but not others. But it's one package, so we only have one vote. You know, if there are particularly egregious parts of it, then maybe there are some parts that are okay, but we can't vote for it, then. We have to vote against it. Of course, that is what we in the opposition are going to do because, again, this bill takes us further down the path that the UCP has set us on of privatization, which, of course, is creating much chaos in our health care system.

My hon. colleagues have spoken extensively about this already, but I'd like to start also by talking a bit about one of the aspects of this bill, which gives the minister much more extensive powers for creation of regulations and orders. Just to be clear, what that means is that when a minister gets to make orders and regulations, they don't bring those to the House, this Assembly here, where we're all sitting. It's a hidden process. It's not transparent. Of course, I know that the UCP likes to say how much they care about democracy and all the things that democracy is, but I mean, this shows, once again, how that's just smoke and mirrors. That's not even true at all.

We know that a principle of democracy is accountability and transparency. Governments must explain and justify their actions. The public institutions must operate openly. Media, Legislatures, watchdog bodies, the public in general should be able to scrutinize legislation when it comes forward with big decisions, but of course this bill makes it possible for none of that to happen. That's all done in the minister's office behind closed doors, and we don't get to know about it until it's done. We just get a report, orders in council.

1:20

This is another example of the erosion of democracy in our province. The UCP has the pen in their hand creating that erosion, and it's shameful, Madam Speaker. These are big decisions, too. The types of categories for the ministerial orders that can be provided are about participating physicians and flexibility, participating in dual practice, who pays for these services, what is publicly funded and what is privately financed, diagnostic and laboratory services. These are things that the public should be able to hear about before the decision is made. Of course, this bill is saying: no, we're not going to give the public that opportunity. We're not going to give other elected members of the Assembly here in opposition – we don't get to hear about that, and even their own backbenchers won't. It really is a significant erosion, once again, and I have deep concerns about that.

There are all sorts of other concerns in this bill that I'd like to talk about as well. For example, again, looking at the Alberta health insurance act, we know that they've already made some big changes to that. You know, I often hear from many people in my constituency office, and I hear from people across the province because I am the shadow minister for seniors, continuing care, and home care. Seniors write to me from all across the province. I hear about their concerns, and I take them to heart and advocate for them on their behalf.

I did receive a letter, and it wasn't from my constituent, but it was certainly about the health insurance act and some of the previous decisions by this government. This is from someone who lives in Vegreville. I'm going to read part of this to the Assembly because I think it's very important. He says:

> I'm writing to express my concerns about the UCP's [legislation] and its repercussions on seniors with health care [private insurance] plans. We were informed by our pharmacist that under the new rules for expenses for prescriptions, our [private] health care provider would be the first payment, and when that plan

> reaches its limit . . . [which is] $2,500, then Alberta Blue Cross for seniors would continue to pay, but we would be responsible to co-pay 30 per cent. Before . . . Blue Cross was the first payment . . .

Right? This is legislation that the UCP had changed previously, and they paid up to 70 per cent.

> . . . then our health care plan would pick up the 30 per cent co-pay on most prescriptions, essentially costing us next to nothing.

His wife has serious health issues.

> The pharmacist told us our private health care plan would be rapidly exhausted. That would mean we would now be responsible to pay for 30 per cent of our prescription bills covered by Blue Cross. Also, our private provider has notified us the new . . . payment scheme would require our premiums per month to increase to cover the extra costs. I think this is unfair to the people of Alberta with private health care plans and a hardship, in particular, [for] seniors and those on fixed incomes. I contacted my MLA in Vegreville, her assistant took my [information] and forwarded my concerns to someone in the Legislature

but we haven't heard back.

This is obviously going to cause some significant hardship for a senior in our province. This was a previous decision. These decisions to change the way things have been done are creating tremendous hardship during an affordability crisis for many seniors on a fixed income.

Another act I'd like to look at which is also in this Bill 39 is about the Compassionate Intervention Act. It really causes me a lot of difficulty even to say that because it's not. It's, like, the heartless intervention act. It has taken away harm reduction programs in our province. We know there's been a significant amount of research done that demonstrates that harm reduction programs save lives. We know that they reduce deaths, disease, transmissions, and other health harms. They create less need for emergency services like having ambulances have to respond because there are supervised consumption sites available that are staffed with compassionate, caring people who work in those facilities. But of course, the UCP has closed most of those facilities, leaving people on the streets. They are not being supported, and that is increasing very significantly the harm done to people in our province.

We know that these methods, supervised consumption sites, are the most evidence-based public health approaches for keeping people alive in our province, and they have taken them away, which is why I call it the heartless intervention act, because it is not compassionate. It is, you know, extremely disturbing that the evidence that has so clearly been demonstrated is just rejected by this government to support their opinions, to do things as they will without realizing the great harm that they're causing vulnerable people.

I mean, I'd just like to explain this a bit more. We know that in supervised consumption sites staff develop relationships with people who are coming to a safe environment to, you know, be cared for. Because of that, they are able to influence them, so these are actually oftentimes brokers for other services: affordable housing, mental health services, other health services, maybe even helping them access ID because they don't have ID because of some circumstance.

There are so many services that these facilities offered that are gone. Guess what happens now. You have to be incarcerated to access services. I mean, it's heinous. It makes absolutely no sense. We had a system in place that made a huge difference. There were absolutely no deaths in any supervised consumption site in Alberta, and the UCP just totally ignored the evidence and the supports that these very important facilities gave people. I just want to reiterate again that harm reduction services are a pathway to recovery. The UCP doesn't seem to understand that, but the evidence has shown that so, so dramatically.

Now, I want to talk about another act that this bill also identifies, opens up, and it's the Protection for Persons in Care Act. Earlier today I had the opportunity to ask a question to the minister of assisted living, actually, about that. One of the things is that in the continuing care system in Alberta, if people have concerns about their loved ones, whether they be their parent, their husband, a wife, a friend, the Protection for Persons in Care Act gives people the opportunity to put forward a complaint if there is a concern with care. Under the UCP's watch since they were elected, these founded complaints have tripled – have tripled – which is a very clear indicator of how much crisis the continuing care system really is in.

It's to do with many things that the UCP has done to create, you know, just sort of the whole health care system being thrown up in the air and having changing responsibility, changing ministers, so much confusion. People don't really know what's going on.

Since 2019 the UCP have said: we're going to review the funding model. Certainly, I mean, I talk to operators all the time, and I'm sure the minister does, too. That's the number one concern because oftentimes people in the continuing care system are becoming increasingly vulnerable.

1:30

It's true that people often are entering the continuing care system at an older age now and often are much more vulnerable, so it's not realistic, the funding model we have. The UCP, even though they made promises back in 2019 that they were going to update the funding model to be more realistic and, you know, help the operators, because most of the operators now are running big deficits – the residents themselves aren't getting the support they need – still that's been several years and nothing has changed.

Also, in my question earlier on I did reference a report that I tabled in this House not long ago by Chris Ryan, who's a resident of a continuing care facility. Just to summarize that report, he says that the conclusions of the report are bleak. He compares residents of continuing care to people who are in prison in Canada. Prisoners sometimes have higher standards of living than residents of continuing care. Underfunding exacerbates the condition. The underfunding is apparent, especially in the night shift, he says. One resident reported having to wait an hour in her own feces every other night while waiting for assistance from the night shift staff. The data also show a 14-hour emergency call bell wait.

As a continuing care centre for young adults – Chris isn't actually a senior; he needs continuing care, but he's, I think, in his 40s – this is one of the better continuing care centres in Alberta if not the best. The deficiencies described are unlikely to be the worst in the province. This report asked for increased funding and improved regulation for long-term care homes in Alberta.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you. Before moving to third reading of Bill 38, I would like to request unanimous consent of the Assembly to move to three-minute bells for the remainder of the sitting.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Government Bills and Orders
Third Reading
Bill 38
Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. McDougall: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 38, the Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

Madam Speaker, what should a student be able to expect from Alberta's postsecondary system? They should understand the rules that apply to them, and those rules should be fair, timely, and consistent. They should be free to hear, test, and express different ideas within the law, and they should have clear, more predictable information about the cost of their education. Bill 38 would establish those standards while preserving the responsibility of universities, colleges, and polytechnics to govern their own institutions, design and administer their own policies, and manage their day-to-day operations.

Throughout debate on this bill members opposite have recognized its strengths. They have acknowledged the value of good governance. They have agreed that academic programs should better connect learners with opportunities in Alberta's economy. We agree, Madam Speaker. That's why this bill is great for Albertans, and I encourage everyone in the House to support Bill 38. At the same time members opposite have tried to portray this legislation as a plan to make education unaffordable. They said that it's going to silence campuses and allow government to interfere in institutional decisions. Those claims are false and not at all what Bill 38 does.

Students and families deserve facts rather than fear, and the opposition has said that the entire purpose of Bill 38 is to increase tuition by ministerial order. This is simply false. A tuition maximum is a ceiling. It is not a target, it is not an automatic increase, and it is certainly not permission for unlimited increases. Under the current funding model an institution may increase tuition in an individual program by as much as 10 per cent provided its average increase across the institution does not exceed 2 per cent.

Bill 38 would replace the growth cap model with maximum tuition amounts for programs or groups of programs. Institutions would continue to set tuition, but they would do so within the applicable maximum. For existing students in '27-28 the protection would be clear. Their tuition increase would be limited to the lower of 2 per cent or the applicable ministerial maximum. That is not making education unaffordable.

They have also argued that Bill 38 would make access to education depend on a student's parents. That claim ignores what this government is actually doing. Our government has removed parental income from provincial student aid assessments. For eligible students that change is expected to provide access to an additional $118 million in provincial student loans within the existing disbursement budget. With this change Alberta is once again the only province in Canada to not include parental income in our provincial student aid assessments. The other side of the aisle has also repeated broad claims through debate on Bill 38 that this government has made past cuts to advanced education, but Madam Speaker, they did so by glossing over the facts. Budget 2026 provides $2.2 billion for postsecondary operations, $125 million more than in '25-26.

The second principle at the heart of Bill 38 is institutional neutrality: the freedom to speak, to listen, to question, and to disagree at postsecondary campuses in Alberta. Madam Speaker, we've been very clear that when it comes to Bill 38 and institutional neutrality, it applies to the official voice of an institution. It does not impose neutrality on individual students, faculty, or staff. It does not tell a professor what to teach. It does not tell a researcher which conclusions to reach. It does not allow government to approve or veto speakers, and it does not prevent an institution from criticizing governments on matters connected to its academic mission or operations, including funding.

Institutional neutrality is not a new or untested idea. It traces back to the University of Chicago's Kalven Report in 1967. In Alberta the University of Calgary adopted its own policy in 2025, recognizing that a university speaks with many voices, not one, and the Expert Panel on Postsecondary Institution Funding and Alberta's Competitiveness recommended the government expect all public postsecondary institutions to adhere to that principle. Across Canada Memorial University, the University of Waterloo, and Laurentian University have adopted their own statements and policies, and around the world universities, including Harvard, Stanford, and the University of Michigan along with a growing number of universities in the United Kingdom, have done the same.

Bill 38 asks Alberta's institutions to follow a principle that others have already chosen to adopt, and we are developing the neutrality regulations in consultation with postsecondary institutions and students. The Alberta Post-secondary Network, representing the presidents of Alberta's 27 publicly funded postsecondary institutions, supports the neutrality initiative because they know, in consultation with this government, that the goal is to create the best environment for our postsecondary students to learn.

Madam Speaker, the same concern for fairness also applies to student codes of conduct. Members opposite say that institutions already have codes, and they would be right. The existence of codes is not the issue. The issue is whether every student can count on clear rules and a fair process, regardless of the campus they attend. As I have said throughout this debate, the review my department did of nearly 200 student code policies and procedures found significant variation among institutions. Bill 38 would allow government to establish minimum requirements so codes are clearly written, accessible, and easy to understand, processes are fair, timely, and transparent, and privacy and confidentiality requirements are clear.

The opposition has also suggested that these standards will allow the ministry to decide individual conduct cases. That is false. Government would set the minimum standard and provide oversight. It would not become the campus disciplinary office. A common floor is not a takeover. A requirement for fairness is not censorship.

1:40

The opposition has also warned that terms such as neutrality may be interpreted differently and could result in legal disputes. The answer to a concept requiring careful definition is not to abandon the principle. It is to define it carefully and implement it responsibly. We will continue that work through 2027.

Madam Speaker, during Committee of the Whole this House adopted a minor housekeeping amendment to section 2 of the bill. It renames the committee referred to in proposed sections 64.1 and 70.1 from a complaint review committee to a complaints inquiry committee.

Madam Speaker, Bill 38 also makes practical changes to the Professional Governance Act. APEGA and ASET jointly requested a transfer in the regulation and oversight of professional technologists. The bill will bring professional technologists and professional licensees together in one licensee class regulated by APEGA.

Madam Speaker, after debate on Bill 38 the choice before this House is clear. We can preserve a tuition model that permits increases of up to 10 per cent in an individual program, or we can establish clear program-based ceilings and protect existing students through the transition. We can allow the official voice of an institution to crowd

out the diversity of the people within it, or we can protect the campus culture where students and scholars are free to test ideas, challenge assumptions, and peacefully disagree within the law.

The opposition has tried to make this bill sound frightening, but when the rhetoric is stripped away, Bill 38 is practical and balanced. Above all, it puts students at the centre, their ability to plan, their right to fair treatment, their freedom to think and speak, and their opportunity to build a future in Alberta.

For those reasons, Madam Speaker, I am proud to move third reading of Bill 38, the Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, and I urge all members of this House to support it. Thank you.

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

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 38, Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2026, in third reading. You know, it's interesting that during the course of this debate, from introduction till today, I've had an opportunity to speak to quite a number of institutions, students, faculty, and so forth. Just yesterday we had quite a large number of schools presenting at the Leg. view centre over at the federal building.

I made a point of speaking to everybody, each of the schools represented, and nobody was supporting this bill, right? You know, I thought to myself: well, maybe we've just imagined some of these things and, as the minister very thoughtfully pointed out, there are perhaps some misunderstandings. Well, I don't think so. There are so many things wanting in our advanced education system, our polytechnics, our colleges, our universities. We've seen a record amount of money being taken out over the last seven years under this UCP government for operating expenses, more than a billion dollars taken out of the system.

When we see an advanced education bill finally show up on the Order Paper, everybody gets excited because there are so many outstanding things that need to be done. We saw a report as well, the Mintz report, that had a wide-ranging series of recommendations for advanced education, saying that advanced education's time has come. The time has come to reinvest in our universities, colleges, and polytechnics.

We have a record growth in our population, young people moving through the K to 12 system, and by golly, Madam Speaker, they need a place to go to postsecondary afterwards, right? If we built all of those schools, 240 from our side and a few on the other side even, those schools are all full of kids, and they need a place to go to postsecondary. To go to trades, to go to polytechnics, to go to colleges or universities: whatever they choose to do, we need to provide that. That's the responsibility of the government. That's the responsibility of Advanced Education. Do we see any of that reinvestment for the future that the Mintz report recommends and, Lord knows, all of the schools are recommending, too? No, we don't, and that's the starting point for my concern about Bill 38.

What it does do is try to demonstrate that you're doing something or maybe talk about doing something, but it doesn't really do much of anything at all, you know. Here we are, using valuable time putting advanced education on the Order Paper but really not following through with the things that matter most. These are my criticisms, and they are continuing as well.

I mean, the one thing I do want to point out, and the minister mentioned it quite rightly – it's not in the bill, though, but it was mentioned or announced alongside Bill 38 – is the exemption for parental income as a determining factor for someone applying for a student loan.

An Hon. Member: That's good.

Mr. Eggen: Yeah. I mean, I don't disagree with that at all.

Let's just be clear. It's not in the bill, right? The minister just kind of tagged it on there because he realized, you know, that we needed a little more meat on this thing. It's just a lot of talk about institutional neutrality and codes of conduct and whatnot, as if we don't have those already. Yes, we do. So they needed to put something in there that maybe made this look a little more substantial, so at the same time they did announce that issue on measuring parental income as part of the determining factor for someone to receive a loan. I agree with that. I mean, I think that's a good idea.

There is another half to that, though, that they missed. Maybe we can talk about it later, but it's spousal income, right? Again, this can be quite a sticky thing, Madam Speaker, because, of course, you can say, "Well, spousal income is all in the same household," and so forth, but, you know, you have many different relationships out there, and people can be estranged from their spouse, their partner. Do we want someone to be unable to go to school and get a student loan because their partner, who they didn't even live with anymore or they have a fight over whatever or there's a problem, says no or has too much income? There has to be some separation there, so I think if we want to look constructively at student loans, that should be included. We can talk about that later, too, absolutely. The minister and I talk to each other, of course. We constructively criticize. He does the same thing to me, and we look for something better.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

Here's another one that we can do for sure, and we will have a private member's bill coming for this straight away – right? – the issue of interest rates on student loans. Many other jurisdictions across the country, around the world have a differentiated interest rate for a student loan. You know, you put a student loan – people pay them back. The interest rates in Alberta are too high, so for us to make a differentiated interest rate or to remove the interest rates from student loans is an idea whose time has come. Is it in Bill 38? No, it's not, but maybe we can put it in somewhere else later. That's what I'm going to do when we win the next election. We're going to fix that problem. And we have a private member's bill that you all could vote for coming up right away. Yeah.

An Hon. Member: Let's do it.

Mr. Eggen: Yeah. Let's do it. Let's do it. Let's stay later tonight. We can start right now.

Yeah. We have a number of issues here. I just want to cover them. There's another problem. This is a trend that I see from this UCP government, where they put a whole bunch in sort of a grab bag. I mean, you can tell by the statutes amendment act. That's a code byword for a grab bag of ideas. You know, they put a couple of good ideas in with things that we can't accept. The whole section around professional associations and so forth, particularly APEGA: I think that's great, right? We all do. We talk to these associations all the time, and the amendments that they're making in Bill 38 around professional associations, particularly engineering and so forth: I think that they're just fine.

Unfortunately, they're tagged in with a bill that is not so fine. Like I said, all of the postsecondaries that I've spoken to, including yesterday and in Calgary last week when I was there, people said: no, we don't like this bill. It wastes an opportunity to actually make advanced education reform.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Yeah. I mean, the other parts of it, right? We talked about this code of conduct. Hi, Mr. Speaker. The code of conduct: schools, every single university that I know of, all 27 public ones, already have codes of conduct, right? It's, like, you know, trying to cause a problem where there is no problem. I see this being acted out in lots of different ways where you're implying that there is a problem. When you do that, you're also sending a message: "We're watching you. You better behave yourselves because we're going to watch you, and we're going to have a code of conduct to slap around, too."

1:50

Now, the minister says: oh, well, it's a neutral thing. He did acknowledge that they already have codes of conduct. Well, gee whiz, then why are we doing this? What's the point? Again, it's to send a message. I believe it's a chilling message to say: "Hey, behave yourself. Self-regulate because we're watching you. We have a code of conduct. We're not asking the institutions. We're telling you what this is going to be, and we'll change it over time as we see fit." There's an implied threat in there that we just don't need any time, especially right now.

Same with institutional neutrality. The minister acknowledges that, you know, schools all over the world are having a movement, to some degree, of institutional neutrality. Well, good for them. People can choose to do it. Institutions can make choices around their governance. That's what they do. Again, not asking them to do this; Alberta is telling them to do this, right? Again, you know, it's performative. It's like: we're doing something in advanced education. No, you're not. I mean, these are things that already exist, or you're just having some words on paper.

Those are my main concerns. The overriding elephant in the room is affordability. Many, many of our students can't go to school anymore. They have to drop out, or they have to take five years instead of four. Everybody has got a part-time job, it seems, because it costs too much to go to school. This affordability issue is literally eating a giant hole in each of our colleges, universities, and polytechnics around the province, so we need to do something about it. We need to restore funding to ensure that they're not just keeping the lights on in our schools but they thrive and flourish for now and the next generation.

The change in tuition, as the minister, you know, made some great lengths to point out. He said: well, you know, I'm not going to change it; I'm going to put a cap on it. There's no cap there. I mean, he didn't actually say what the cap is going to be. You don't change things around tuition to lower the tuition, I don't think. I very strongly suspect that it's in order to have increases in tuition and significant ones and different tuitions for different subjects and so forth, this clustering concept, which I find highly problematic. So do most other schools as well, particularly some of the smaller ones.

Yesterday I saw – the minister was there at the same event that I was. You know, a lot of these schools – like, Portage is – what? – 2,000 students maybe. Keyano. I mean, these are schools that are a similar size to a large urban high school, right? They don't have the latitude and the economies of scale to deal with something like clustering and differentiated tuition for different subjects and all this kind of stuff. Their margins are very thin. Lakeland, as well, I spoke to; a whole bunch of them. Their margins are very thin. They don't have latitude to adjust to some large-scale clustering model and to differentiated tuition and all this stuff. That is a huge problem, and, quite frankly, I think we can do much, much better.

So those are my concerns, that I've outlined before. I think they're not unreasonable. I think there's constructive criticism built into them that the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Minister of Advanced Education can take note of, and maybe we can fix it.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Mr. Kasawski: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Happy to rise on Bill 38 and give some thoughts. But I do want to just respond to the minister's comments, which I appreciate him bringing into debate. He brought up a couple of terms that really were interesting to hear, and I think when he hears them said back to him, he's going to say: "Well, that does sound funny. Thank you, Member, for bringing that up."

Neutrality regulations. I mean, just pause on that for a second. This is part of the minister's neutrality initiative. I think he said that there's going to be a neutrality inquiry committee. I mean, I don't know if enough people remember the history books that talk about McCarthyism, but they probably have read *1984*, where there's doublespeak mentioned. This whole talk of selective or institutional neutrality is something that's really of concern to me.

I think I'd like to highlight another irony, and that is that the Premier does not really love freedom of expression. I'm not sure where this fits with the neutrality inquiry committee, but the Premier has stated that anyone in the public institution of the United Conservative Party that's representing or speaking on behalf of the party must uphold the results of the referendum on separation. The Premier does not approve of freedom of expression within her own party, so she certainly does not approve of the freedom of expression by students at an Alberta advanced education institution.

Mr. Speaker, I really do think that this bill, the sections of this bill on neutrality, compelling neutrality, is coming from thin-skinned Conservatives that do not like democracy and do everything they can to stifle it. The UCP hate variety. One might even say that the UCP hates diversity.

They love consolidation, though, Mr. Speaker, consolidation of power. It's probably why they're so enamoured with the consolidation of the grocery chains across our province that will rebrand themselves and set themselves up in a new location, and the government believes that somehow that's going to lower the cost of groceries for Albertans. What would lower the cost of groceries for Albertans is more competition and more independent grocers.

The Speaker: Hon. member, is that part of the bill that's before us? Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Kasawski: You know, Mr. Speaker, we support entrepreneurs and independent small grocers on this side of the House. We also support variety and independent thinking and diversity on campuses, and the UCP do not.

Bill 38 is trying to compel neutrality. The thing is that we already have a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that provides protections and responsibilities for Canadians on and off campus. There's a redundant piece of legislation that is coming into this place, and it's being brought in because of the culture wars that the UCP love to bring up in this Legislature, that waste an enormous amount of time and an enormous amount of energy.

I suspect it's all in anticipation of the end of the month, when all of the members from the UCP are going to have to go and face their party members at a convention. They want to make sure that they've brought in some legislation that is going to be satisfying to those members, legislation that has led to a ban on flags in schools throughout the province, which now the government has recognized is going to be creating more waste because they would have to put new flagpoles and additional flagpoles in front of every school in this province so that we can only have two flags. Bill 38 is a copy and paste from MAGA legislation from the U.S. that does not have any relevance in Canada, where we have the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But it panders to the UCP members that'll be attending the convention and makes them feel like somehow there's

some improvement being made to Alberta through Bill 38, through these neutrality initiatives.

Canadians have freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression under the Charter. Canadians also have freedom of peaceful assembly under the Charter, but the courts have ruled and interpreted on this enough to recognize that your opportunity to have free thought, free beliefs, and free expression does not mean that you get to assemble anywhere you want. A university campus, postsecondary campus, advanced education institutions: they are able to control who is able to come on and off of their campus. It's not up to the provincial government to help their friends that are thin-skinned bigots. Fascists, racists, misogynists, revisionist historians, hate groups, conspiracy promoters, antiscience bloviators: it's not up to this government to make sure they can go onto a campus.

2:00

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader with a point of order, did I hear?

Point of Order
Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Schow: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think you heard exactly what I heard. Insinuating that those are our friends would be something that's wildly inappropriate and does bring a level of decorum in this Chamber that I don't think is becoming of members in good standing. Under 23(h), (i), and (j) I'd ask that member to retract and apologize for that lengthy list of absurd phrases and individuals that he would associate with our caucus. That's just absurd. Trust me. If you want to go down that road, I've got a list of my own.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, under 23(h), (i), and (j), making allegations against another member, false or unavowed motives to another member – I suppose it's up to your interpretation on (j), whether it's abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to cause disorder. But what I will say is that, again, the remarks were directed as a collective. The member was speculating on or perhaps referencing types of individuals we have indeed seen the Premier sit down in interviews with, that we have seen invited to members of the government's own town halls sponsored by their constituency associations or indeed its own . . .

The Speaker: Yeah. Let's spare the debate and deal with the point of order. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Mr. Shepherd: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. Are we not normally allowed to defend on a point of order?

The Speaker: You were drifting from argument on the point of order and into debate.

Mr. Shepherd: Okay. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, then.

The Speaker: I don't mind. You get to ask and now you've got an answer.

Hon. member, you're certainly bordering on debate that would raise disorder in the House, so we're not going to call a point of order, but we're going to ask you to try to not bring disorder to the House with your debate if you could, please.

Thank you.

Debate Continued

Mr. Kasawski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The point being that all Albertans' advanced education institutions own and control campus land and buildings and set the rules for using that space. Under law, trespass rules, and campus access they are able to limit who is able to come on and off campus. They are able to give permission to people and also to withhold permission to people to come onto their campus and use their space in their buildings.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is well established in this country. It's what makes us different from the United States. We do not need Bill 38 to come in with its neutrality initiative and try and change the laws of Alberta in a way that is not helpful to Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Seeing no more speakers, would the mover like to close? No closing.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 2:04 p.m.]

[Three minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

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

2:10

Against the motion:

Boparai	Hayter	Renaud
Calahoo Stonehouse	Hoffman	Schmidt
Ceci	Irwin	Shepherd
Dach	Kasawski	Sigurdson, L.
Eggen	Kayande	Tejada
Haji		

Totals:	For – 44	Against – 16

[Motion carried; Bill 38 read a third time]

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

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Children and Family Services.

Mr. Turton: Yes. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to move third reading of Bill 36, the Children and Family Services (Supporting Alberta Families) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026.

First of all, I just want to thank members on both sides of the House for their invaluable discussion, their questions, and their shared focus on the safety of children here in Alberta. Mr. Speaker, the principle behind Bill 36 is straightforward. Every child and young person in Alberta deserves to be in a safe surrounding, supported by the people who care the most about them. When a family faces a crisis and intervention is needed, our laws should not stand in the way of good decisions. They must provide clear rules, clear protections, and timely supports so that children can thrive in a stable and loving home.

Mr. Speaker, that is what Bill 36 is all about. By updating four provincial acts – the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, the Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act, the Protection Against Family Violence Act, and the Education Act – this bill puts the safety, well-being, and stability of children first.

At its heart Bill 36 delivers on three foundational goals. Number one, it helps keep children connected to their families, their culture, and their communities. It reduces the administrative burden to make processes clearer, and it strengthens protections against sexual exploitation and online harm. Everything in this bill flows directly from these three principles.

Mr. Speaker, during the debate members of the opposition questioned how this legislation supports cultural planning for Indigenous children in care, and I want to be very clear. Keeping Indigenous children connected to their families, their culture, and their communities is important to the work of Children and Family Services. This legislation enhances that work. When a child cannot remain safely at home, relationships with people they already know and trust matter more than ever. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and adult siblings help children maintain connection to their language, their culture, and who they are. They help provide stability and grounding during a very difficult time. That is why Bill 36 formally defines kinship caregivers in law and makes safe placements with extended family or close community members the explicit first choice under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, which I will refer to as CYFEA.

Bill 36 also enables a formal permanency planning framework to guide decisions about a child's future. It legislates openness agreements so that adopted children can maintain ongoing and meaningful connections with their birth families, former caregivers, and Indigenous communities that they have called home. It expands access to adoption records for adult adoptees and youth aged 16 and older who are living independently. For adoptees that are Indigenous, this helps them connect with their Indigenous heritage and their biological parents. These proposed changes did not happen in isolation. They were shared by the voices of Indigenous representatives on the CYFEA review committee and by written input from Indigenous leaders right across the province.

Now, some members have asked whether prioritizing kinship means that children will automatically be uprooted from loving, stable foster homes, and the answer is clearly no. My ministry is focused on minimizing disruptions and disrupting placement moves. Kinship priority applies when a child first enters care, when a move is already required, or when a kinship option is identified. Every decision remains anchored in one test: what serves that individual child's safety, stability, and needs?

Mr. Speaker, members opposite have also suggested that our government ignored recommendations from the CYFEA review committee because not every one of the 37 recommendations appears as a legislative amendment in Bill 36. The committee, chaired by the Member for Camrose, brought together representatives from Indigenous communities, guardians, caregivers, service providers, and MLAs from both caucuses in this Assembly. We take the 37 recommendations seriously and have reviewed each one. As my ministry reviewed each recommendation, we were pleased to see alignment with existing policy and practice so that not every recommendation needed to be in legislation. Many reinforce policy and practice already under way in the ministry, like collaborative case planning.

There are a few recommendations where the committee itself said that we should engage before determining further amendments, especially with Indigenous communities, to inform future legislative changes. Where the law itself needed to change, we acted. Bill 36 delivers immediate legislative action on kinship recognition, caregiver core participation, permanency planning, adoption openness, and modern protections against online harm. Because CYFEA mandates a comprehensive review every five years, this work does not stop when Bill 36 passes. It's an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.

Mr. Speaker, we also heard questions about funding and concerns that front-line workers are being asked to do more without adequate support. Let me address that directly. First, Bill 36 is designed to take pressure off front-line workers and families, not add to it. For example, by enabling the extension of temporary guardianship orders without requiring extra evidence hearings while an application for permanent guardianship is before the court, we are getting rid of the grey area and reducing court appearances, helping to maintain certainty and stability for the child. Less paperwork and fewer procedural hearings mean that caseworkers can spend more time doing what matters most, supporting children and families when they are going through their darkest days.

Second, we're managing implementation responsibly. Our current budget is adequate, and we are aligning directly with existing fully funded programs rather than building a costly new bureaucracy. Beyond the intervention system itself, our government provides more than $3.7 million each year to eight child and youth advocacy centres and over $17 million in '26-27 to 15 sexual assault centres and their umbrella organizations. These are tangible front-line commitments, Mr. Speaker.

Before we vote, I would like to highlight how the remaining statutes in this omnibus bill work together. Under the Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act we are retiring outdated prostitution language and adopting a modern definition of sexual exploitation, which includes child sexual exploitation through electronic means, and under CYFEA we're recognizing emotional injury caused by exposure to online violence or through electronic means. That gives law enforcement and child protection workers another tool to combat online grooming, cyberluring, trafficking, and digital harassment. Harm online is real.

Under the Protection Against Family Violence Act we're repealing part 2 of the act to reflect the December 2025 deactivation of the Family Violence Death Review Committee. The committee's work was overlapping with fatality inquiries, child intervention, serious incident reviews, and the office of the Child and Youth Advocate, that makes similar recommendations. By eliminating duplication, we can redirect efforts towards early intervention and co-ordinated responses to family violence while advancing prevention through Alberta's 10-year strategy to end gender-based violence.

Finally, under the Education Act we're updating section 4 to ensure that children living with kinship caregivers are treated the same as children in foster care and attending local schools and accessing school transportation.

Mr. Speaker, we have debated the details, answered the tough questions, and kept our focus squarely on where it belongs, on

the children and youth in this province. This bill gives children a stronger voice without sidelining guardians or caregivers. It prioritizes kinship care without uprooting children from stable foster homes. Bill 36 respects Indigenous families and puts cultural connections first, and it strengthens protections against sexual exploitation, both in person and online. The amendments before the House focus on administrative fairness, increased participation by families and caregivers, system improvements, clarified adoption processes, and modernized terminology. This is a balanced and practical piece of legislation. Together we can give Alberta's vulnerable children clear protection, stronger connections, and a safer place to be a permanent and safe and loving home. I call on all members to support it.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of Bill 36, the supporting Alberta families statutes amendment act, 2026. Thank you.

2:20

The Speaker: Are there any speakers to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak on the final reading of Bill 36, the children and family services statutes amendment act, 2026. Well, of course, there are some concepts in here that one would agree to when reading it on paper. However, when you do a deep dive into actually what this looks like on the ground, how are we as a government or as an organization, the child and family services, going to measure the outcomes of what it's proposing to do?

Speaking of measurements, the Auditor General just released a report about child and family services where, you know, they say that, in fact,

> the department does not consistently demonstrate
> - young adults have current and complete transition plans
> - service agreements that list financial and non-financial supports align with transition plans.

They also found that engagement with young adults did not occur as required, and they found that they needed to make a bunch of recommendations to

> - processes to identify and respond to young adults' needs . . . ensuring transition to independence plans are current, complete, and reflected in transition to adulthood agreements
> - processes [that] demonstrate compliance with the Transition to Adulthood . . . Policy Manual regarding meetings with young adults.

In fact, there was some data around the meeting with the young adults, and it was mortifying, the fact that some of these adults had only been met with once every six months. These are young people. These are not, you know, established 25-year-olds with a career. These are kids from 18 to 24 who've been bounced around from foster home to foster home.

You know, I think I would have been much more hopeful if this minister had brought forward a real, concrete plan to talk about how we are going to measure and assess where we are having success with children in care, regardless if it's foster care or kinship care. What the stats are showing as it currently stands is that the plan they have is not working; it's failing. We have more kids leaving care into incarceration than we've ever had in the history of our province, which means something is not working, and renaming things does not mean it's going to work.

The notion of the sex trafficking here: you know, there's nothing whatsoever about expanding provincial protection powers around ensuring that people who are perpetrators are convicted. There's no investment in the crime, but what there is going to be is secure treatment for young women who are doing sex work. What does it mean to be in secure treatment? It means that you are locked in a bedroom with a mattress and a bed and a desk. You're lucky if you get a desk, definitely not a light or a pen because they think you might harm yourself. You're locked in that room until they allow you out. Now this government is giving itself more power to lock up and institutionalize young Indigenous women under emergency protection.

Why don't we look into emergency prevention? Why aren't we investing in young children? Why aren't we making sure that these families who are struggling with their children have groceries, have the availability to take their children to swimming, to ballet, to gymnastics, all the things we know that make children healthy, competent, thriving young human beings?

Instead, we're reacting to the crisis, which is compounding on the crisis. Every young person that I have ever met with – and I have worked with hundreds – has never said: oh, wow, foster care really improved my life. I have never met a child who said: those people who took me in sure did a lot of good for me. In fact, I have read reports, met with hundreds of young people who have told me that their foster parents or their kinship parents were worse than what they were dealing with at home. We need to figure out how to support parents so we can fix the root of the problem.

Foster care isn't working, and changing the legislation is not going to work because there is not a single budget line to any one of these things. In fact, we haven't even increased any sort of therapeutic processes to these kids that we are going to apprehend that are engaged in sex work. There's nothing around ensuring that they have access to sexual recovery. I'll tell you what. Most of these kids, Mr. Speaker, who are performing in this work are kids who've been sexually assaulted as children. They were molested. They were sodomized. They were beaten. They were raped as children. Therefore, they need a tremendous amount of support, of therapeutic support, not secure treatment locked up in a room.

It is deeply concerning, this legislation. You know, the legislation says that it will recognize written openness agreements for children who are adopted out. Currently there are nations who are fighting this government in court to see their kids that have been adopted out, that are in foster care. We want to see our babies. We want them to know their language.

There are so many reports. Chandler and Lalonde back in 1982 was publishing, you know – it reduced suicide by over 87 per cent in young people when they were connected to their identity, their culture, their language, and here we are saying that we're going to try to give access to these children's lives. Stop removing them. Stop taking them away. Bring investment into the families. It's so much simpler, and we know the solutions to our problems. Don't kid yourself. We know where we need the help. If the government was to listen to us, then they could make investments where appropriate.

Ms Hoffman: Prevention.

Member Calahoo Stonehouse: Prevention.

Another thing that I found in the Auditor General's report that I thought was quite alarming was that these kids, these young people who deserve to have workers who care, workers who report: they couldn't in fact find the reports for these kids, so when the Auditor General went and did this report, they couldn't in fact have

continuance of documentation on where these kids are living, how they're living. That's a huge alarm for us. If we don't know where our babies are – as a mom if I don't know where my kids are, what they're doing, if they're in school, you know, they're not going to go on their own. They need me in the morning to be like: "Let's go guys. Rise and grind." Right? That's our job as parents. If the Auditor General can't find the reports about where these foster kids are, we've got a much bigger problem than just renaming legislation.

I want to commend, you know, the minister for attempting to follow the recommendations that were given by the collective, but he falls very short, and it's only going to hurt kids and families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Any more speakers? I see none.

Would the minister like to close? No. Okay.

Hon. members, let the record show that I didn't refuse anybody speaking. Okay. All right. Just it's important. That is important, that the people here get to talk when they need to.

[Motion carried; Bill 36 read a third time]

The Speaker: Well, if I talk for 11 more seconds, it'll be 2:30. Anybody objects?

It gives me time to say please drive home safely. Some of the roads in Alberta are not good, probably worse than they've been in a while, especially if you're heading south, so please come back to us safely. At this point, at 2:30, the House is adjourned until 1:30 Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 2:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 31st Legislature - 2nd Session (2025-2026)

Activity to Thursday, November 19, 2026

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

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

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

Bill 1 — International Agreements Act (Smith)
First Reading — 6 *(Oct. 23, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 77-85 *(Oct. 28, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 109-18 *(Oct. 29, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 133-35 *(Oct. 30, 2025 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 184-87 *(Nov. 4, 2025 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 250-52 *(Nov. 6, 2025 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force November 26, 2025; SA 2025, cI-3.8]

Bill 2 — Back to School Act (Horner)
First Reading — 26 *(Oct. 27, 2025 aft., passed on division)*
Second Reading — 27-28 *(Oct. 27, 2025 eve.)*, 29-35 *(Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division)*
Committee of the Whole — 35-36 *(Oct. 27, 2025 eve.)*, 37-45 *(Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division)*
Third Reading — 45-46 *(Oct. 27, 2025 eve.)*, 47-54 *(Oct. 27, 2025 eve., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(Oct. 28, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on October 28, 2025; SA 2025 cB-0.5]

Bill 3 — Private Vocational Training Amendment Act, 2025 (McDougall)
First Reading — 65 *(Oct. 28, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 135-37 *(Oct. 30, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 187-93 *(Nov. 4, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 215-16 *(Nov. 5, 2025 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 334-37 *(Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 371-73 *(Nov. 19, 2025 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 c17]

Bill 4 — Public Safety and Emergency Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2) (Ellis)
First Reading — 121 *(Oct. 30, 2025 , passed)*
Second Reading — 193-201 *(Nov. 4, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 216-24 *(Nov. 5, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 289 *(Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned)*, 323-34 *(Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed on division)*
Committee of the Whole — 408-13 *(Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 447-55 *(Nov. 24, 2025 eve., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(Nov. 26, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force November 26, 2025, with exceptions; SA 2025 c18]

Bill 5 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Schow)
First Reading — 271 *(Nov. 17, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 322-23 *(Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 407-08 *(Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 589-90 *(Nov. 27, 2025 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force December 11, 2025; SA 2025 c23]

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

First Reading — 150 *(Nov. 3, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 252-60 *(Nov. 6, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 289-98 *(Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned)*, 337-39 *(Nov. 18, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 341-51 *(Nov. 18, 2025 eve., adjourned; amendments introduced)*, 455-65 *(Nov. 24, 2025 eve., adjourned; amendments introduced)*, 504-14 *(Nov. 25, 2025 eve., passed on division)*
Committee of the Whole — 681-86 *(Dec. 2, 2025 eve., passed)*
Third Reading — 713-21 *(Dec. 3, 2025 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 c19]

Bill 7 — Water Amendment Act, 2025 (Schulz)

First Reading — 121 *(Oct. 30, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 224-35 *(Nov. 5, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 298-307 *(Nov. 17, 2025 eve., adjourned)*, 351-55 *(Nov. 18, 2025 eve., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 480-93 *(Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 536-43 *(Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 661-63 *(Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 c27]

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

First Reading — 478 *(Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 663-70 *(Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 737-44 *(Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed with amendments)*
Third Reading — 766-71 *(Dec. 4, 2025 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force December 11, 2025, with exceptions; SA 2025 c26]

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

First Reading — 319-20 *(Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed on division)*
Second Reading — 378-91 *(Nov. 19, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 493-501 *(Nov. 25, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 549-54 *(Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 676-79 *(Dec. 2, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 815-22 *(Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed on division)*
Committee of the Whole — 855 *(Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 873-80 *(Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)*
Third Reading — 891 *(Dec. 9, 2025 eve., adjourned on division)*, 892-900 *(Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force December 11, 2025; SA 2025 c24]

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

First Reading — 271 *(Nov. 17, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 374-78 *(Nov. 19, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 514-21 *(Nov. 25, 2025 eve., adjourned)*, 543-49 *(Nov. 26, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 670-76 *(Dec. 2, 2025 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 728-29 *(Dec. 3, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 744-45 *(Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed)*
Third Reading — 789-94 *(Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2025 c25]

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

First Reading — 426 *(Nov. 24, 2025 , passed)*
Second Reading — 555-64 *(Nov. 26, 2025 eve., adjourned)*, 590-96 *(Nov. 27, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 637-46 *(Dec. 1, 2025 eve., adjourned)*, 808-15 *(Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed on division)*
Committee of the Whole — 856 *(Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 867-73 *(Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division with amendments)*
Third Reading — 913-14 *(Dec. 10, 2025 aft., adjourned on division)*, 916-22 *(Dec. 10, 2025 aft., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2025 c21]

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

First Reading — 478 *(Nov. 25, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 693-98 *(Dec. 2, 2025 eve., adjourned)*, 731-37 *(Dec. 3, 2025 eve., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 745-50 *(Dec. 3, 2025 eve., adjourned)*, 850-55 *(Dec. 9, 2025 aft., passed with amendments)*
Third Reading — 860-67 *(Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(Dec. 11, 2025)* [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2025 c20]

Bill 13 — Regulated Professions Neutrality Act (Amery)
First Reading — 404 *(Nov. 20, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 564-73 *(Nov. 26, 2025 eve., adjourned)*, 629-37 *(Dec. 1, 2025 eve., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 686-92 *(Dec. 2, 2025 eve., adjourned)*, 801-08 *(Dec. 8, 2025 eve., passed)*
Third Reading — 887-91 *(Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(Dec. 11, 2025)* [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2025 cR-13.3]

Bill 14 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (Amery)
First Reading — 763 *(Dec. 4, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 794-801 *(Dec. 8, 2025 eve., adjourned)*, 844-50 *(Dec. 9, 2025 aft., passed on division)*
Committee of the Whole — 856 *(Dec. 9, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 880-87 *(Dec. 9, 2025 eve., passed on division with amendments)*
Third Reading — 922-23 *(Dec. 10, 2025 aft., adjourned on division)*, 924-31 *(Dec. 10, 2025 aft., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(Dec. 11, 2025 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force December 11, 2025, with exceptions; SA 2025 c22]

Bill 15 — Public Safety and Emergency Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Ellis)
First Reading — 943 *(Feb. 24, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 972-83 *(Feb. 25, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1141-48 *(Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed)*
Third Reading — 1337-44 *(Mar. 31, 2026 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(Apr. 16, 2026 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force April 16, 2026; SA 2026, c5]

Bill 16 — Traveller Protection and Destination Development Act (Boitchenko)
First Reading — 963 *(Feb. 25, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1065-68 *(Mar. 12, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1148-52 *(Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed)*
Third Reading — 1216-19 *(Mar. 24, 2026 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(Mar. 26, 2026 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2026, cT-6.7]

Bill 17 — Fiscal Measures Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Horner)
First Reading — 1039 *(Mar. 10, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1210-16 *(Mar. 24, 2026 aft.)*, 1241-44 *(Mar. 25, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1270-73 *(Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed)*
Third Reading — 1273-76 *(Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(Mar. 26, 2026 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2026 c3]

Bill 18 — Safeguards for Last Resort Termination of Life Act (Amery)
First Reading — 1124 *(Mar. 18, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1332-37 *(Mar. 31, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1462-65 *(Apr. 14, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 1524-28 *(Apr. 16, 2026 morn., passed)*
Third Reading — 1607-12 *(Apr. 22, 2026 aft., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2026 cS-0.3]

Bill 19 — Appropriation Act, 2026 ($) (Horner)
First Reading — 1140 *(Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 1222-27 *(Mar. 24, 2026 aft., passed on division)*
Committee of the Whole — 1248-58 *(Mar. 25, 2026 aft., passed on division)*
Third Reading — 1278-88 *(Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(Mar. 26, 2026 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force March 26, 2026; SA 2026, c1]

Bill 20 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2026 ($) (Horner)
First Reading — 1197 *(Mar. 23, 2026 eve., passed)*
Second Reading — 1219-21 *(Mar. 24, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1244-48 *(Mar. 25, 2026 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 1276-78 *(Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(Mar. 26, 2026)* [Comes into force March 26, 2026; SA 2026, c2]

Bill 21 — Interprovincial Trade Mutual Recognition Act (Schow)
First Reading — 1261 *(Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 1344-49 *(Mar. 31, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1404-08 *(Apr. 2, 2026 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 1453-55 *(Apr. 14, 2026 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(Apr. 16, 2026 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2026, cI-9.5]

Bill 22 — Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2026 (Sigurdson, RJ)
First Reading — 1299 *(Mar. 30, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1399-1404 *(Apr. 2, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1618-20 *(Apr. 22, 2026 aft., passed with amendments)*
Third Reading — 1643-47 *(Apr. 23, 2026 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2026 c6]

Bill 23 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Amery)
First Reading — 1299 *(Mar. 30, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1455-62 *(Apr. 14, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1492-98 *(Apr. 15, 2026 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 1520-24 *(Apr. 16, 2026 morn., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(Apr. 16, 2026 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force April 16, 2026, with exceptions; SA 2026, c4]

Bill 24 — Alberta Whisky Act (Nally)
First Reading — 1329 *(Mar. 31, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1393-99 *(Apr. 2, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1498-99 *(Apr. 15, 2026 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 1532-36 *(Apr. 16, 2026 morn., adjourned)*, 1607 *(Apr. 22, 2026 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2026 cA-37.7]

Bill 25 — An Act to Remove Politics and Ideology from Classrooms and Amend the Education Act, 2026 (Nicolaides)
First Reading — 1329 *(Mar. 31, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1465-71 *(Apr. 14, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 1499-1504 *(Apr. 15, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 1647-51 *(Apr. 23, 2026 morn., adjourned)*, 1833-39 *(May 11, 2026 eve., passed on division)*
Committee of the Whole — 1874-80 *(May 12, 2026 eve., passed on division)*
Third Reading — 1901-07 *(May 12, 2026 eve., adjourned)*, 1925-26 *(May 13, 2026 aft., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force on Proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2026 c13]

Bill 26 — Immigration Oversight Act (Schow)
First Reading — 1353 *(Apr. 1, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1528-32 *(Apr. 16, 2026 morn., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1620-24 *(Apr. 22, 2026 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 1739-42 *(May 6, 2026 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2026 cI-0.3]

Bill 27 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Horner)
First Reading — 1353 *(Apr. 1, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1487-92 *(Apr. 15, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 1612-18 *(Apr. 22, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1746-49 *(May 6, 2026 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 1769 *(May 6, 2026 eve., adjourned)*, 1769-71 *(May 6, 2026 eve., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2026 c8]

Bill 28 — Municipal Affairs and Housing Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Williams)
First Reading — 1385 *(Apr. 2, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 1636-43 *(Apr. 23, 2026 morn., adjourned)*, 1752-56 *(May 6, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 1757-59 *(May 6, 2026 eve., adjourned)*, 1839-46 *(May 11, 2026 eve., passed on division)*
Committee of the Whole — 1880-86 *(May 12, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 1893-95 *(May 12, 2026 eve., passed on division)*, 1887 *(May 12, 2026 eve., adjourned)*
Third Reading — 1928-36 *(May 13, 2026 aft., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2026 c10]

Bill 29 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (LaGrange)
First Reading — 1420 *(Apr. 13, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1651-57 *(Apr. 23, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 1716-23 *(May 5, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 1867-74 *(May 12, 2026 aft., passed on division)*
Committee of the Whole — 1887-93 *(May 12, 2026 eve., passed)*
Third Reading — 1936-43 *(May 13, 2026 aft., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force May 14, 2026, with exceptions; SA 2026 c9]

Bill 30 — Expedited 120-Day Approvals Act (Jean)
First Reading — 1450 *(Apr. 14, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1706-11 *(May 5, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1771-76 *(May 6, 2026 eve., passed)*
Third Reading — 1776-77 *(May 6, 2026 eve., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2026 cE-12.8]

Bill 31 — Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Nally)
First Reading — 1627 *(Apr. 23, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 1711-16 *(May 5, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1749-52 *(May 6, 2026 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 1800-1806 *(May 7, 2026 morn., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force May 14, 2026, with exceptions; SA 2026 c12]

Bill 32 — Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 2026 (Amery)
First Reading — 1635 *(Apr. 23, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 1743-46 *(May 6, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 1759-69 *(May 6, 2026 eve., adjourned)*, 1846-53 *(May 11, 2026 eve., passed on division)*
Committee of the Whole — 1895-1901 *(May 12, 2026 eve., passed on division)*
Third Reading — 1907-12 *(May 12, 2026 eve., adjourned)*, 1926-28 *(May 13, 2026 aft., passed on division)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force on May 14, 2026; SA 2026 c7]

Bill 33 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2) (Amery)
First Reading — 1973 *(Oct. 27, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1990-97 *(Oct. 28, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 2018-23 *(Oct. 29, 2026 morn., adjourned)*, 2076-81 *(Nov. 3, 2026 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 2128-30 *(Nov. 5, 2026 morn., passed)*

Bill 34 — Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Nally)
First Reading — 1990 *(Oct. 28, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 2010-18 *(Oct. 29, 2026 morn., adjourned)*, 2081-86 *(Nov. 3, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 2195-98 *(Nov. 17, 2026 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 2223-28 *(Nov. 18, 2026 aft., passed)*

Bill 35 — Education and Childcare (Securing Parental Involvement) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Nicolaides)
First Reading — 2009 *(Oct. 29, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 2068-76 *(Nov. 3, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 2203-09 *(Nov. 17, 2026 aft., passed)*

Bill 36 — Children and Family Services (Supporting Alberta Families) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Turton)
First Reading — 2009 *(Oct. 29, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 2130-36 *(Nov. 5, 2026 morn., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 2198-2203 *(Nov. 17, 2026 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 2268-71 *(Nov. 19, 2026 aft., passed)*

Bill 37 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Schow)
First Reading — 2009 *(Oct. 29, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 2233 *(Nov. 18, 2026 aft., passed)*

Bill 38 — Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (McDougall)
First Reading — 2067 *(Nov. 3, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 2136-46 *(Nov. 5, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 2189-95 *(Nov. 17, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 2228-33 *(Nov. 18, 2026 aft., passed with amendments)*
Third Reading — 2265-68 *(Nov. 19, 2026 aft., passed on division)*

Bill 39 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2) (Justin Wright)
First Reading — 2097 *(Nov. 4, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 2233-40 *(Nov. 18, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 2258-64 *(Nov. 19, 2026 aft., adjourned)*

Bill 40 — Electoral Divisions Act (Amery)
First Reading — 2158 *(Nov. 16, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 2254-58 *(Nov. 19, 2026 morn., adjourned)*

Bill 41 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (No. 2) ($) (Nixon, JJ)
First Reading — 2189 *(Nov. 17, 2026 aft., passed)*

Bill 42 — Energy, Environment and Utilities Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Glubish)
First Reading — 2222 *(Nov. 18, 2026 aft., passed)*

Bill 43 — Transportation (Safe and Sensible Roads) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Dreeshen)
First Reading — 2251 *(Nov. 19, 2026 morn., passed)*

Bill 201 — Employment Standards (Protecting Workers' Pay) Amendment Act, 2025 (Ganley)
First Reading — 121 *(Oct. 30, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 154-65 *(Nov. 3, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 274-76 *(Nov. 17, 2025 aft., defeated on division)*

Bill 202 — Conflicts of Interest (Ethical Governance) Amendment Act, 2025 (Kasawski)
First Reading — 248 *(Nov. 6, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 276-84 *(Nov. 17, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 427-31 *(Nov. 24, 2025 aft., defeated on division)*

Bill 203 — Energy Storage Planning for Investment Act (Al-Guneid)
First Reading — 319 *(Nov. 18, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 431-39 *(Nov. 24, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 608-13 *(Dec. 1, 2025 aft., defeated on division)*

Bill 204 — Public Interest Disclosure (Publicly Funded Health Entity Whistleblower Protection) Act (Sweet)
First Reading — 534 *(Nov. 26, 2025 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 613-20 *(Dec. 1, 2025 aft., adjourned)*, 1014-20 *(Mar. 9, 2026 aft., defeated on division)*

Bill 205 — Non-Disclosure Agreements Act (Johnson)
First Reading — 1129 *(Mar. 19, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 1169 *(Mar. 23, 2026 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Families and Communities)*

Bill 206 — Accessible Alberta Act (Renaud)
First Reading — 1063 *(Mar. 12, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1081-94 *(Mar. 16, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 1166-69 *(Mar. 23, 2026 aft., defeated on division)*

Bill 207 — Primary Provincial Industries Recognition Statutes Amendment Act, 2026 (Dyck)
First Reading — 1269 *(Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 1300-1311 *(Mar. 30, 2026 aft., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1424-32 *(Apr. 13, 2026 aft., passed)*
Third Reading — 1549-51 *(Apr. 20, 2026 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force on January 1, 2027; SA 2026 c11]

Bill 208 — Tobacco, Smoking and Vaping Reduction Amendment Act, 2026 (Petrovic)
First Reading — 1507 *(Apr. 16, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 1551 *(Apr. 20, 2026 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future)*

Bill 209 — Consumer Protection (Affordability Measures) Amendment Act, 2026 (Eremenko)
First Reading — 1635 *(Apr. 23, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 1672-84 *(May 4, 2026 aft., adjourned)*, 1820-22 *(May 11, 2026 aft., defeated on division)*

Bill 210 — Consumer Protection (Fraud Prevention Measures) Amendment Act, 2026 (Deol)
First Reading — 1781 *(May 7, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 1822-28 *(May 11, 2026 aft., defeated on division)*

Bill 211 — Patient Outcomes Reporting Act (Batten)
First Reading — 2009 *(Oct. 29, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 2036-50 *(Nov. 2, 2026 aft., defeated on division)*

Bill 212 — Pharmacy Statutes (Rewards Points) Amendment Act, 2026 (Pitt)
First Reading — 1923 *(May 13, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 2159 *(Nov. 16, 2026 aft., withdrawn)*

Bill 213 — Alberta Personal Income Tax (Emergency Services Volunteer Tax Credits) Amendment Act, 2026 (Lunty)
First Reading — 1923 *(May 13, 2026 aft., passed)*
Second Reading — 2159-69 *(Nov. 16, 2026 aft., passed)*

Bill 214 — Alberta Health Care Insurance (Protecting Public Health Care) Amendment Act, 2026 (Hoffman)
First Reading — 2127 *(Nov. 5, 2026 morn., passed)*
Second Reading — 2169-72 *(Nov. 16, 2026 aft., adjourned)*

Bill 215 — Municipal Government (Reserve Land Use) Amendment Act, 2026 (Yao)
First Reading — 2222 *(Nov. 18, 2026 aft., passed)*

Bill Pr1 — The Ranchmen's Club Ordinance Amendment Act, 2026 (Ceci)
First Reading — 1269 *(Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills)*, 1450 *(Apr. 14, 2026 aft., reported to Assembly; proceeded with)*
Second Reading — 1972 *(May 7, 2026 morn., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1792 *(May 7, 2026 morn., passed)*
Third Reading — 1867 *(May 12, 2026 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force May 14, 2026]

Bill Pr2 — Prairie Bible Institute Amendment Act, 2026 (Sawyer)
First Reading — 1269 *(Mar. 26, 2026 morn., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills)*, 1450 *(Apr. 14, 2026 aft., reported to Assembly; proceeded with)*
Second Reading — 1792 *(May 7, 2026 morn., passed)*
Committee of the Whole — 1792-93 *(May 7, 2026 morn., passed)*
Third Reading — 1867 *(May 12, 2026 aft., passed)*
Royal Assent — *(May 14, 2026 morn.)* [Comes into force May 14, 2026]

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